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IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

## **International Dialogue on Migration 2010 Migration and Social Change**

### **First Intersessional Workshop: Migration and Transnationalism: Opportunities and Challenges 9 – 10 March 2010**

#### **Final Report**

#### **Introduction**

Transnationalism offers a fresh perspective for policymaking on migration: it recognizes that in a globalized world, lives, activities and identities transcend national borders. Attachments and allegiances have multiplied and individuals feel loyalties and affinities for more than one place. Without a doubt, migrants are among the primary actors of a transnational world, although they are by no means the only ones living with and contributing to this phenomenon. While such concepts have yet to enter policymaking in a systematic fashion, transnationalism is not a new phenomenon. Most definitions emphasize sustained cross-country and / or cross-cultural connections involving exchanges by migrants, institutions, corporations and governments across national borders. These connections may arise from historical links, family ties, commercial interests or cultural networks, to name a few, and can substantially shape lives in both countries of origin and destination.

Understanding the transnational dimension of migration requires a concerted consideration of geographies – real and imagined. Transnationalism takes place at different geographical scales, charts emotional cartographies of home and belonging, and creates and influences relationships between one place and another. Analyzing migration through the transnational prism means thinking differently about space and time: it requires re-examining the assumption of the national space as the exclusive container for individual and collective identities and for political, economic, social and family life, as well as a reconsideration of the relationships between places across borders. Networks of various types are one classic feature of a transnational existence: stretching across borders, they affect societies and migrants alike. Furthermore, the notion of “home” in the twenty-first century is in many instances markedly different from earlier periods,

owing to innovations in technology, transport and communication networks and resulting increased mobility and connectivity. It is now easier than ever before to be connected to two or more places across national borders. Present day transnational realities combined with globalization and advances in technology compel us to think of “home” in a different way.

There is a need for renewed thinking and policymaking around migration and transnationalism to keep in step with the realities of multi-sited migrant lives. Understandings of migration need to be revisited to ensure they accurately reflect the highly mobile and interconnected world that we live in today. The challenge for policymakers is to move beyond traditional dichotomous conceptualisations of home and host countries as the foundation of most policies and practices today and to reconsider concepts of identity, cohesion, belonging, integration and nationality. Under current paradigms, an individual’s rights and entitlements to certain services and resources remain largely tied to notions of national belonging. Delineations are made about who “belongs,” and to what extent. Degrees of social, cultural, economic and political participation derive from such differentiations.

Thinking and acting “transnationally” involves extending policy considerations beyond relatively easily defined national settings to the more fluid and intangible transnational space. Taking account of transnationalism and its relationship with migration enables policymakers to reflect the realities of migrants’ multi-sited lives in policy and programmes. Policymakers addressing migration issues need to engage with transnationalism in conceptual and practical ways to harness the opportunities it presents and address the challenges it poses. Tailored policy responses incorporating the languages of belonging and rights for migrants will produce better outcomes for migrants and societies. Innovative policy solutions geared towards making transnationalism beneficial for migrants and their families in both countries of origin and destination are required.

Importantly, transnationalism is as vital an issue for societies of origin as it is for societies of destination. The migrant, in some sense, functions as a bridge and mediator between the two. It is, however, in the interest of countries to ensure that the borders between them do not impede the productive connections which migrants can establish between two countries or result in the detriment or deprivation of certain fundamental rights of the migrant and his or her family. Constructive international cooperation is therefore a key element of transnational policymaking on migration.

## **The Workshop**

Discussions at the workshop, “Migration and Transnationalism: Opportunities and Challenges”, held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 9-10 March 2010, within the framework of the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM), form the basis of lessons learned and effective approaches outlined below.

This workshop took place under the overarching theme of the IDM in 2010, “Migration and Social Change”, as selected by the IOM membership. The workshop explored the social and cultural transformations in both societies of origin and destination emanating from cross-border temporary, circular or permanent movements of individuals and families, with special attention to the perspective of migrants themselves and on the opportunities and challenges brought about by changing notions of belonging and identity. In line with the overarching theme, the emphasis was placed on social as opposed to economic aspects of transnational exchanges. The workshop was attended by more than 225 participants, representing 78 governments, 13 international organisations and 14 non-governmental organisations, as well as by representatives of the media, the private sector and academia.<sup>1</sup>

The specific objectives of the workshop were:

- to bring together governments to exchange their experience of and response to new transnational realities and to identify good practices for maximizing opportunities arising from transnationalism;
- to provide the IOM membership with the opportunity to discuss the political, civic and social consequences of transnationalism, including the issue of transnational families, diasporas and other transnational networks; and
- to exchange innovative ideas for multi-stakeholder partnerships at all stages of the migration process to make transnationalism work for individuals and societies.

