

Migrants & Cities in the SDG Agenda

Migration is one of the key themes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to SDG target 10.7 on “well-managed migration policies”, targets on inclusion, equal rights and opportunities, counter-trafficking and resilience to climate-related events are key to improving the well-being of migrants in cities and to ensure sustainable urbanization.



Main issues

Relevant SDG targets as entry points

The facts

SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES

Why are migrants vulnerable?

Migration is often missing from the urbanization agenda. Many migrants and refugees in cities are more likely to live in segregated and poorly maintained areas, making them more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, detention, prone to restrictions of freedom of movement and access to services.

- 1.3 Implement social protection systems
- 1.5 Access for all to basic services
- 5.2 Eliminate violence against all women
- 8.7 Eradicate forced labour and human trafficking
- 16.2 End exploitation and trafficking of children

Legal restrictions and socioeconomic discrimination have a negative impact on the capacity of migrants to access economic opportunities.

It is estimated that 98% of persons who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation are women.

The lack of access to health services is associated with higher risk of acquiring STD. In South Africa female migrants are 1.6 times more likely to be HIV-positive than non-migrants.

CHALLENGES

How to address urbanization?

Poorly managed urban migration results in the development of informal or ineffective solutions to address basic needs of migrants. Exclusion of migrants from basic services has a negative impact on both the well-being of migrants and on sustainable socio-economic development of urban areas. The SDGs recognize that the inclusion of vulnerable groups in cities is essential for sustainable urbanization.

- 1.4 Equal rights to economic resources for all
- 4.3 Equal access for all to affordable education
- 8.5 Decent work for all
- 10.2 Empower and promote inclusion of all

Studies show that education and vocational training are of key importance for the success of integration processes. Language competences influence success in education and integration into the labour market.

The majority of migrants move to urban areas. According to the WMR, migrants living in cities are more likely to live in slums with limited access to essential services.

OPPORTUNITIES

Why cities need to be more inclusive?

Diversity, when well managed, can become a driver of development. While rapid human mobility can be a challenge, it also brings substantial opportunities. Migrants are a source of innovation, and can be part of the response to demographic and labour market challenges. Migration and migrants can also contribute to making cities more resilient.

- 11.3 Sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory for sustainable human settlement planning
- 9.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards
- 11.1 Build the resilience of the poor and reduce their exposure to economic, social and environmental disasters
- 13.1 Sustainable and resilient infrastructure to support economic development and human well-being

Climate change will increase the incidence of sudden and slow-onset disasters. Disaster risk reduction strategies, with strong emphasis on sustainable development, are key in reducing forced migration and stabilizing populations in areas affected by degradation or disasters.

The city of Ho Chi Minh, improved the lives of 7.5 million urban poor and vulnerable people, by improving water access and sewage connections, as well as developing roads, sewers, lakes, canals and bridges.

SOLUTIONS

What are the solutions offered by the SDGs?

The SDGs put in place a set of policy recommendations to make sure that the positive aspects of urban migration are enhanced and the negative ones reduced.

- 8.8 Protect labour rights, including migrant workers
- 11.b Cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion at all levels
- 16.b Enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies
- 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels