

# IMRF Roundtable 4

## 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 4 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 4

This section highlights 4 key areas in which LRGs contribute to GCM implementation within cluster 4. It is not exhaustive of all LRG action under cluster 4, but rather serves to illustrate and showcase the potential of LRGs to accelerate GCM implementation.

1. **LRGs are actively seeking out and utilizing data to improve evidence-based local migration action.** LRGs are uniquely positioned to collect specific sets of migration-related data and are spearheading data collection at local level to help identify gaps, set priorities, include migrants’ voices in policy making, and change the course of action to align local policies with the GCM and the Sustainable Development Goals across many areas of intervention (objective 1 c, d, h, j, k).
2. **LRGs address and reduce vulnerabilities by safeguarding migrants’ human rights,** with particular attention to the rights of children through actions aimed at ensuring legal aid and information, guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children, non-discriminatory access to education and health care, and access to public safety resources including safe zones for reporting crimes and mechanisms to protect migrants from exploitation and abuse (objective 7 b, c, e, f, h, i, j, k).
3. **LRGs shape a more balanced narrative on migration** through campaigns based on evidence that showcase the positive contribution of migrants and migration to society, countering public discourse that stigmatizes migrants and generates discrimination. Through their knowledge of local communities, LRGs are best positioned to engage in public debates constructively, addressing concerns and highlighting meaningful, positive realities (objective 17 b, d, e, f, g).
4. **LRGs are proactive actors that engage in innovative partnerships to strengthen international cooperation on migration.** As LRGs face diverse realities of migration with limited mandates and scarce resources, they often proactively seek partnerships with civil society, the private sector, different levels of government, international organizations and with their peers to fill the gap between

mandate and responsibility. This has been critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in managing sudden, significant arrivals of migrants and refugees, such as the large scale displacement resulting from the current Ukraine conflict. At the international level,

LRGs increasingly engage in partnerships with city networks, Member States and UN agencies, where they inspire with local expertise and share examples for scaling and replication (objective 23).

Examples of practices are available in the Annex.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

To advance the implementation of GCM Objectives 1, 3, 7, 17, 23, 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 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 4

1. **Invest in data gathering and assessment methods in partnership with LRGs.** This can strengthen data gathering and data disaggregation, improve evidence-based policy making, planning and programming, increasing the effectiveness of interventions across multiple sectors related to migration.
2. **Partner with LRGs in designing global platforms that help promote balanced and evidence-based narratives on migration.** This can help generate a strong

movement capable to influence public discourse on migration, countering waves of misinformation that contribute to partial and distorted public perceptions of migration.

3. **Directly partner with LRGs: such partnerships bring new perspectives to international fora.** This can help design the policies of the future in closer coordination, break new ground and promote a better governance of migration.

## ANNEX

### EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

City	Description	GCM objectives
Mexico City, Mexico and Santiago de Chile, Chile	A joint <a href="#">initiative</a> to strengthen city services in both cities and cater to the needs of populations on the move that face increasing vulnerabilities. This project creates public-private partnerships and city-to-city networks on integration practices. The project aims to improve access to decent work and sustainable livelihoods for migrant workers and refugees by ensuring their employability. Supporting cities work in partnership with multiple levels of government and international organizations, this innovative partnership is funded by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.	7, 23 (6, 15, 16, 18)
Sao Paulo, Brazil, and about 30 other LRGs	LRGs have started to use the <a href="#">Local Migration Governance Indicators</a> (Local MGI) developed by IOM to support evidence-based migration management by taking stock of policies, laws, and structures in place to manage migration, with the purpose of identifying gaps, establishing priorities, and generating positive policy changes that enhance the overall wellbeing of migrants and the societies where they live. LRGs have also used the Local MGI to track progress on their commitments. As a result, some LRGs are adopting new policies rooted in the GCM. For instance, the Mayor of Sao Paulo, Brazil adopted a Municipal Plan for Immigrant Policies (2021-2024) with commitment to take 80 actions that directly align with the GCM, GCR, and SDGs.	1 (+) Extensive coverage of GCM objectives