## **Lessons Learned and Effective Approaches**

### ***1. Design policies that recognise the dual role of migrants as agents and subjects of transnationalism.***

A transnational context decisively shapes an individual’s experiences on a range of levels. Migrants’ lives are determined by transnationalism, whether it means being separated from family, having to pay taxes in more than one country (or no country at all), or accessing different social and political rights and entitlements (from pension schemes to voting rights) in different countries. At the same time, migrants also have an active role in creating transnational networks, maintaining connections with two or more societies at once, and engaging in transnational activities. In these ways, migrants are the agents of transnationalism. The linkages they create can become vehicles for social and cultural exchanges between societies. More concrete examples include migrants’ contributions to the arts through literature, music, theatre and film; exchanges at the level of education and research; through cuisine; or the promotion of tourism. The active participation of migrants as agents, and awareness of their role as subjects of transnationalism, is of critical importance to maximizing the benefits and addressing the challenges presented by migration and transnationalism.

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<sup>1</sup> More information about the workshop can be obtained at [www.iom.int/idmtransnationalism](http://www.iom.int/idmtransnationalism)

- **Incorporating considerations of the main drivers and facilitators of transnationalism into policy formulation.** Globalization has contributed to the evolution of transnational migration and has strengthened the degree of connectivity between different places and realities. Global technological advances – through the accelerated development of communication, transport, trade and information networks – and decreases in associated costs have resulted in the proliferation of use of the telephone, internet, mobile phone, global media and transport mediums. This has had and continues to have a resounding impact on migration and transnationalism. With the increased potential for connectivity come both opportunities for maximizing migrants’ contributions and addressing challenges related to migration and transnationalism for governments in origin and destination countries.
  - In Uruguay, for example, one government initiative makes use of existing postal services in Chile, Spain and Uruguay to facilitate the transfer of remittances from migrants at rates up to 40 per cent lower as compared to those offered by the private market. In a second initiative, a database of highly skilled Uruguayan professionals abroad targets such individuals for potential collaboration with domestic enterprises or research and scientific institutions.
  - In the high skilled sector, transnational corporations can themselves catalyze transnationalism through international inter-corporate transfers, during the course of which issues such as access to social services, taxation, transferability of benefits, impacts on accompanying spouses and children and participation in the respective communities come to the fore. Governments can draw useful lessons from the experiences of the private sector. For example, comprehensive public-private partnerships are key elements in Procter & Gamble (P&G) Europe’s expatriate relocation programme.
- **Recognizing contemporary patterns of mobility to inform policy design.** Contemporary migration patterns can be short-term or long-term, circular, temporary, permanent or consisting of a series of multi-staged itineraries that may include returns to the point of origin. Migrants may obtain education in one country, work and raise children in another and retire in a third, as one of many variations. Policies need to take account of such patterns and make provisions to respond to the very practical consequences in terms of access to rights, services and entitlements.
  - In the example of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), a high level of mobility amongst its member states resulted in the creation of a political framework that consists of a single market, safeguarding the free flow of skills, the free movement of certain categories of persons, as well as the social and economic benefits accruing to them throughout their studies and work in the CARICOM region. CARICOM members have made reference to contemporary patterns of mobility and designed policies that, together with reciprocal and bilateral agreements, allow migrants in the region to be educated, work and retire in several different CARICOM member states and to do so with access to the labour market, as well as pension and disability benefits.

## ***2. Establish a reliable evidence base to inform policy formulation.***

Present day societies are experiencing enormous social changes over relatively short periods of time. The knowledge base for policymaking thus needs to evolve rapidly and be updated on an ongoing basis. By making effective use of comprehensive research and mapping exercises, policymakers are better placed to formulate measures that reflect transnational realities, target the right groups and facilitate greater social and political participation of migrants.

