

Migrants Shaping Cities: integrating migrants into the local agenda

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BACKGROUND

Migration flows affect cities in different ways. The kind of experience a city has with migrants can influence the type of migration-related policies that local leaders like mayors develop. Moreover, a city's migration experience can contribute significantly to changing the narrative and improving the public perception of migration. Our paper will look at how local authorities integrate migration factors and migrants into local planning. Moreover, the session will discuss the role of migrants as city-makers and their contribution to development in communities of origin and destination. Through their talent and diversified contribution, migrants help cities become successful and competitive globally.

The UN Secretary-General's Report for the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2006, states: *"There is a need to build capacity and promote research to evaluate policy interventions in both countries of origin and destination and to facilitate the mainstreaming of migration considerations into strategic development frameworks."* This is more reflected in Goals 10 and 11 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which talk of *"reducing inequality within and among countries"* and *"make cities and human settlements safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable"* respectively.

Migration has become a major force shaping international reality. Migration is a powerful force of social change and cultural interaction in implicated countries. It provides migrants themselves with significant opportunities to progress. It is also a factor that has diverse developmental effects on both the home and host countries. The international community has recognized these facts in its deliberations on migration and has accepted the need to establish a more coherent political response to the phenomenon.

Cities with good strategies of inclusion attract better skilled migrants, innovators, investors, students, returnees and Diasporas, and thus benefit from their investment in migrant-inclusion policies. Talent mobility of young migrants in particular could also be addressed with a focus on their contribution to cities and the factors that can hinder such contributions. We will during this session showcase best practices for migrant-inclusive local planning and will also analyse challenges faced by local authorities in fully harnessing the economic potential of migrants' contribution and will furthermore discuss the role of Diasporas in local economic development in both countries of destination and origin.

Key words: Migrants, Integration, Local Agenda, Issues, Opportunities and Partnerships.

The Collins English Dictionary defines a migrant as *“a person or animal who moves from one region, place or country to another”*.

By the end of my paper, we should have tried to answer the following questions:

- How are migrants shaping the image of cities and how could cities best take advantage of what migrants bring with them?
- How are local authorities shaping the public perception of migrants? Do they promote their cities as being diverse and inclusive?
- What are the best practices for integrating migrants and their needs into local planning? What are the potential consequences of not including migrants in the process?
- How does a migrant's well-being affect his or her ability to contribute to a city's development?
- How do cities benefit from Diasporas' role in bridging origin and destination cities and promoting the socioeconomic development of both?

ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The framework linking migration, urban governance and policy planning is a complex one. For this reason, the present paper, rather than being exhaustive, aims to provide an overview of the main challenges and opportunities – and importance of linking migration-related policies and initiatives with urban and local governance. It draws on the experience of IOM and the concepts developed in the contexts of the 2015 World Migration Report, which covers the theme of the migrants and cities and will fit into the discussions of the conference on Migrants and Cities.

More specially, the paper presents IOM’s understandings of migrants as a complex issue that affects and is affected by both positively and negatively, a vast array of policy areas at the local level. Therefore, linking migration with urban policies requires not only the recognition of the complexities inherent to migrants, but also coordination between multiple stakeholders, including migrants themselves, and at all levels ranging from the local to the international level.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MIGRANTS SITUATION IN CAMEROON AND THE CENTRAL AFRICAN SUB REGION

The preamble of Cameroon’s constitution states that *“every person shall have the right to settle in any place and to move about freely, subject to the statutory provisions concerning public law and order, security and tranquility.”* In that spirit, the Republic of Cameroon signed the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, without reservation, its 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

In July 2005, Cameroon adopted a Law Defining the Legal Framework for Refugee Protection and the relevant decree followed in November 2011. The law applies the refugee definitions of both Conventions and prohibits *“refoulement”* of refugees *“for*

reasons other than national security and public order, pursuant to a lawful decision, and with 72-hour notice to United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)" (World Refugee Survey 2009). Article 7 of the law states that *"no person shall be turned back at the border ... to return to a territory where that person's life, bodily integrity or freedom would be threatened."* There have been some cases of **"refoulement"** but there has not been systematic governmental harassment or serious physical risk (World Refugee Survey 2009).

In Cameroon refugees participate in the management of their host villages, but not to the same extent as nationals. For example, refugees participate in local planning activities through village water or health committees, and may even lead the committees, but the role of village chief is filled by a Cameroonian. Villages may also have a person who represents the refugees and works closely with the chief.

