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

Second Intersessional Workshop:
Societies and Identities: The Multifaceted Impact of Migration
19-20 July 2010

Final Report

Introduction

Addressing relationships between migrants and home and host communities is a pivotal component of migration management in order to make migration as positive an experience as possible for all involved. The key objective of the International Dialogue on Migration intersessional workshop on which this report is based was to foster dialogue between policymakers and practitioners on the ways in which migration has transformed their societies, with a focus specifically on the social and cultural dimensions of change.

Societies are not static entities, and the ways in which they transform as a response to migration, among other phenomena, can call into question strongly held beliefs about belonging, identity and inclusion. To address such changes, societies, including both migrant and non-migrant members, need spaces in which they can discuss legitimate concerns, practical challenges and potential opportunities while countering and alleviating unfounded fears. Governments have a crucial role in creating such spaces, in influencing public discourse and perceptions of migrants and migration, and practically supporting both migrants and non-migrants in adapting to social change. Under the maxim that "lives are local" and complementary to national-level policymaking, it is the level of local and city governments which is particularly relevant for policymaking and programming in this context and which will receive special attention in this report.

With regards to relationships between migrants and home societies, sociologist Peggy Levitt – who acted as the keynote speaker at the workshop – describes the "ossification effect" as "the disjunction between emigrant and non-migrants' journeys." Some migrants may see their countries of origin as static rather than dynamic, and expect their homes to remain as they exist in their memories and imaginations. The challenge is therefore to foster channels of communication between those who leave and those who

stay to create a better understanding of mutual needs and expectations. Peggy Levitt also proposes the idea of "social remittances" – the transfer of ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital – as a way to conceptualize the many contributions made by migrants to their societies of origin, beyond the monetary and economic kind.

With regards to relationships between migrants and societies of destination, integration has been described as a two-way process of mutual adaptation, with rights and obligations on the part of both migrants and societies and with the creation and maintenance of cohesion as the ultimate objective.[1] This view of integration as a "two-way process" was frequently repeated at the workshop. Integration is a new area of policymaking for many countries which have only recently been exposed to migration in a significant way, while others are seeing a need to rethink integration in light of a greater diversity of migrants coming to their country and new migration types and patterns, such as more temporary and circular migration. "Diversity management" – addressing the tensions and debates that may arise from the interactions between different cultures, customs and belief systems – is a central component of integration, as is ensuring access to services, employment and education, among others, for migrants and their descendants to enhance their participation in their new society.

Of course, migration is only one among a range of phenomena which cause societies to change. In addition, the effects of and attitudes towards migration are influenced by other pressures which societies face, such as "hard" and "soft" security concerns or economic downturns of the kind currently experienced worldwide. It is important to recall that migration is and remains a global reality and one with great potential for beneficial social outcomes. Honest dialogue about the opportunities and challenges it poses for migrants, their families and the communities with which they interact is therefore preferential to politicisation of the issue.

The Workshop

The second intersessional workshop of the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 19-20 July 2010. Titled "Societies and Identities: The Multifaceted Impact of Migration," this workshop continued the year-long overarching theme chosen by the IOM membership, "Migration and Social Change." A total of 178 participants attended the workshop, including a wide variety of stakeholders from 66 member and observer states, 12 international organizations and 8 non-governmental organizations. Participants also joined from academia, civil society and the private sector.[2]

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[1] Integration and social cohesion were discussed in greater depth at an IDM workshop in 2006 on the subject of *Migrants and the Host Society*. The report of the workshop is available here: http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/IDM_11_EN.pdf (English only)

[2] More information about the workshop can be obtained at www.iom.int/idmsocieties

This workshop focussed on migration as an impetus for socio-cultural transformations in both home and host countries. It explored the policy implications presented by the complexities of migrants' interactions with societies and specifically aimed to:

- Bring together governments to exchange their experiences of and responses to the realities of social diversity in their respective societies and to identify effective practices for maximizing contributions of migrants in both home and host societies;
- Provide the IOM membership with the opportunity to discuss some of the pertinent social consequences of migration, such as managing perceptions of migrants and migration, effective advancement of national and sub-national integration policies, and mitigation of negative impacts on families;
- Exchange innovative ideas for multi-stakeholder partnerships at all stages of the migration process including strategies for building social capital and cohesion at the local level.

