IMRF Roundtable 2
Local and Regional Governments' Progress & Recommendations

This paper has been prepared by the Mayors Mechanism of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) for the 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). It illustrates the contributions and progress of Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) toward the implementation objectives of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) under discussion at Roundtable 2 of the IMRF. It proposes recommendations to national governments and international organizations for joint action with LRGs to advance future progress.

1. WHY CITIES ARE IMPORTANT FOR BETTER MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) are on the frontlines of managing migration and are therefore key allies in implementing the GCM. It is through the partnership with LRGs that national governments can root policies in local realities and make migration governance more effective.[i]

Today 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is estimated to rise to 68% by 2050.[ii] Migration is mostly an urban phenomenon and local governments are at the forefront of managing the impact and ceasing the benefits of migration.

As the level of government closest to the population, LRGs often take pragmatic action and find new solutions to emerging issues.[iii] For example, cities are first responders to the mobility challenges generated by conflicts, climate change, economic instability, and have been most impacted by the pandemic, with 95% of COVID-19 cases reported in urban areas. They have spearheaded innovative and people-centered actions to ensure inclusive pandemic recovery and advance GCM implementation.

While LRGs are increasingly asked to do more with less, they face difficulties to access finance and have limited legal mandates.[iv] For example, only 4% of the 500 largest cities in developing countries are deemed

creditworthy in international financial markets[v] and according to the World Bank, local governments have also lost up to 25% of their annual revenues in 2021 due in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic.[vi] Yet they must respond with pragmatic solutions to increasing demands to reach all their residents, regardless of their migration status.

LRGs are at the core of sustainable development efforts at the local level and are central partners in advancing all objectives of the GCM. This paper illustrates how LRGs have contributed to the GCM objectives within Cluster 1 and formulates recommendations for the future — so that local action turns into global success.

2. CITIES PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL COMPACT: CLUSTER 2

This section highlights 6 areas in which LRGs contribute to GCM implementation within cluster 2. It is not exhaustive of all LRG action under cluster 2, but rather serves to illustrate and showcase the potential of LRGs to accelerate GCM implementation.

1. **LRGs provide local identity documents for all residents to access public services without discrimination.** This helps not only to overcome widespread vulnerabilities, but also to create life changing opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the importance of documentation to implement public health measures and provide access to services vital for individuals and for public health. Mobility restrictions also highlighted gaps in existing legal frameworks, for instance when thousands of migrants found themselves stuck in transit with expired documentation without the possibility to recover outstanding salaries or being forcibly returned without appropriate sanitary and health protection measures (objective 4 a, c, f, g).

2. **LRGs assist in saving lives and support the identification of those having died or gone missing.** LRGs organize reception and provide immediate humanitarian assistance, where oftentimes national or international actors are slow in their response. They are able to swiftly set up humanitarian assistance and are able to conduct search and rescue operations, including through city-to-city partnerships and info sharing (objective 8 a, c).

3. **LRGs help fight trafficking** by providing assistance to trafficked persons, supporting rehabilitation and re/integration through survivors' support centers and services including health, legal and socio-economic support. The conflict in Ukraine has generated extensive vulnerabilities to trafficking over the past weeks, as criminal networks have infiltrated humanitarian operations to prey on displaced persons trying to leave the country in search for safety. LRGs have identified and reported suspects and are putting in place safeguard mechanisms to avoid infiltrations of criminals in evacuations (objective 10 b, e, h, i, j).

4. **LRGs help ensure humanitarian and human rights-based border management practices at the local level**, protecting the lives of third country nationals in local communities when conflict or environmental crises hit, in cases requiring search and rescue operations and in all other necessary circumstances, including the activation of child protection services for unaccompanied minors (objective 11 e).

5. **LRGs provide locally-led alternatives to migration detention and non-custodial solutions** in cooperation with civil society organizations to assist and protect migrants in vulnerable situations, particularly unaccompanied minors on the move (objective 13 f, h).

6. **LRGs support the dignified return and reintegration** of migrants through economic empowerment programs, inclusion and social cohesion policies that help make returns sustainable and through the development of local policies on return and reintegration (objective 21 b, c, h, i).

Examples of practices are available in the Annex.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

To advance the implementation of GCM Objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 21, national governments and local governments must work together in partnership. This section presents recommendations and ideas for action that meet the whole-of-government principle of the GCM and help build a more cohesive and effective governance of migration for the benefit of all.

CROSS CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Forge improved coordination with LRGs at all levels to help achieve better, more efficient, and people-centred migration policies.** Such coordination mechanisms make it easier for national governments and cities to manage migration together, especially when faced with a crisis like COVID-19. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, LRGs call on national governments for increased, better and sustained coordination and communication structures. This can bring benefits not only to local communities but also at national level, contributing to achieve the GCM objectives and the SDGs.

RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO CLUSTER 2

2. **Review legal mandates to decentralize competences to LRGs in areas that can lead to more effective implementation of the GCM objectives.** This can help overcome existing obstacles in key policy areas related to GCM implementation across all objectives, finding more effective solutions, eliminating inconsistencies, and ultimately improving the local-national governance of migration.