Recently, in Cameroon, Boko Haram disrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in northern Cameroon since early 2014, committing crimes under international law and human rights abuses, including willful killings, attacks directed against civilian objects, misappropriation, looting and abductions. In addition, about 81,000 people have been forced to flee from their homes. The Cameroon government increased its security presence to counter these growing attacks.

Statistics of immigrants from the Emigration-Immigration Police Station Bamenda in the North West regional delegation for National Security of Cameroon, where my council is situated, from January to September 2015, indicate that a total of 417 (four hundred and seventeen) people immigrated into the region. These immigrants came from almost all countries in the world and for various reasons such as business and tourism.

Innovative business ideas can boost development, promote economic growth and create jobs. That's why we support Cameroonians who live in Germany, have good

business ideas and want to launch their own businesses in Cameroon. These entrepreneurs actively transfer knowledge and create new perspectives – for themselves, for Cameroon, and for Germany. We provide assistance before, during and after the start-up phase through various cost-free services both in Germany and in Cameroon.

In all the affected countries in the Central African Sub region, the ongoing migration crisis centering on both the Middle East and Europe is many things. But it is also a public opinion management challenge of impressive girth and height. This is one of those instances where wise local leaders will not make policy first and only thereafter ask communication advisers to go and ‘sell’ it. They will have their sharpest communication/political advisers in the room while making policy, especially as the situation evolves in ever more dramatic directions. And those advisers will, one hopes, be monitoring public opinion, consulting panels of voters, talking to deeply experienced players in the political system... all as vital inputs into the policy process.

In as much as migration has important roles to play like being the original and oldest poverty reduction strategy through creating new innovative and entrepreneurial strategies and helping to unlock untapped human potentials in both the host and migrant populations, the host should be able to devise ingenious and ‘harmless’ survival strategies in order to protect themselves from being assimilated, engulfed or even annihilated due to their blind hospitality to strangers or guests.

Since the beginning of 2014, Northeast Nigeria has witnessed an increase in Boko Haram’s violent attacks, leading to widespread displacement in the country with a spillover effect in neighboring countries including Niger, Chad, and of course Cameroon.

The fact that international migration, when it is legally done offers tremendous direct effects on the growth of the state economy, empowerment (poverty reduction) of poor households and families through remittances and return of migrants with skills acquired from abroad. The issue as such, still requires much attention from the government and its development partners to put in place policies that will overturn the tides. Consequently, the formulation of these policies necessitates the involvement of the youths and the consideration of their voices. This was therefore the rationale for the national workshop on the phenomenon on youth unemployment and migration in the 21st century, that advocated for the effective and active youth participation towards policy reforms on unemployment and migration in Cameroon.

The focus of Cameroonians on international migration as the only way to a better future has been reflected in many conversations with informants: 'everyone wants to leave – if not legally, then illegally'. 'Those who are still here are the ones who haven't made it yet.' This is what is called the 'Bush faller syndrome" pushing most Cameroonians to long for international migration.

Among the reasons for migration are unemployment, poverty, the search for educational opportunities, business, adventure, religious travel and family reunion. Although many migrants may be motivated mainly by economic incentives, we have to assume a mix of different and changing reasons. The majority of migrants are young men and women, mostly from the middle or lower strata of Cameroonian society.

Migration as a cross cutting issue in local planning

More than half of the world (54% in 2014) lives in cities, and this share is expected to increase by 66% by 2050. Almost all the growth in the world population over the next

few decades – another 3.7 billion is expected to take place in urban centers in low and middle income countries where poverty reduction is slow and large deficits in the provision of basic services remain. Strong population growth in cities puts enormous pressure on infrastructure, the environment and the social fabric of urban areas.

Urbanization is therefore one of the great challenges currently being faced by societies around the globe, and its rapid development makes it important to define effective urban planning strategies that also address the other major issues of the day, such as environmental change, poverty and inequalities.

Among the drivers of rapid urbanization, human mobility is one of the most important, together with other demographic trends such as fertility and longevity. Indeed, for many cities, migration has become a more important determinant of population growth and age structures than fertility and mortality.

Migration can lead to cultural changes, shifting gender roles and family structures, and often entails different degrees of vulnerability and risk of abuse for men and women.