The IOM – UN Alliance of Civilizations *Online Community on Migration and Integration – Building Inclusive Societies*[3] hosted a Virtual Dialogue on the same topic parallel to the workshop, allowing participants unable to attend in person to engage in the discussion from across the globe. Questions for discussion were posted on the website and participants were invited to share their knowledge, experiences and good practices by posting relevant information and participating in a debate with other users.

Lessons Learned and Effective Approaches

1. Minimize false perceptions of migrants in public discourse, especially when these images are linked to racist, extremist or xenophobic sentiments.

"Language matters" – this simple statement cannot be made more clearly, nor could it be more important in thinking about managing the relationship between migrants and societies. The language used to refer to migrants, even the terminology (e.g., whether they are called "illegal immigrants", "irregular migrants", "overseas workers", or "expatriates") can significantly influence societies' perceptions of migrants and migration. Without downplaying the real challenges migration brings to societies, it is necessary, first, to establish an accurate factual basis for assessing the costs and benefits of migration in a society (for example, regarding employment, social benefits and crime), second, to counteract overly negative and false images of migrants and third, to create opportunities for new narratives of migration which are balanced, fair, realistic and accessible.

- **Documenting, raising awareness of and actively combating the production of racist, extremist and xenophobic images.** Racist, extremist and xenophobic perceptions of migrants are often driven by a lack of accurate information and sensationalized or even falsified accounts. Other times such discourses signify a

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[3] For more information, please visit the website at www.unaoc.org/ibis/.

resistance to change and other vested interests. The impact of such images can be destructive, resulting in the exclusion of migrant communities, the dissolution of social cohesion, and in the worst case the incidence of physical violence or aggression against migrants or those perceived to be "outsiders". To prevent these circumstances from arising, governments should be aware of any increase in racist, xenophobic or extremist sentiment and develop effective strategies to clarify misperceptions, raise awareness as to the realities of migration and migrants' lives and contributions to society, and send strong messages against violence and discrimination.

o The Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia, which opened in 2005 and is attached to the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, conducts surveys to gauge the attitudes of the native Spanish population towards migrants. The Observatory suggests pathways for action and coordinates with other institutions to eradicate racial discrimination and xenophobia. For example, the Observatory coordinated and led an initiative titled "Living Together: European Citizenship against Racism and Xenophobia" which brought together governmental, non-governmental and academic institutions from six European countries in producing a compilation of best practices on tolerance and dialogue and a "Decalogue" of principles of harmony and respect geared towards European citizenship and to neutralize racist and xenophobic discourses.[4]

o One of the tasks of the Argentinean National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism is to research and monitor public perceptions of migrants. For example, in 2006 it conducted a project to "map" discrimination against migrants. The survey results were then used to plan awareness raising, training and sensitization campaigns across the country.[5]

- **Expanding the scope of "multilingual", "ethnic" or "immigrant" media.** The presence of different voices in the media is a positive manifestation of diversity, contributes to a sense of belonging and raises the visibility of migrants in a constructive way. Media by and for migrant or minority ethnic communities, for example in the form of newspapers or radio shows, allows migrants to discuss issues they find relevant, add their own commentary to debates about social change in societies of destination, and – importantly – represent themselves rather than be represented. Where language barriers are not an issue, or where such media is available in several languages, the society of destination can also benefit from these perspectives, enriching the dialogue about social change and social cohesion. In some cases, "ethnic" media produced by migrants and their descendants in countries of destination is also consumed in societies of origin, thus contributing to strengthening links and exchange between home countries and nationals abroad. In short, media creates new platforms for social inclusion.

o *Metro Éireann* is Ireland's first multicultural weekly, focussing on issues related to migration, diversity and multiculturalism. The newspaper, published in English and partly in Irish, enjoys a wide readership among the migrant and non-migrant