- **Integrating transnational aspects into the existing evidence base.** Research into transnational aspects can frequently be integrated into existing data collection efforts, in particular through national census, or by making use of existing networks and facilities. Where there are strong migration links between two countries, research cooperation or data sharing could be considered for particular migrant groups, such that both the country of origin and the country of destination may benefit. The knowledge gained in this way can be instrumental in furthering broader policy aims.
  - For example, Zambia's proposed diaspora engagement policy seeks to take stock of the demographic composition of the Zambian diaspora through an internet based tool in collaboration with Zambian embassies. This information would complement the results of the 2010 National Census and inform policies to promote local investment opportunities for Zambians in the diaspora.
- **Creating and maintaining Migration Profiles.** Migration Profiles are essentially country-specific reports that analyze key national migration trends and patterns. They are often accompanied by a process of capacity building to ensure the long-term sustainability of data collection and research efforts in the area of migration. Such tools create an important evidence base in order to set migration policy priorities.

## ***3. Foster transnational social and political participation of migrants.***

Transnational realities require policies and legal provisions that enable migrants to participate socially and politically in societies of origin and destination. Support for such participation, be it in the country of origin or country of destination, helps realize political and social rights of migrants, promotes a sense of belonging and ownership vis-à-vis both communities, and can enhance the migrant's contribution to the development and cohesion of the respective societies. Access and participation of migrants are at stake in areas such as healthcare, pension benefits and the recognition of educational qualifications. Provisions in this regards are sometimes spelled out in bilateral or regional agreements. Moreover, the political and social participation of migrants at the local level forms an important basis for integration in societies of destination and for reintegration upon migrants' return to the countries of origin.

- **Facilitating the portability of social benefits.** Policy responses that facilitate access to pension, health and welfare schemes in the transnational context are of enormous practical significance for migrants and societies alike. Fear of losing out on benefits because contributions made to certain schemes cannot be transferred across borders can be a deterrent in making mobility decisions. Economies competing for labour and skills would be well advised to consider this aspect in migration policies and related provisions.
  - “Move, Don’t Lose” is the slogan for the CARICOM agreement on portability of benefits, recognizing that harmonisation of social security legislation of the CARICOM member states is one way to promote functional cooperation and regional unity. The agreement facilitates the portability and totalisation of social security benefits of workers in the Caribbean region and is based on the principles of equality of treatment and maintenance and protection of rights. The Treaty of Chaguaramas and its 2001 revision aim to gear mobility towards development in a region where workers can move without losing their acquired rights to retirement, survivors, disability and invalidity pensions.
  
- **Promoting out-of-country voting as a platform for democratic rights and political participation of migrants.** Being granted a political voice is a basic feature of citizenship and helps to maintain a relationship between a migrant and his or her country of origin by giving the migrant a stake and say in the country’s fate and future. Out-of-country voting is one way in which countries of origin can give effect to the political dimension of transnationalism. Out-of-country voting is most effective when accompanied by information dissemination and awareness raising campaigns, constitutional frameworks that accommodate diaspora representation in legislative or executive bodies, and the collaboration of consular missions and embassies.
  - In Ecuador, the possibility of dual nationality was established in 1995, followed in 2002 by voting rights in certain elections (limited to elections of the president and vice-president) for Ecuadorian citizens abroad. The revision of the country’s Constitution in 2008 makes provisions for the representation of Ecuadorians abroad in Ecuador’s National Assembly (*Asamblea Nacional*). A total of six representatives (two for each of the following three regions: Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa; United States and Canada; and Europe, Asia and Oceania) are elected by and for Ecuadorians in the diaspora.
  - In Moldova, all eligible citizens abroad regardless of their migration status have the right to vote. Polling stations are set up by embassies and consular offices as provided for by national legislation, including the 2007 Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova and supported by the country’s 1994 Constitution. The provision of extensive out-of-country voter information in the form of radio and TV broadcasts, leaflets, calendars, booklets and through a dedicated website significantly increased out-of-country voter turnout in the 2009 elections.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [www.voteaza.md/](http://www.voteaza.md/)