<p><b>Barranquilla, Medellín, and Mexico City in Latin America and Arua, Kampala, and Nairobi in East Africa</b></p>	<p>Six LRGs have worked with the Mayors Migration Council and Mixed Migration Centre to collect and analyze data on urban mixed migration through the 4Mi Cities project. The project works to understand the needs and preferences of migrants and refugees in each city through individual surveys, of which over 300 were administered in each city. Based on the resulting data, these LRGs have committed to taking specific actions to improve the socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees, e.g., through promoting their active civic participation, improving their access to services, or working directly with migrant and refugee-led organizations to improve overall response efforts.</p>	<p>1, 7 (15, 16 +) Extensive coverage of GCM objectives</p>
<p><b>Dublin, Ireland, Johannesburg, South Africa, Mechelen, Belgium, Montreal, Canada, Sao Paulo, Brazil</b></p>	<p>These five cities have joined <a href="#">It Takes a Community</a> a social media campaign that promotes positive stories of migration and social inclusion gathered in communities across the world. Initiated by the <a href="#">GFMD Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration</a>, this campaign is a multi-stakeholder initiative of the government of Canada, the government of Ecuador and the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, implemented with national governments, local governments, businesses, civil society and international organizations. The campaign highlights how migrants and their fellow community members are working together to make the places where they live and work more productive, innovative, and welcoming.</p>	<p>17, 23</p>
<p><b>Barcelona, Spain</b></p>	<p><b>Barcelona’s Observatory of Discrimination</b>, launched in 2019, is an innovative mechanism seeking to understand and monitor discrimination in the city through a partnership between the city human rights department and a dozen local human rights organizations.</p>	<p>17</p>
<p><b>Medellín, Colombia</b></p>	<p>The city of Medellin is expanding an existing housing assistance program to benefit over 200 migrant and displaced families with three months paid accommodation. The project also improves families’ access to the city’s suite of social, legal, health, and employment services. The overall goal of the project is to provide a period of reprieve to those at risk of homelessness while leveraging that time to improve their self-reliance and wellbeing. This initiative is funded by the MMC’s <a href="#">Global Cities Fund for Inclusive Pandemic Response</a></p>	<p>7</p>
<p><b>LRGs across the world</b></p>	<p><b>Financing local GCM implementation:</b> The Global Cities Fund for Migrants and Refugees (GCF) is the Mayors Migration Council’s response to the unmet needs of cities as they support migrants, refugees, and IDPs in the face of pressing challenges — from global pandemics to the climate crisis. By directly funding cities to implement programs of their own design, the GCF builds precedents of fiscal feasibility in city governments that are often disregarded by donors with low risk tolerance. With the support of Strategic Partners – C40 Cities, UCLG, UN Habitat, the UN Migration Agency, and the UN Refugee Agency – the GCF has proven to be an effective mechanism to help international donors channel their resources in support of city-led projects with the potential of being institutionalized,</p>	<p>All</p>

	replicated, and/or scaled in the future. As of May 2022, the GCF has raised \$4.5M+ in direct funding to 20 city governments improving the lives of 15,000+ migrants, displaced, and marginalized people and building a pipeline that can be scaled to fund more cities in more regions.	
LRGs across the world	<b>Accelerating local and global action on climate migration:</b> In response to the urban impact of the climate breakdown on migration, C40 Cities and the Mayors Migration Council (MMC) established the Global Mayors Task Force on Climate and Migration, led by the mayors of Barcelona, Bristol, Dakar, Dhaka North, Freetown, Houston, Los Angeles, Lima, and Milan. In November 2021 at COP26, this group issued a <a href="#">Global Mayors Action Agenda on Climate and Migration</a> , identifying three priority areas for global action — Urban Resilience, Urban Inclusion, and Urban Transformation. Each priority area aligns with the GCM.	All
LRGs across the world	The <a href="#">GFMD Mayors Mechanism</a> was established in 2018 to link local authorities to the state-led <a href="#">Global Forum on Migration and Development</a> (GFMD). The Mechanism creates opportunities for LRGs to engage in multilateral fora and provides them with opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and exchange. It establishes a platform to interact with States, civil society, the private sector, youth groups, and provides avenues to bolster innovative solutions. Co-steered by <a href="#">United Cities and Local Governments</a> , <a href="#">Mayors Migration Council</a> and <a href="#">IOM</a> , the GFMD Mayors Mechanism is launching a Call to Local Action for Migrants and Refugees at the IMRF 2022 in partnership with <a href="#">UNHCR</a> to expand the number of LRGs endorsing the Global Compacts through the Marrakech Mayors Declaration, collect and showcase the bold, people centred action that achieve or exceed the Compacts goals.	23 (+) All

## 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>.