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[4] www.oberaxe.es
[5] www.inadi.gov.ar

community, including among members of the Government. Founded in 2000, *Metro Éireann* has also become a platform for intercultural communication in Ireland.[6]

o One local community in South Africa which worked with the Nelson Mandela Foundation recognized that linguistic differences played a key role in excluding some members of the community. The community established a newspaper that is published in several African languages which are spoken in that particular locality to promote a sense of ownership and participation amongst migrant and non-migrant community members.[7]

- **Calling on "mainstream" media to adopt ethical and unbiased reporting practices.** In general, any society stands to benefit from an open debate about what the role of the media is and should be. There is, however, little doubt that media should strive towards objectivity and accuracy in their reporting, including in relation to migration and the representation of migrants. Media organizations may also consider including migrants in their work in other ways, for example by increasing migrant representation among their staff and by targeting migrants as part of their viewer- or readership.

o The Institute for Public Policy Research in the United Kingdom frequently and publicly corrects misrepresentations of migration realities in the media. The Institute also conducts research on "Communicating Migration", looking at the effectiveness and credibility of different messages on migration, and collaborates with media organizations to work towards a public debate about migration issues that is moderate and realistic, rather than sensationalized.[8]

o The editor of the Irish weekly *Metro Éireann* has argued for greater accountability on the part of mainstream media outlets for the stories they produce about migrants and migration, especially when those stories may overstate negative impacts.

- **Engaging societies in the identification of and responses to hostile messages on migration.** Projects to foster critical perspectives in the consumption of media can also contribute to minimizing negative images of migrants and migration in society.

o The support of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in South Africa in the creation of media liaison structures has had a powerful effect on the perception of migrants in one community the organization worked with. Now, when the media features a story that casts migrants in an unfair or negative light, community members circulate petitions to present the other side of the story and to advocate on behalf of vulnerable migrant groups.

- **Encouraging innovative opportunities for societies to publicly acknowledge the diverse contributions of migrants to social and cultural life.** Governments can play

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[6] www.metroeireann.com
[7] www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php
[8] www.ippr.org.uk

an active role in promoting a positive image of migrants and shaping the discourse in a way that recognizes the potential benefits migrants and migration bring to societies. At the municipal level where the impacts on communities may be felt most immediately positive images of migrants and migration can be highlighted to counter misinformation and negative stereotypes.

- o In the Philippines, the Commission for Filipinos Overseas at the Office of the President offers an array of awards to highlight the contributions of migrants to the development of Filipino society, as well as their successes in societies of destination.

- o The *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* opened in Paris in 2007. This museum focuses on the contributions of migrants in the construction of modern-day France, and its creation included input from various members of academia, migrant organizations and migrant communities. Its main goal is to encourage the French public to fully appreciate the role migration played in shaping its history.[9]

- o On 10 August of every year, Morocco celebrates National Migrants Day, with the strong participation of civil society. As a country of origin, transit and destination, the day is also a useful occasion to highlight the importance of partnerships with the countries of origin of migrants in Morocco and with the countries of destinations of Moroccan migrants and their descendants.

2. Institutionalize mechanisms for migrants and diasporas to have their voices heard in the policymaking processes in countries of origin and destination.

Some of the most important stakeholders for governments to incorporate into the policymaking process are migrants themselves. Creating institutional structures, organizations and avenues for migrants and diasporas to engage in political processes and social life will result in more responsive policies and inclusive societies. It is important to underline that this applies to countries of destination as well as countries of origin, where the migration experience can significantly shape community politics and social dynamics.

- **Enhancing opportunities in governments for advisory bodies concerned with the needs and perspectives of migrant communities**. One effective way of including migrant voices in government is by empowering migrant groups to offer information, opinions and expertise. Furthermore, these bodies can be consulted on various areas of policymaking, working flexibly within existing policy structures.

  - o The Government of Australia gathers input for policymaking and implementation from a variety of such bodies, including the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, which represents Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council. The latter is consulted on issues of social cohesion and religious and

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[9] www.histoire-immigration.fr

cultural diversity, the social and economic benefits of Australia's cultural diversity, and the social and civic participation of migrants. In early 2010, the Multicultural Advisory Council has issued its cultural diversity statement, entitled "The People of Australia", which summarises its policy recommendations to the Government.[10]

o The Department of Labour and Employment of the Philippines supports the active representation of migrants in working committees of the legislature, providing a direct line of communication to Government and thus facilitating the incorporation of their contributions to the policymaking process.

o At the local level, the City of Edinburgh in Scotland actively seeks advice and feedback on policies from migrant and minority ethnic communities and NGOs as part of the activities of its Equalities, Diversity and Human Rights Scheme.

