

This snapshot updates #22. These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest research, information and analysis in a fast-moving environment. Topics will be repeated from time to time as analysis develops. If you have an item to include, please email us at research@iom.int.



New research & analysis on cities, local authorities & COVID-19

[What can we learn from Latin America's solidarity cities?](#), by M. Godoy and H. Bauder

[Migrants and mayors are the unsung heroes of COVID-19. Here's why](#), by R. Mughah and V. Zanuso

[We need sanctuary cities and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), by G. Hudson

[UNESCO learning cities' response to COVID-19 — Refugees and migrants](#), by UNESCO (webinar)

The importance of migrants for cities and local authorities

Migrants primarily live in urban spaces, contributing to the socioeconomic, cultural and, at times, political life of cities. While their importance in cities' labour market has been long-standing, the pandemic has revealed for some their crucial [role on the frontline](#) in times of crisis.

The city of [Buenos Aires](#), Argentina, has thus authorized Venezuelan migrants whose foreign qualifications were not yet recognized to work in health care systems. Some German states, such as [Saxony](#), have also lobbied national authorities to allow migrant doctors to provide medical assistance during the pandemic.



Did you know?

While global statistics on the number of migrants in cities are not readily available, it is estimated that [19% of the world's foreign born population lives in global or world cities](#).

Pre-existing inequalities in urban spaces

The pandemic has revealed and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities for people living in some cities, especially for those from marginalized groups, including migrants. This is not only the case in [megacities](#) and other big cities with important informal settlements, such as slums or favelas, that are hosting more than [1 billion people](#) worldwide. Inequalities have also been revealed and exacerbated in cities of [OECD countries](#), such as the [United States](#) and [Canada](#). [Reducing inequalities](#) is increasingly presented as a prerequisite for effective preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic and future crises.



Worldwide solidarity cities



As mentioned in [snapshot #22](#), so-called ‘sanctuary cities’ and mayors primarily located in North America have been actively engaged in supporting migrants during the pandemic. From [New York City](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Nashville](#), and [Chicago](#), to [Toronto](#), support measures for migrants have included the sharing of information on COVID-19, cash payments, access to testing and healthcare and/or broader access to benefits and services irrespective of their migration status.

But, beyond these typical sanctuary cities, a number of cities and local authorities worldwide are showing solidarity for migrants in the context of the current pandemic. Similarly as in sanctuary cities, solidarity has taken the form of distribution of food (such as in [Soacha](#), Colombia, and [Kerala](#), India), accommodation support for homeless persons (such as in [São Paulo](#), Brazil), cash assistance for vulnerable groups of the population (such as in [Bogotá](#), Colombia).



Relocation of migrant children



Some [ten European cities](#) have proposed to EU leaders to relocate unaccompanied migrant children from Greece. These include Amsterdam, Barcelona and Leipzig. Out of these ten cities, seven are in countries which have not pledged to participate in the European Commission’s relocation efforts.

Supporting cities

As epicenters of the pandemic, some cities face important financial challenges to address the many impacts of COVID-19, including for those faced by marginalized groups. Some [philanthropic foundations](#) have come to their support, such as the [Open Society Foundations](#) which for instance supports the cities of [New York](#), Budapest and Milan through USD 130 million funding dedicated to respond to COVID-19. Support through sharing of good practices has also been provided by [coalitions of cities](#).

Selected resources listing good practices of cities and local authorities

- ⇒ [Live action tracker: Municipal migrant & refugee sensitive COVID-19 response & recovery efforts](#), Mayors Migration Council
- ⇒ Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, in [Intercultural Cities: COVID-19 Special page](#), Council of Europe
- ⇒ [Cities and regions share practices on COVID-19 information for migrants](#), European Commission

This COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot has been produced by [IOM Research](#) (research@iom.int).

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