

# IMRF Roundtable 3

## 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 3 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.<sup>i</sup>

Today 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is estimated to rise to 68% by 2050.<sup>ii</sup> 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.<sup>iii</sup> 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.<sup>iv</sup> For example, only 4% of the 500 largest cities in developing countries are deemed

creditworthy in international financial markets<sup>v</sup> 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.<sup>vi</sup> 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 3

This section highlights 3 areas in which LRGs have spearheaded GCM implementation within cluster 3. It is not exhaustive of all LRG action under cluster 3, but rather serves to illustrate and showcase the potential of LRGs to accelerate GCM implementation.

- 1. LRGs play a key role in providing safe access to services to all residents regardless of status, so that all residents' human rights are protected, and communities can prosper.** LRGs provide access to a broad range of services, including housing, health and integration programs, one-stop information points, language and vocational training, skilling and job placement services, to migrants and displaced populations regardless of migratory status. The management of the health crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the key role of LRGs in providing safe access to services as well as setting up specific awareness raising campaigns in multiple languages. COVID-19 highlighted on the one hand the central role of migrants in providing essential services across many sectors, including health, and on the other the widespread barriers for migrant populations to access basic services, including vaccines (objective 15 a, c, e, f).  
**residents to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of the community.** LRGs are at the forefront of promoting diversity and empowering migrant and host communities through programs such as intercultural dialogue, sharing stories, mentorship programs, civic integration courses, the establishment of community centres and local consular services. LRGs also create opportunities for migrants' communities to participate in local policy design, implementation and review (objectives 14 e, f and 16 a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h).
- 2. LRGs play a pivotal role in creating inclusive societies and create opportunities for all**
- 3. LRGs are uniquely placed to create partnerships with diaspora to support local development and have extensive knowledge and data on diaspora communities residing in their territories,** which is key to make policies more effective at all levels of government. Connections between diaspora communities and their countries of origin often happens at local level. LRGs mobilize diaspora communities in their cities so that migrants from their countries of

origin can be effectively reached. Ukrainian diaspora in many cities has been mobilized by the local administrations to join support efforts for new arriving Ukrainian refugees. LRGs are also key to support diaspora working with local

communities in countries of origin to stimulate local community development. (objective 19 a, b, c, d).

Examples of practices are available in the Annex.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

To advance the implementation of GCM Objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, national and local governments must work in partnership. This section presents recommendations and ideas for action that meet the whole-of-government principle of the GCM and help to 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.
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.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO CLUSTER 3

1. **Support LRGs to guarantee universal access to basic services, including**

**universal access to health.** This is key to deliver on the GCM guiding principles on

human rights and people-centred approaches and to align local and national policies and interventions.

2. **Introduce firewalls between service provision and immigration enforcement.** This can ensure that human rights of migrants are guaranteed and access to basic services is not compromised by exchanges of data and information between service providers and immigration authorities, which can exacerbate the vulnerability of undocumented migrants.
3. **Promote the inclusion of migrant health needs into national and local health care**

**policies and plans in cooperation with LRGs.** This can facilitate affordable and non-discriminatory access to health services, reduce existing barriers, and improve culturally sensitive delivery, promoting the physical and mental health of migrants and receiving communities.

4. **Partner with LRGs on research and evidence-based policies on the impact of non-financial contributions of migrants and diasporas to sustainable development,** such as knowledge and skills transfer, social and civic engagement, and cultural exchange.

## ANNEX

### EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

City	Description	GCM objectives
Beirut, Lebanon – Municipal Mobile Health Clinic	Beirut has set in place the city’s first <a href="#">Municipal Mobile Health Clinic</a> , which provides free and non-discriminatory Covid-19 testing and other basic medical services to any individual who is unable to access these services, including migrants and refugees in marginalized neighborhoods.	15
Grenoble, France - Local Citizenship & Migration In partnership with Barcelona, Valencia, Spain, Sousse, Tunisia, Seine Saint Denis, France	The city of Grenoble hosted a peer-learning event on <a href="#">Local Citizenship and Migration: Fostering the right to the city for all</a> with Barcelona, Sousse, Seine Saint Denis, Valencia in March 2021. This was organized within a <a href="#">Peer Learning Program</a> , which allows the transfer of knowledge, skills and experience among municipalities. Cities exchanged on: Guiding vision on migrants’ inclusion (Grenoble, France); Fostering institutional innovation to accredit migrants’ residency (Barcelona; Spain); Reinforcing migrant participation and civic engagement (Sousse, Tunisia); Highlighting the wealth that migration brings (Seine Saint Denis, France); Addressing discrimination while fostering conviviality (Valencia, Spain).	16 (17)
LRGs in various European countries – Include-EU	LRGs from Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia and Spain including the city of Tirbug, the region of Crete, and the Region of Tuscany, collaborate in <a href="#">includeu-eu</a> to build more inclusive and cohesive European societies, an initiative to share knowledge and experience on	15, 16

	integration programs, pilot new initiatives, and strengthen cooperation and partnerships between local and regional authorities.	
<b>Braga, Portugal</b>	LRGs mobilize diaspora in their cities to help integrate migrants from their countries of origin, e.g. Braga, Portugal connects to the Ukrainian diaspora to help integrate new arriving Ukrainian refugees.	16, 19
<b>Milan, Italy with national government institutions</b>	The city of <b>Milan, Italy</b> , established a partnership with the Ministry of the Interior to support family reunification programs. Over 10,000 people per year awaiting the arrival of family member/s from abroad will have a dedicated first point of contact to ensure newcomers are welcomed into the city, informed about and connected to available services.	15, 16 (7, 17)
<b>Valencia, Spain</b>	<b>Valencia, Spain</b> , developed a local action plan to address discrimination in the city while fostering conviviality aimed at reinforcing social programs through institutions that protect human rights, mainstreaming inequality and intersectionality in social agendas, offering legal advice and access to justice.	16 (4, 7, 17)
<b>Sousse, Tunisia</b>	<b>Sousse, Tunisia</b> , partnered with civil society on the 'Solidarity without borders initiatives', which organizes events to address prejudice toward migration and builds the capacity of local actors to work on migration issues through participatory methods.	16 (17)
<b>The State of Puebla, Mexico</b>	<b>The State of Puebla, Mexico</b> , established local consular services for Poblano migrants living in Los Angeles, New York City and New Jersey. Services for returned migrants include financial support, education and employment opportunities, as well as health services. Services for Poblanos living abroad include legal counselling, help desk for visa processing, family counselling services including on detained and missing migrants.	14

## 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

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

<sup>ii</sup> UN DESA, World Urbanisation Prospects, 2018 edition.

<sup>iii</sup> 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.

<sup>iv</sup> 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.

<sup>v</sup> MMC, Brief: Municipal Finance for Migrants and Refugees: The State of Play, 28 April 2022.

<https://www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org/news/muni-fi-report>

<sup>vi</sup> UN Habitat, UNCDF, UCLG-Africa, UNECA COVID-19 in African cities: Impacts, Responses and Policies, 2020. <https://unhabitat.org/covid-19-in-africa-cities-impacts-responses-and-policies>.