- **Facilitating the engagement of the diaspora in their home societies and empowering non-migrants to benefit from social remittances and other contributions.** In addition to financial remittances, social remittances are recognized as an avenue for change and development in countries of origin, though they are admittedly much more difficult to measure and manage.

o The Rwandan Diaspora General Directorate, part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, implements a policy that defines the contributions of diaspora broadly. Besides the more traditional development impacts of the diaspora, the Directorate also considers knowledge and technology transfer, cultural development, the diaspora's role in national unity and reconciliation and in propagating a positive image of the country, and its contributions to good governance.[11]

o In 2009, IOM, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (Mashav), the Center for International Migration and Integration (CIMI - Israel), and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) jointly organized the first international capacity building workshop for women leaders of diaspora organizations. Twenty-eight women from 17 countries had an opportunity to discuss experiences, strategies and challenges in making concrete contributions to the development of their home countries.[12]

- **Recognize opportunities for using existing consular networks to manage relationships between migrants and societies.** The use of consular functions to support migrants in countries of destination is outlined in the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, through assisting and safeguarding the interests of a State's nationals abroad. Consulates also take on the responsibility of providing avenues of communication between countries of origin and migrants. Moreover, if designed in partnership with the host country, the availability of such support

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[10] www.fecca.org.au and www.immi.gov.au/about/stakeholder-engagement/national/advisory/amac/
[11] www.rwandandiaspora.gov.rw
[12] A second workshop of this kind was held in November 2010.

mechanisms through the consular system can also help to smooth the integration process in the country of destination.

- o The Rwandan Government utilizes its network of embassies and consulates around the world to maintain relationships with the diaspora, including through websites and digital and printed newsletters.

- o With over 150 embassies and consulates, the Government of Morocco provides services and information to Moroccans abroad, while also minimizing the sense of exclusion they may feel with respect to host or home countries.

- **Advancing new initiatives for building capacities, sharing best practices and creating communities of knowledge.** Innovative ways of communicating via social networks – "actual" or "virtual" – can help open up dialogues to new participants. However, managing these resources takes time, efforts and strong institutional backing, at which point government support can be an important element to their success.

- o The European Youth Forum is in the initial stages of a new programme, called YM+, which will involve capacity building of migrant youth organizations to effectively lobby for their interests in national and international fora. It also targets youth organizations more generally, aiming to enhance their efforts to integrate migrant youth and youth with a migration background into their activities.

- o The UN Alliance of Civilizations and IOM launched an Online Community for sharing good practices on migration and integration. The network, "Integration: Building Inclusive Societies", consists of a diverse group of practitioners, policymakers and academics and has within its first few months attracted nearly sixty submissions of good practices from six continents.[13]

3. Support initiatives to facilitate dialogue between migrants and communities of origin and destination, in particular at the local level.

Encouraging open communication and dialogue between migrants and the communities they interact with, both in home and host societies, is indispensable in raising awareness of the others' needs and perspectives, in countering negative stereotypes and fears and hostilities, and in fostering a greater sense of cohesion. Actions by local actors, governmental or non-governmental, can be particularly useful as they target the scale of social interaction which tends to be most relevant in most people's lives. Of particular interest is the focus of many local governments on supporting focus groups, "townhall meetings" and community dialogues. In countries of destination, for example, these fora provide a means of identifying the challenges that may arise during the process of integration – linguistic, cultural and economic, to note a few – and a means of mediating them or working towards creative and community-specific solutions. In countries of

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[13] www.unaoc.org/ibis/

origin, communication between migrants and the communities that remain behind can be facilitated through migrant associations and modern technology.

- **Mobilizing and supporting local government leadership in efforts to integrate migrant communities.** Local government leadership, as participants or in the background as organizers and supporters, has a powerful impact on whether community dialogues will achieve their objectives.

  o According to the Council of Europe, one of the main factors determining the success of its "Intercultural Cities" programme is the active participation and strong leadership of municipal governments, in particular the cities' mayors. The programme was developed together with 11 pilot cities and focuses on public discourse, the media, and symbolic and cultural actions to create an urban culture of diversity. For example, this means reducing spatial segregation between groups and designing multiple contact zones and spaces for interactions for different groups within the city.[14]

  o Directed at local communities and municipalities, the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia, referred to earlier in this report, has issued a handbook, "Guide to Build and Apply Local Plans on Raising Awareness" which facilitates the development of practical plans to support the integration of migrants, combat racism and discrimination, and strengthen social cohesion and an appreciation of diversity. This was followed by the publication of a "Compendium of Success Stories in implementing Local Awareness-Raising Plans on Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination", coordinated by the Observatory in the framework of the European Community programme PROGRESS.

- **Fostering mutual understanding through creation of opportunities and "safe spaces" for community members to share concerns about migration and associated social change.** The psychosocial aspects of integration must be taken into account because the success of community dialogues relies on the creation and management of trusting relationships.

  o In a recent pilot project by the Nelson Mandela Foundation Dialogue Programme, "community conversations" targeted sites in five provinces of South Africa that experienced social tumult and xenophobic violence directed against migrants in 2009. Based on the methodology of Community Capacity Enhancement, the project facilitated more than 30 community conversations and trained approximately 30 facilitators to implement such dialogue initiatives between communities and migrants. One of the key ingredients for successful outcomes is the creation of a sense of trust among community members who, in the dialogue, must leave their "organizational hearts (affiliations) outside" and enter the dialogue as individuals.

  o The Institute for Public Policy Research in the United Kingdom conducted pilot community dialogues in three areas in the West Midlands which aimed at giving

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[14] www.coe.int/interculturalcities

people the chance to take part in an open and honest debate about the impacts of migration in their local area. The project relied on the willingness of non-migrants in societies of destination to trust both the Institute and other community members to engage in an open discussion of their views on migration. The Institute concluded that a more constructive debate on migration requires open dialogue, a better understanding of public views, new narratives on migration, and efforts to build consensus.

o Under the motto "Everyone Belongs", the Diversity and Social Cohesion Programme of the Australian Government (Department of Immigration and Citizenship) celebrates community participation, inclusiveness and respect during the annual "Harmony Day" on 21 March. The programme also funds various projects conducted by community-based organizations that promote the development of inter-cultural and inter-faith understanding and community cohesion. Projects bring together migrants and non-migrants on the basis of shared interests, such as activities involving sports or volunteering.[15]

- **Mobilizing local actors to serve as cultural mediators between migrant and host communities.** Individuals who are "on the ground" or who have personal experience with the social and cultural challenges of integration can contribute to increased dialogue in the function of mediators. A commitment to training and supporting these individuals to engage other community members will help both migrants and societies of destination to negotiate the often sensitive differences that may arise in everyday interactions.

o The Italian Islamic Religious Community (CO.RE.IS.) conducts training courses for public school teachers about Islam and the religious needs of Muslim students. The organization has also contributed to the 2007 Italian "Charter of Values of Citizenship and Integration", under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Interior, stating for example that education must be granted to boys and girls with equal right and criticizing incidences of segregation of female Muslim students.[16]

o The city of Turin in Italy has received recognition from the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities programme for its use of teams of "inter-cultural street mediators" to engage with young people, including migrant youth, street traders, new arrivals and established residents in anticipating disputes and minimizing conflict.

o The Norwegian Cultural Orientation Programme employs bicultural trainers in its post-arrival orientation programmes for humanitarian migrants in order to leverage their cross-cultural understanding, bilingual skills and empathy with the refugee experience.

- **Implementing programmes to create links between migrants and home societies and facilitate reintegration upon return.** The changes experienced by individual

[15] www.harmony.gov.au
[16] www.coreis.it

migrants during their time abroad may be dramatic. They may have adopted new behaviours or practices, learned new languages or skills, or developed new attitudes towards their home communities. In worst case scenarios, they may have been isolated, exploited or abused. Therefore varied support for return migrants, made available in both societies of destination and origin, is an important aspect in allowing migrants to communicate their (perhaps changed) needs effectively. Other programmes may target the descendants of migrants, the so-called "second or third generation", who are sometimes keen to explore their heritage and can help establish partnerships between the two or more societies they may be connected with.

- o The National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers talks to migrants about the challenges of reintegration even before they migrate, as part of a comprehensive pre-departure preparedness programme. Upon return, they focus on reintegration at two levels, that of the individual and that of the community.[17]

- o The Moroccan Government organizes summer camps for children of Moroccan nationals abroad, which offer them the opportunity to become familiar with the culture and country of their parents and to better negotiate their identities as "second generations" or transnational individuals.

- o The Government of Mexico has identified a "failure to reintegrate" as one of the main reasons that Mexican youth who are repatriated from the United States migrate again. According to research produced by the Centre for Migration Studies of the National Migration Institute, 30 per cent of these youth migrate within one year of their return, and over 50 per cent within five years. This information will be used to drive new policy and programme development for this target population.[18]

4. Provide effective support to vulnerable migrant groups and migrant families in all aspects of the migration process and in partnership with multiple stakeholders.

"People need support, sometimes", a slogan used by one of the presenters, was a theme which echoed throughout the workshop: services and targeted programmes can help alleviate some of the very practical challenges migrants and their families face in everyday life, even if they cannot offset the emotional toll which the migration experience can take. Access to services and assistance in a culturally sensitive way is also essential in enhancing the participation of migrants in social, cultural and political life around them and maintaining cohesive and functional communities, both in home and host countries. Particular challenges may arise for migrants in an irregular situation. Again, service providers, organizations and institutions at the local level are likely be aware of and responsive to gaps in supporting of migrants and their families and can represent important partners in operationalizing policies on the ground.

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[17] www.nrco.dole.gov.ph
[18] http://www.inm.gob.mx/index.php/page/Centro_de_Estudios

- **Addressing the cross-cutting challenges experienced by migrant families, in particular by children, youth and the elderly.** As the most basic units of society, families are affected by migration in a multitude of ways. While migration can bring many benefits to families, long periods of separation can also lead to a breakdown of relationships and other emotional, psychological and material difficulties. Family members who remain in the home country, particularly women and children, may require specific support structures - for example, through social services and in the education sector. Support mechanisms, differentiated by age and gender, are also needed in societies of destination, not just for newly arrived migrant families, but possibly also for some that have been resident in the country for a longer period of time.

  o In its research, the Centre for Migration Studies of Mexico's National Migration Institute has identified the so-called "Penelope Syndrome" referring to anxiety, depression and other detrimental psychosocial effects observed in women who face new economic and emotional burdens as heads of families as their partners migrate. Intra-familial tensions and a declining educational performance of children also emerge as major challenges in families of migrants who remain in the country of origin.

  o In the year 2000, the City of Edinburgh instituted its "Plan for Older People", part of the city's "A City of All Ages" strategy. Within this broader framework, the "Today and Tomorrow" programme is based on an action plan for elderly people and their carers from migrant and ethnic minority communities, covering aspects of health, community care, transportation and housing services. "Today and Tomorrow" evolved from a seminar in late 1999 and was the first action plan of its kind to address equal opportunity and anti-discrimination measures for minority ethnic elders in Scotland. The task group includes not only representatives from migrant and ethnic minority communities, but also community and voluntary groups, city council departments and the National Health Service. In 2008, the programme won the first prize in a European Good Practice Competition (Active Ageing and Social, Cultural and Economic Integration of Migrant Elders across Europe).[19]

  o Argentina enacted law No. 25871 in 2004 as part of domestic legislation recognizing the rights of migrants as laid out in the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The law ensures access to health, education and social assistance for the migrant population independent of their migratory status. Maintaining migrants in a status of irregularity is seen as a form of discrimination and Argentina has periodically carried out regularization programmes to normalize the status of migrants both from within and beyond the region of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). The Argentinean policies are strongly integrated into regional policies at the level of MERCOSUR.

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[19] http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/1456/older_people/1055/a_city_for_all_ages/2

- **Considering inter-cultural issues in the health sector.** This crucial area of service provision may see the need to adapt certain structures and practices to cater to different health needs and, in particular, to respond to special vulnerabilities found in some segments of the migrant population.

  o The Italian Islamic Religious Community (CO.RE.IS.) has set up a working group on health in partnership with the Milan Municipality Health Counsellor, the city's main hospitals, and an academic body for inter-religious studies. The initiative aims to address inter-cultural issues in the health sector, including concerns related to Female Genital Mutilation, privacy and confidentiality requirements, and access to health care for migrants with irregular status. The working group is also planning a seminar on "Women and health in the inter-cultural society" and hopes to provide inter-cultural and inter-religious training to health workers.

- **Instituting programmes to encourage language proficiency as a key factor in decreasing vulnerability in countries of destination.** Proficiency in the local language is a highly effective means of enhancing migrants' possibilities for economic, political and social participation in destination countries. While language proficiency is essential in raising employment opportunities, it is also important for language programmes to reach out to the migrant family as a whole, to avoid isolation of some family members and to enable them to communicate their needs and interact with the surrounding community.

  o Recognizing that "having a voice" means, in its simplest form, being able to communicate with one's community, the Australian Government provides English language tuition to eligible migrants through its Adult Migrant English Programme. In recent years, this programme has focused on family members of migrants who have low levels of English proficiency.

- **Leveraging synergies with civil society and business actors to increase effective service provision to migrant communities.** "Leveraging synergies" means using the structures, competencies and networks of existing institutions and organizations to achieve specific objectives in meeting migrants' needs.

  o One of the organizations supported by the capacity building initiatives of the European Youth Forum, the *Associação de Melhoramentos e Recreativo do Talude* in Portugal, specializes in providing education and childcare services to migrant communities who may experience difficulty accessing these services as a result of a lack of information, financial resources or language skills.

  o *Upwardly Global*, a US-based organization which aims to shift attitudes in the private sector regarding hiring practices and company cultures around inclusion of migrants. *Upwardly Global* has coached job seekers from more than 94 countries and developed ongoing relationships with more than 70 employers.[20]

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[20] www.upwardlyglobal.org/. This example is drawn from the Virtual Dialogue hosted by the *Online Community on Migration and Integration – Building Inclusive Societies* in parallel to the workshop.

Conclusion

Migration is a complex topic whose implications touch upon deeply held political, social and cultural values of individuals, communities and societies in home and host countries. The focus of this workshop, while generally concentrating on the social impacts of migration on societies and the need to keep the migrant at the centre of policy considerations, also relates to return migration and migration and development. As a cross-cutting issue, migration will certainly continue to elicit discussion with a diverse set of priorities, stakeholders and objectives. But the key concept to keep in the forefront as these discussions continue is *dialogue.*

What role can dialogue – at various levels – play in helping to manage the relationship between migrants and societies? It is clear that the challenges posed by migration in a globalizing world are transnational – that is, their impacts are felt across borders – and thus will require transnational solutions that are not confined within national borders. Governments can begin this process by cooperating across borders, between countries but also between cities and local authorities and between ministries within the same government. These dialogues can then lead to better policy coherence, better understanding of migrants' needs, and more timely and appropriate responses to fluctuating migration flows.

It is equally important to hear the perspectives and acknowledge the expertise of civil society groups. Their contributions to policymaking and implementation are often effectively targeted at a particular situation or locality. If structures already exist, these kinds of partnerships can avoid duplication in projects, research or services. The diaspora can be a particularly powerful civil society resource. Bringing migrants and their families into dialogue with governments in countries of origin and destination about their needs and their abilities can promote integration, reintegration and transnational connections.

At the community and individual levels, the relationship between migrants and societies relies on the ability to create space to hear and tell new narratives of migration. Dialogues based on trusting relationships and a commitment to mutual understanding conducted in safe spaces can allow communities to address social changes and concerns brought about by migration and, in the process, empower them to transform themselves. In this way, they can integrate migrant and non-migrant perspectives into a common vision for a joint future.