3. **Increase municipal access to international funding.** As LRGs are asked to do more with less, there is a need for increased LRG access to international funding. Innovative funding schemes, including the MMC led Global Cities Fund for Inclusive Pandemic Response and the important precedent of the UN Migration Multi Partner Trust Fund, which includes city-led organizations as part of its Steering Committee are key examples to be replicated and scaled.

1. **Promote programs that provide local identity documents and residence status to guarantee non-discriminatory access to services to all residents modeling the successful examples set by LRGs.** This helps ensure safe access to services for all residents, combats discrimination, promotes public health and social cohesion and is in line with humanitarian and refugee law.

2. **Ensure that humanitarian, life-saving efforts are not criminalized as facilitation of irregular migration or** smuggling of migrants-related crimes. This is paramount to guarantee access to humanitarian assistance regardless of status as well as to protect migrants in vulnerable situations.

3. **Strengthen LRGs capacity to provide alternatives to migration detention in particular non-custodial alternatives for unaccompanied migrant children, facilitating access to basic services at local level, including shelter, health and education.**

ANNEX

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

City	Description	GCM objectives
Rzeszow, Poland	Since the arrival of refugees from Ukraine, the city of Rzeszow, Poland has organized reception capacities. With volunteer support, the city created a help center at the railway station, organized collections for donations, set up a call center to answer questions from people arriving from Ukraine and created a bilingual brochure with essential information for newcomers.	8
Lampedusa, Italy – The Lampedusa Charter	Cities located on land and sea borders often grapple with the deadly effects of unsafe and unmanaged human flows. For 10 years now, local authorities in Lampedusa, Italy, commemorate the shipwreck of 3 October 2011 when more than 360 people lost their lives and advocates for safer migration routes – principles that are echoed in the Lampedusa Charter. Following the call of Salvatore Martello, Mayor of Lampedusa and Linosa, the Mayor leads the consultative effort – together with ULCG – to draft the Lampedusa Charter, which aims to provide a manifesto to restore the dignity of people on the move and reaffirming the role of cities.	8, 11
Changunarayan, Nepal – Mayor Entrepreneur	Changunarayan municipality has been actively engaged in the COVID-19 response to support returnee migrants and the receiving community through the Mayor Entrepreneurship Development Program, which creates livelihood and economic uplifting conditions for returnees, also	21

ship Development Program	providing interest-free loans to support entrepreneurship. The program is implemented in partnership with IOM and financial institutions.	
Habru District, Ethiopia – Reintegration Good Practices	The Habru District, like many other communities in the Ethiopia, is subject to chronic and transitory food insecurity, also due to environmental degradation. The community project Creating Livelihoods through Environmental Rehabilitation in Ethiopia mobilized returnees and community members to tackle several challenges experienced by returnees in Ethiopia.	21 (2, 16, 17)
LRGs from all over the world	Local authorities participate in reporting missing migrants and migrant deaths to the Missing Migrants Project (MMP), which counts migrant fatalities at the external borders of a state or during the process of migrating towards an international destination. Collecting data on migrant deaths and disappearances remains challenging due to the lack of systematic reporting on the deaths of non-nationals in transit. MMP collects data through official sources including the coast guard and local authorities, nongovernmental civil society organizations, focal points in IOM country offices and media monitoring. Media sources may have an incomplete or incorrect coverage, which poses an additional challenge on routes with no public official records.	
New York City, USA	**New York City** introduced free municipal identity documents (IDNYC)for all residents, regardless or migration status, in 2015. The IDNYC provides access to a wide variety of services and programs offered by the City and benefits all residents, including the most vulnerable. The program has been critical to empower the city government to respond rapidly and inclusively during COVID-19 ensuring non-discriminatory access to vaccination and health services to its resident population, expanding universal health care to all residents regardless of status, income level or insurance.	4

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

C40-MMC, Global Mayors Action Agenda on Climate and Migration, November 2021.
IOM, IOM-UNDP Seed Funding to Advance Joint Programming for the Response and Recovery from COVID-19 and the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
IOM-UN Habitat, Integrating Migration into Urban Development Interventions, 2021.
Mayors Mechanism, GFMD Mayors Mechanism Resources, January 2021.
MMC, Brief: Municipal Finance for Migrants and Refugees: The State of Play, April 2022.
MMC, Global Cities Fund for Inclusive Pandemic Response Progress Report, December 2021.
MMC, Climate Migration in Mexican and Central American Cities, February 2022.
UCLG, Migration and Displacement in Context of Crises: What are LRGs doing to save and protect lives? April 2022.

SOURCES

i UN Secretary General Report on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, A/76/642, paragraph 16.

ii UN DESA, World Urbanisation Prospects, 2018 edition.

iii Countries including Madagascar, Morocco, Nepal and Tonga have mainstreamed migration into their development or sector plans at national and local levels, or developed specific migration and development approaches, policies or mechanisms. IMRF 2022, Background Note for Roundtable 1.

iv The mandate, competencies, and prerogatives of local and regional governments (LRGs) on migration vary across countries based on legislation and governance systems of each Member State.

v MMC, Brief: Municipal Finance for Migrants and Refugees: The State of Play, 28 Aril 2022. https://www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org/news/muni-fi-report

vi UN Habitat, UNCDF, UCLG-Africa, UNECA COVID-19 in African cities: Impacts, Responses and Policies, 2021. https://unhabitat.org/covid-19-in-africa-cities-impacts-responses-and-policies.