Gender analysis is important for understanding the different conditions, motivations for and impacts of migration of men and women, boys and girls. Male and female migrants can show different attitudes, pursue different strategies and enhance the development potential of migration in different ways.

Migration is therefore an essential parameter to be taken into account in urban planning. This is true not only for the challenges related to demographic densification, but also in terms of the Socioeconomic dynamics that characterize migration. Migrants bring with them networks and values, which, if properly considered, may be turned into valuable opportunities for both host and home territories. In addition to contributing to demographic trends, through their mobility,

migrants also contribute to connecting cities to other cities and territories, in several ways:

- Migrants often stay connected with their home territories, where they keep in touch with their family and friends. This gives rise to a multitude of dynamics across territories which go beyond the transfer of remittances.
- Migrants sometimes return temporarily or permanently and may build on the networks and capacities developed during their stay in the host territory to increase the chances of their return being successful.
- Migrants and migrant associations may contribute to the development of home and host territories, both directly (i.e. through individual or collective initiatives, or trade) and indirectly (through transnational and trans local networks).
- The establishment of migrant communities in specific cities may lead to the creation or consolidation of migration corridors, which in turn may connect host and home territories through trade relations and social and cultural networks, sometimes paving the way for decentralized cooperation.
- People may migrate to different territories in their lifetime, further building and consolidating transnational and trans local networks between different cities and territories.

These dynamics lead to the strengthening of extensive transnational, trans local and multidirectional networks among cities which may constitute great opportunities for development planning in urban centers if they are well understood and taken into account. For this reason, the relationship between migration and urban planning should be considered not only in view of the challenges that migration and quick demographic growth create with respect to infrastructure, housing, provision of services and availability of opportunities, but also in terms of the opportunities that

migration may provide if it is well managed and integrated into all levels of policymaking. Indeed, for migration to be integrated into local and urban planning, it must be recognized as a cross-cutting phenomenon, affecting and being affected by most national and local sectoral policies. This also implies recognizing that most territories are at the same time home, host and transit territories and therefore shift from a discourse centered on in-migration and outmigration (or on the oversimplification of considering Southern territories as home countries and Northern territories as host countries) towards the recognition of migration as a transnational or trans local and multidirectional dynamic. The fact that R. Skeldon, *“Global migration: demographic aspects and its relevance for development”*, UNDESA Technical Paper No. 2013/6 (New York, 2013). Close to half of global urban-dwellers reside in a multitude of relatively small settlements of less than 500,000 inhabitants gives indications of the density of the transnational and trans local networks potentially created by migrants across cities.

This highlights the importance of sound migration management policies as a prerequisite for inclusive urban development. In this context, the role of local authorities, and more generally of local actors (including civil society and the private sector), is increasingly recognized as key in linking migration with urban planning and development. As proximity actors, local authorities are the best informed about local realities and the most likely to integrate migration into local planning, while taking into account global challenges and opportunities and local particularities. Recent decentralization trends only add to the relevance of local actors as strategic partners in the definition and implementation of migration-related policies and initiatives with a global impact on population dynamics.

Migration as a key element in urban planning

In recent decades, particularly in the global South, poorly managed urban migration has often resulted in the development of informal or ineffective solutions to address basic needs, and the exclusion of migrants from access to land, housing and job markets and health and education services. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) estimates that one out of every three people in cities of the developing world lives in a slum comprising migrants and other urban poor.

At the same time, moving to cities can greatly enhance people's well-being: it can mean escaping the impact of hazards on fragile rural livelihoods and accessing diverse employment opportunities and better health and education. While the promotion of access to basic services and opportunities in rural areas remains a key challenge, well-managed migration towards cities has the potential to increase the well-being of the people who move as well as those who stay behind, while contributing to positive socioeconomic dynamics in the urban areas of destination.

Promoting the socioeconomic inclusion of migrants in their host territory, through the provision of services and opportunities, ensures their integration into local life. This includes participation in the economy (in the labour market and also in support of the fiscal and welfare systems), as well as in the local culture and society as a whole. In this sense, a rights-based approach to migration, supported by the delivery of relevant services, is one of the keys to integration, and recent research highlights strong correlations between effective provision of migrant-inclusive services and urban development in the major emerging economies.

In pursuing more inclusive urban governance, cities today link local urban social cohesion to economic growth and global competitiveness.