- **Creating an enabling local environment for the development of “citizenry” and transnational links.** From a transnational perspective, identities, activities and participation transcend any single national space. Individuals can identify with and participate in communities at different levels: local, national, regional and global. While identities are not mutually exclusive, in fact, identification with the local community is often experienced as more important, more immediate and more relevant for daily life and for a sense of belonging than national citizenship, leading to the development of the notion of “local citizenry.” Furthermore, transnational awareness also recognizes that contemporary migration patterns are often network-based. Through so-called “chain migration,” migrants from one particular region or city in one country move primarily to a particular region or city in another country where prior migrants from the same neighbourhoods are already present.
  - The Commission on Integration and Cohesion in the United Kingdom, an advisory body active in 2006-7, was tasked with developing practical solutions to building cohesion at a local level. The Commission found that in the UK there was a much higher level of individual identification with local neighbourhoods than with the nation as a whole, among both migrants and non-migrants.<sup>3</sup>
  - The city of Montreuil in France and Yelimané region of Mali are linked through a long-standing migration network which has brought a large Yelimané community to Montreuil. A twinning arrangement in 1985 solidified the relationship between Montreuil and Yelimané. According to city authorities, the notion of “local citizenry” allows Yelimané migrants in Montreuil to identify with their local surroundings and community, even in the absence of a French passport.
  - The city of Geneva in Switzerland presents a microcosm of globalization and the city’s authorities participate in the United Cities and Local Governments initiative to connect with other cities in an effort to strengthen the local management of social cohesion and cultural diversity, among other issues.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***4. Develop differentiated policies targeting specific migrant groups.***

When approaching migration policy formulation from a transnational perspective, it is important to bear in mind that there are different categories of migrants with different forms and degrees of transnational engagement. Children and youth, the so-called “second and third generations”, and irregular migrants are among the groups who require particular attention, as their needs may not be fully addressed by a “one-size-fits-all” policy.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/Default.aspx?recordId=18>

<sup>4</sup> See also [www.cities-localgovernments.org/](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/). This particular example is drawn not from the workshop itself but from the IDM panel at the 99<sup>th</sup> IOM Council Session on 2 December 2010 which summarized the conclusions of the IDM 2010 on *Migration and Social Change*. On that occasion, the city of Geneva was represented by the city’s mayor, Sandrine Salerno.

- **Developing mechanisms geared at promoting the participation and protection of children and youth.** Migrant children and youth should be regarded as some of the primary agents of transnationalism. They are very often the first points of contact between their families and the new society, and they tend to learn new languages more quickly and adapt to new environments more easily. Children may, in fact, act as cultural “mediators” and linguistic “interpreters” for their parents, which can be empowering and beneficial, but may also lead to tensions in the family and represent a burden for the child. Policymakers may wish to take these considerations into account in policy formulation, especially in the area of integration and education policy and through targeted investments in health and social protection. Seeing schools as sites of integration and equipping them with the right resources and expertise to devote attention to migrant children and their families has proven a useful approach. Migrant children and youth require special support, but should also be taken seriously as having a legitimate voice, as stipulated also in relevant legal frameworks, starting with the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child.
  - As a result of historic migration patterns, there is a significant presence of Brazilians of Japanese descent in Japan. Quintessentially “transnational”, this group, known in Japan as the *Dekassegui*, has attachments to both countries and cultures. However, Japanese Brazilians living in Japan also face serious barriers to their inclusion in society, primarily for reasons of language. Instead of segregating Japanese Brazilian children and youth into “minority” schools, one proposal is to launch bilingual public schools, offering Japanese–Portuguese programmes, in order to integrate Japanese Brazilians with the rest of the population.
  
- **Empowering second and third generations to participate socially and politically.** The so-called “1.5<sup>th</sup>, second and third generations” – children or grandchildren of those who originally migrated – are important intermediaries between societies of origin and destination. Their experiences, biographies, cultural and linguistic resources allow them to enrich both countries of origin and destination. Nevertheless, they may also feel displaced and disempowered, because of identity dilemmas or because of a perceived or real rejection by the host society which does not view them as full members of the community. Many initiatives aim to create conditions that are conducive to the social and political participation of these particular groups and ultimately empower 1.5<sup>th</sup>, second and third generations to feel part of the country in which they were born and/or raised. At the same time, it is crucial that the host / majority society be sensitized to the needs, rights and realities of these groups, to better understand their backgrounds, challenges and potential.
  - Again in Japan, studies indicate that the 1.5<sup>th</sup>, second and third generation of Japanese Brazilians tend to feel dislocated and unsure of their identity. Incidence of crime also tends to be higher among Japanese Brazilian youth compared to native Japanese of the same age group.
  - The 2010 Greek citizenship bill introduces a new way for migrants to acquire Greek citizenship, either by being born in Greece or by attending a Greek school, followed by the expression of interest either by the parents or by the individual himself. The bill allows “second generation” children to acquire Greek citizenship

through simplified procedures, provided that the requirements of the law are met, mainly in terms of their legal residence.

- **Addressing the situation of irregular migrants in terms of their rights to social and political participation.** In many instances, irregular migrants are excluded from basic services such as healthcare, from education, or from true social and political participation in countries of destination. Barriers to return also mean that they are often barred from participation in the social and political life of the country of origin. Creating mechanisms geared at promoting their social and political participation as well as protecting all migrants, regardless of their status, can help mitigate the vulnerability of irregular migrants.

#### ***5. Develop support mechanisms for migrants and their families in societies of destination.***

To ensure a successful migration experience, which translates into opportunities for all in both countries of origin and destination, migrants and their families need to be supported throughout the migratory process. While migration policy has traditionally focussed on the individual or the primary / economically active migrant, there is growing recognition of the importance of the family unit in the migration process. Different measures may need to target the family as a whole or at the very least take into account the family circumstances of the migrant. Considerations of gender and age acquire particular importance in this regard. For societies of destination, measures targeting migrant families or accompanying spouses and children of a migrant are indispensable for fostering social cohesion and wellbeing, even if the migrants are only expected to remain in the country for a limited period of time.

- **Ensuring access to information and assistance throughout the migration process.** Access to information on migration options, processes and conditions and adequate preparation and assistance at the various stages of the process are key components of a successful migration experience. Information on migration options needs to be provided in consideration of the various reasons for migration – be it in search of employment, as part of family reunification or for educational or entrepreneurial opportunities. Depending on the specificities of the situation, information on employment opportunities, educational admission requirements, or conditions for enterprise development may be most relevant. The provision of practical assistance to migrants and their families in the form of pre- and post-departure orientation, accompaniment through the documentation and immigration formalities, as well as periodic contact throughout the migration process minimizes anxieties and strengthens migrants' trust in government institutions and processes.
  - Experiences gained through the IOM Temporary and Circular Labour Migration project between Colombia and Spain underscores the importance of continuous support in the provision of information, accompaniment and periodic assessment throughout the process of migration for migrants.

- The Geneva-based NGO *Pluriels – Psychotherapie and Cross-Cultural Studies Centre for Migrants* offers counselling, therapy and psychosocial support for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as well as bi-cultural couples, members of transnational families and other individuals from different cultural backgrounds resident in Switzerland. The organization was founded in recognition of the emotional and psychological issues and familial tensions that can arise from migration, from leaving family members behind and from having to adapt to a new cultural and social environment.<sup>5</sup>
- For families of intra-corporate transferees, Procter & Gamble (P&G) offers career counselling for partners, language lessons and various networks, such as a Parents' Network, Women's Network and sports teams. The company also promotes insertion into the local environment through community events and other initiatives in conjunction with local partners.
- **Developing training and awareness raising initiatives targeting migrant and host communities.** Initiatives to equip migrants and their families with vital information on their rights and responsibilities in societies of destination are an important support strategy. Sensitization needs, however, also exist in host communities who are too often unaware of the background, situation and motivations of new arrivals in their midst. Better informed communities, local authorities and migrants create a more favourable environment for migrants in host countries and reduce the risk of rejection and hostility on the part of the community of destination.
  - An example of a mobile and characteristically “transnational” community who has experienced a long history of discrimination was provided by the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP). FERYP works with the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe to promote the social inclusion of Roma in Europe. FERYP also supports relevant activities of Roma youth organizations in Europe through training and awareness raising activities. In addition, FERYP provides information, legal advice, and training on possible approaches that can be used by Roma youth and other actors to change the prejudices and stereotypes about Roma people.
  - The Government of Turkey places great importance on transmitting the Turkish language to Turkish nationals abroad. To this end, and in collaboration with host governments, Turkey regularly sends qualified language teachers to countries with large Turkish communities.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See also [www.pluriels.ch/](http://www.pluriels.ch/). This particular example is drawn not from the workshop itself but from the IDM panel at the 99<sup>th</sup> IOM Council Session on 2 December 2010 which summarized the conclusions of the IDM 2010 on *Migration and Social Change*. On that occasion, the organization was represented by Alfredo Camelo.