The participation and inclusion of migrants in their host territories are an essential part of building stable, open and vibrant communities that assure the socioeconomic future of a country. It is also a key element enabling migrants to participate directly or indirectly in the development of their home territory.

Local authorities must be committed to including migration at all levels of urban policies in order for the role of migrants as local actors to be strengthened. Diverse policies, such as those aiming to fight xenophobia, to provide migrants with access to relevant information and services, to facilitate migrants' access to the labour market, and to foster migrant participation in the social and political life of the territories concerned, are key in promoting social inclusion and cohesion.

Local policymaking must address the complex nature of migration and not limit its scope to remittances or in-migration and outmigration; its vision should also encompass transnational dynamics. Local authorities are in a position to be involved throughout the migration cycle, from the provision of information to prospective migrants to the effective (re)integration of newcomers or returnees, the inclusion of migrants within the socioeconomic life of their territory and the promotion of transnational and trans local linkages. As service providers responsible for decentralized institutions, local authorities are indeed at the forefront of establishing enabling public policies that are beneficial to migrants and the population at large.

Urban management and humanitarian crises

Linking migration management and urban and local planning is also important in the context of humanitarian crises.

A gender analysis of migration looks beyond simple differences in migration behaviour between men and women – such as the likelihood and type of migration – and examines the inequalities underlying those differences. It looks at how these are shaped by the social and cultural contexts of the individual, and the influence that membership of social groups and economic and political conditions can have on decisions about migration.

Population movements towards, within and between urban areas are an increasingly common feature of humanitarian crises. On the one hand, in times of crisis cities often offer relative safety and protected access to resources and opportunities – and therefore represent an obvious destination for populations moving from affected areas. On the other hand, as conflicts and disasters become increasingly urban, migration crises unfold more and more in urban settings. In addition, most of those on the move (economic migrants, students, displaced persons and refugees) live in urban areas and their special needs and vulnerabilities in times of crisis should be specifically addressed in urban emergency planning and responses.

For those responsible for managing risks and emergencies, the urban landscape poses a different set of challenges: diversity of affected populations, concentration of people and assets, need for coordination among various actors, and continuity among crisis-induced and pre-existing conditions of vulnerability. All of these factors require the relevant actors to rethink and redesign existing preparedness and response models.

Massive, sudden population movements put pressure on cities and challenge local actors, including city authorities, service providers, private companies and host communities. If inadequately managed, they can have long-term effects on people's well-being and security, including by reducing access to employment, public health, education, safe water and sanitation – which in turn can fuel tensions within host communities. City authorities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a fundamental role in reducing potential vulnerabilities of forced migrants in cities. Inclusive access to basic services and opportunities is key to successfully addressing displacement, promoting the integration of newcomers into the urban fabric and creating more sustainable human settlements.

There is an inverse relationship between internal migration and urban health-care systems. Firstly, by its quality and capacities, the availability of public health care in urban areas is an element that causes migratory dynamics. The strong presence of health-care services, information, education and communication, good hygiene, compliance with preventative measures and finally the geographic area and cost of accessibility to public health institutions and medicines are described as elements that trigger migratory flows to urban health systems.

Migrants, cities and governance – the importance of partnerships

Despite the progress made in some cities, city and municipal governments do not give priority to including migration in local planning. Inclusive local plans, policies and measures, in particular at the city level, are critical in defining migrants' well-being and resilience. Effective national and international instruments and institutions also need to be put in place.

Managing migration has become a priority for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) policy making. This change of thinking about migration is drawn from the understanding that migration, if well managed, may generate important gains for both the host countries and the migrants' countries of origin. Indeed, there is by now a growing consensus in policy circles that the management of the accelerating globalization process – including effective domestic adjustment posed by it – necessitates a coherent approach to policymaking as well as increased co-operation with global partners.

Local initiatives developed by local authorities, civil society, diaspora associations or through partnerships among these actors are, however, flourishing in several cities and territories in the global South and the global North, with various levels of impact. Some States have recognized the importance of the local level in the co-development framework since the 1990s, and the international community is increasingly active in engagement with local actors.

Indeed, as local actors are increasingly recognized in the international arena, great opportunities are being created for partnerships at all levels, from the local to the international level, both within States and across borders.

Such partnerships and interaction raise the important question of coordination and policy coherence. From this point of view, the integration of migration into sectoral policies and planning at the national level, together with the development of coordination mechanisms to ensure coherence between local and national policies, is important to establish sound local policies that reflect the specificities of each territory and the national and global challenges and opportunities related to migration.

Similarly, the diversity of the actors potentially involved in such partnerships raises the issue of ownership and participation. Territories – both in the global North and the global South – are increasingly recognizing the importance of these factors, and setting-up mechanisms that facilitate the adoption multi-stakeholder approaches. These approaches include the creation of formal or semi-formal institutions reflecting the position of all stakeholders, including migrant groups, both within the country and abroad.

In particular, considering migration as a transnational dynamic, and international migrants as stakeholders in local policies, also opens up opportunities in terms of decentralized cooperation mechanisms, which link local or regional territories across borders.

Moreover, the number of potential stakeholders is high, the possibilities for partnership are wide, and existing initiatives are diverse. It is therefore useful to set up dialogue structures that take stock of these dynamics to identify and discuss their strengths and weaknesses, to share good practices and lessons learned and to foster innovation in policymaking and partnership creation. This is being done in several international forums, such as the Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development, which held its first session in Barcelona in 2014, with a second one planned to take place in Quito in 2015. The 2015 Conference on Migrants and Cities will bring together relevant national and local actors to discuss for the first time in a global policy forum the complex dynamics of human mobility at city and local level and assess how risks can be managed and development opportunities maximized.

Local authorities and other actors should ensure the free, active and meaningful participation of migrants, refugees and IDPs in urban decision-making processes and urban and spatial development. For example, these groups should be included in

relevant national action plans and strategies, such as plans on the provision of public housing or national strategies to combat racism and xenophobia.

Freedom of speech and assembly, the right to information, consultation and participation in decision-making processes and the right to vote – to name a few – are also crucial to sustainable and inclusive urban development.

The challenges and difficulties faced by migrant women

Migration can often be contradictory in its outcomes. On the one hand, it may lead to significant gains for migrant women in their autonomy, income, levels of empowerment and education; on the other, it can also result in downward job mobility, “deskilling” and reorientation away from paid work and towards the domestic sphere, and in extreme cases, in physical abuse and exploitation. The Council of Europe report (2011) listed some of the following significant issues affecting migrant women’s integration especially into the labour market which are:- Limited Legal channels for migration; restriction on the independent right to migrate or to stay in the destination country; education, over qualification, lack of recognition of skills and qualifications and deskilling; gender-based discrimination and migrant women in the labour market; protection gaps, working conditions and vulnerabilities in the domestic service sector and finally the lack of support for migrant women’s ability to organise for their rights.

Conclusion

From the perspective of a mayor, we have overviewed the issues, challenges and opportunities related to linking migration with local and urban planning, as well as some of the main arguments in favour of effectively considering this link as fundamental to the development of urban centers around the globe. The main points discussed can be summarized as follows:

- Migration is one of the main features contributing to urban growth, and therefore needs to be readily incorporated into urban planning.
- Migration brings challenges as well as opportunities related to urban planning. Adequate resources and capacities to support the provision of services and opportunities are keys to accommodate rapid demographic growth. Furthermore, transnational and translocal linkages and the diversity brought by migration, if adequately managed and promoted, can benefit both home and host territories.
- To address the challenges and build on the opportunities related to migration at the local level, it is important to recognize that migration is a cross-cutting issue, affecting and being affected by, both positively and negatively, most national and local sectoral policies.
- The same applies in the context of humanitarian crises. City authorities, the private sector and NGOs play a fundamental role in reducing potential vulnerabilities of forced migrants in cities. Inclusive access to basic services and opportunities is key to successfully address displacement, promote integration of newcomers in the urban fabric and create more sustainable human settlements.
- Local actors are therefore increasingly recognized as key in addressing both the challenges and opportunities in the link between migration, urbanization and the related global aspects. They have a major role in migration governance.

- Migration governance implies establishing strategic partnerships among all actors (from institutions to civil society and the private sector) at the local, national and international levels, from various sectors, and within and across borders. Such partnerships should include the participation of migrants and migrant groups.
- Owing to the diversity of the actors involved and of existing initiatives, it is important to establish platforms for dialogue, such as the International Dialogue on Migration, to build on good practices and lessons learned and to promote policy coherence at all levels.

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