<sup>6</sup> This particular example is drawn not from the workshop itself but from the IDM panel at the 99<sup>th</sup> IOM Council Session on 2 December 2010 which summarized the conclusions of the IDM 2010 on *Migration and Social Change*. On that occasion, the Government of Turkey was represented by Ambassador Şakir Fakili, Director of Consular Affairs, Directorate of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey.

**6. Establish support mechanisms for the families of migrants who stay behind in countries of origin.**

Transnationalism is as much about those who migrate as it is about those who stay behind. In situations in which one member of the family migrates, families are separated for potentially long periods of time, with ensuing changes to the distribution of tasks, responsibilities and decision-making. Needless to say, such separation also brings with it emotional costs, in particular for children. It is also important to note that separation due to migration impacts differently on men and women, on children and the elderly, on the person who migrates and the person who remains behind. Many such “transnational families” deal admirably and creatively with separation and the challenges they face. At the same time, however, it is women, children and the elderly in particular who may need extra support mechanisms to avoid the negative social repercussions that can result from family disruption. A variety of support mechanisms can be put in place to help families experiencing the departure of a caregiver and / or breadwinner.

- **Adopting innovative information and communication technology solutions to facilitate contact between migrants and their communities.** New communication and information technologies enable cross-border connections and exchanges in ways not previously possible and allow migrants to maintain ties with family members “back home”. Government and/or private sector led programmes aimed at expanding telecommunications and internet coverage as well as making related services cheaper are effective ways of facilitating and maintaining transnational connectivity.
  - Through the ANTEL20 service, Uruguay is able to offer special rates for communication via mobile telephones to Uruguayan migrants, thus enabling them to maintain contact with their families and friends.
  - Maintaining contact can be difficult, even in times of globalization: some ethnic newspapers in Japan carry sections called “The Disappeared” in which families in Brazil who have lost touch with their relatives search for family members who moved to Japan.
- **Developing needs-based programmes for the families of migrants who stay behind in the country of origin.** Specialized surveys of households that regularly or permanently experience the absence of one or more family members due to migration generate useful quantitative and qualitative information about their needs and challenges. This information can feed into adapting existing services and institutions, such as schools, kindergarten and health care facilities. The involvement of a range of government agencies, including those responsible for education, family, health and social welfare, in the design of such programmes is critical. At the same time, the role of civil society organizations and religious communities as support networks should be acknowledged and promoted.
  - In Ecuador, the National Institute for Children and the Family, the Ministry for Economic and Social Inclusion, the Defence for Children International and UNICEF Ecuador conducted a study on the impact of paternal and maternal migration on the lives of adolescents and their families. The study focused on the

basic features of the parental migratory process through the observations and experiences of the adolescents left behind, the adolescents' participation in the migration project, and their suggestions for addressing the problems posed by migration.

- **Creating psychosocial support mechanisms for families.** Psychosocial support can take a variety of forms and be made available by different service providers, both governmental and non-governmental. It typically includes counselling, periodic visits, differentiated programmes for adults and children, and practical advice for migrants and their families. In particular where migration programmes are formalized and government-sponsored, psychosocial accompaniment of the family of the migrant throughout the process has emerged as an effective practice to ensure the success of the undertaking.
  - *Fundación Crecer*, a partner organization in IOM's Temporary and Circular Labour Migration project between Colombia and Spain, accompanies migrants and their families from the moment the migrant (often women in this specific programme) decides to leave, during their stay abroad and after their return. Each family receives tailored attention, depending on the specific circumstances of the migrant and his or her families, including the motivations for migration, fears and concerns. One particular element of the accompaniment is to convey information between the migrant and the family, so both sides receive regular updates on the other's wellbeing and progress.
- **Promoting family unity in a transnational context.** Reconciling family unity with growing individual mobility can be a challenge. Facilitating migration while mitigating negative repercussions for the family unit requires balancing different individual rights and collective interests. Policymakers should take care not to unnecessarily prolong separation of family members or impose *de facto* or *de jure* barriers to family unity. Notably, this risk can arise even when all family members reside in the same country: in so-called "mixed status" families some members may be citizens of the country of residence, some may hold permanent residence, while others are in an irregular situation. The promotion of family unity can be realized in different ways, for example, by making provisions for migrants to be visited by, accompanied by or reunified with their spouses and children, or by harmonizing the migration status of different members of the same family. With respect to children in particular, family reunification may be promoted to give effect to the best interests of the child, a principle that is widely acknowledged across the world and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## ***7. Strengthen multi-level and inter-State partnerships and cooperation.***

Transnationalism, by its very definition, calls for enhanced cooperation between countries of origin and countries of destination. Growing mobility, cross-border family ties, and many of the other features of migrant transnationalism discussed in the workshop and in this report make efforts towards better policy coherence between home

and host countries increasingly relevant. Through sharing effective practices and experiences, adopting innovative solutions and engaging relevant stakeholders, States are better able to respond to issues related to migration and transnationalism.

- **Consolidating horizontal cooperation between different government agencies.** Horizontal cooperation between different government ministries at the same institutional level can bring about greater coherence in migration policy formulation and subsequent implementation. For example, in countries of origin the knowledge acquired by an immigration or home affairs ministry can inform the finance ministry's strategy in diaspora engagement or a social welfare ministry's allocation of human and financial resources to offer support for families of migrants who stay behind. In countries of destination, similar cooperation between a ministry of interior and ministries in charge of education or social policy can help in setting priorities and in allocating resources to support migrants, their families and host communities in the most effective way.
- **Involving local level actors through vertical cooperation.** Systematic engagement of local and other sub-national levels of government is as important to policy coherence as horizontal cooperation. Most immediate contact between migrants and communities happens at the local level, and the experience, expertise and potential of local authorities can thus make a significant contribution to policy formulation and the success of different initiatives.
- **Bolstering multi-stakeholder and inter-State cooperation.** States stand to benefit from policy dialogue, broad participatory frameworks and cooperation arrangements involving other governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental actors. Where strong historical or cultural ties between countries have given rise to significant mobility and transnational activity by migrants, bilateral initiatives have proven useful in shaping the transnational ties between two countries. Likewise, there are many innovative examples of inter-city cooperation, direct partnerships between cities or municipalities in countries of origin and destination. Regional-level cooperation – for instance through regional consultative processes on migration – may be a preferred course of action for States with significant intra-regional migration flows. Where regional integration processes or agreements provide for varying degrees of liberalized movement of persons, these could be complemented with schemes to ensure portability of benefits, enhance cultural exchange or facilitate the political participation of migrants.
  - At the city level, Montreuil in France works closely with Malian diaspora associations to promote their inclusion in city life, for instance through participation the city festival, the annual Week of Malian Art and Culture and other events. Furthermore, the twinning between Montreuil and the Yelimané region in Mali has resulted in cooperation projects worth EUR 4 million since 1985, focussing on local development, capacity and institution building and technical support for agricultural communities in Yelimané.

- **Engaging migrants, migrant networks and diasporas as key stakeholders.** Many migrants remain connected for a wide variety of reasons to their countries of origin, regardless of the extent of their integration in their countries of destination, and in this way are “able to create roots without being uprooted”. Migrants, migrant networks and diasporas are key stakeholders in both countries of origin and of destination and merit systematic engagement by governments.
  - Formalized in 2005, the Uruguayan diaspora forms a recognized constituency – in reference to Uruguay’s 19 administrative districts, the diaspora is popularly known as *Departamento 20*, or the 20<sup>th</sup> district. Diaspora liaison takes place under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and includes, for example, the creation of consultative councils (*Consejos Consultivos*) abroad to provide a support network for migrants and maintain their connection with the home country. To date, more than 40 such councils exist in 14 countries. According to the law, a global meeting of consultative councils in Montevideo is foreseen to take place every two years.

## **Conclusion**

The IDM workshop, “Migration and Transnationalism: Opportunities and Challenges,” emphasized the need for contemporary migration policymaking to take due account of existing transnational realities. A critical aspect in ensuring the adaptability of migration policies to the rapid changes in society is the willingness of policymakers to engage in conceptual as well as practical levels of inquiry over the experiences and responses to migration and transnationalism. Multi-level transnational cooperation amongst migrants, migrant associations and States, as well as communities in countries of origin and destination, is pivotal in achieving the best outcomes for all concerned parties. While there are challenges associated with transnational migration, on the whole, transnational migrants enrich the numerous spaces they occupy and communities with which they engage. Migrants carry knowledge, skills, and social connections wherever they go. Their characteristics and multi-sited lives enable them to construct bridges and opportunities for societies of origin and destination alike. Policymakers and governments are challenged to move beyond national migration policy formulation to consider the present day realities and social changes occasioned by migration and transnationalism and to translate these considerations into effective policies with positive impacts for migrants and societies.