



Mediterranean City-to-City Migration

Dialogue, Knowledge and Action

Peer-Learning Event

How to build knowledge on urban migration: innovative tools and practices to face data challenges

19-20 March 2019, Al Hussein Cultural Centre, Amman

Summary of Discussions

Context

This document summarises the results of the regional Peer-Learning Event of the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM) project held under the auspices of the **Greater Amman Municipality** (GAM) on 19-20 March 2019. The event convened more than 50 participants from 13 city administrations, 1 national association of local authorities, 2 regional sections of UCLG and as well as experts and representatives of international organisations. Participants were selected on the basis of a competitive application process. The programme is available [here](#).


This first regional Peer-Learning Event tackled the issue of data challenges faced by cities and local authorities when addressing migration and inclusion policies. The thematic scope derives from the recommendations and priorities set forth by participating cities in the launch meeting of the project's phase II (Vienna, October 2018). The event was held under Chatham House rules so outside of official statements and case studies presented, comments from the discussion and exchanges are not attributed.

Photos of the event are available [here](#).

Official opening and welcoming remarks

Ahmad Al Malkawi, City Manager of the Greater Amman Municipality, welcomed participants on behalf of the Mayor Dr. Yousef Al Shawarbeh, recalling Amman's rich migration history and identity. Mr. Al Malkawi also underscored Amman's ability to learn from previous experiences to enhance its absorption capacity and resilience, in order to fulfil its role as a city and provide access to services for all.

Sarah Schlaeger, Head of ICMPD Jordan Office, highlighted that the MC2CM project explores the nexus between urbanisation and migration in order to reap the benefits of diversity for all the citizens. In this regard, Ms. Schlaeger acknowledged the relevance of this project not only to ICMPD's



Mediterranean portfolio, but also to its priority to foster evidence-based migration policies at all levels, linking the strengthening of data capacity to the promotion of a balanced narrative on migration.

Lamine Abbad, Programme Officer at UCLG, presented the objectives of the meeting and the methodology of the exchange. Mr. Abbad emphasized the key role of sharing local practices and experiences among cities facing similar constraints and willing to adapt feasible solutions to their local contexts.

Key concepts and definitions

Hadi Assaf, Independent expert, presented key concepts and framework on data challenges and innovative tools, building upon the [thematic document](#), including:

- Efficient policy-making, evaluation and monitoring, particularly in the field of migrant reception and integration, largely depend on access to accurate and up-to-date information, both at the national and the local levels;
- Limitations on data availability, accuracy and quality hinder the development of informed policies, which in turn remain largely guided by public perceptions and political agendas;
- Governments ought to promote a balanced narrative on migration, based on migrants and refugees' contributions to the economic sector and labour market, and assessed impact on welfare systems;
- Inter-institutional coordination and local partnerships with local stakeholders such as CSOs, migrant associations, research institutions, private sector or international organisations are a cornerstone of data collection and sharing of information;
- Indicators are crucial to break down policy goals into specific objectives, support progress monitoring and provide a crucial source of information for outcome evaluation;
- Migration information and data can be retrieved from statistical sources (i.e. population and housing censuses, household surveys), administrative data (i.e. residency permits, border crossings) and innovative or “big data” (i.e. mobile phones, money transfers, social media, digital sensors).

Fátima Fernández, Project Officer at UCLG recalled the importance of local data to monitor and evaluate the achievement of global agendas. Ms. Fernández reminded that the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) consider local data as being “crucial” for the adoption of informed policies and warned about the importance of creating trusted spaces to reach migrants irrespectively of their legal status. Presentation available [here](#).

Deema Abu Thiab, National Programme Coordinator at UN-Habitat Jordan called attention to the fact that rapid urbanisation is linked to growing rates of migration and pollution that are to be tackled. Ms. Abu Thiab presented the evidence-based urban strategy that UN-Habitat is developing in Jordan in collaboration with local actors and praised the key role played by urban observatories, city and district profiling, desk reviews and local surveys. Presentation available [here](#).

Local observatories and comparable indicators to face data challenges

Akram Khraisat, Director of the Amman Urban Observatory (AUO) further elaborated on the topic of indicators by presenting the work of the AUO to improve strategic urban planning and informed decision-making for both public and private actors. Mr. Khraisat stressed the importance of international indicators for benchmarking purposes so as to understand where the city stands in relation to others. At the level of local governance, the AUO aims to consolidate a network of interconnected departments whose decisions are subsidiary to others. For example, indicators on education or health can be connected to infrastructure projects, thus avoiding inconsistencies and strengthening the resilience of the city.

The approach to migration data in the city is mainstreamed by way of analysis of proxy indicators such as data on solid waste collection which contribute to urban planning and governance in the city. Presentation available [here](#).

The issue of international urban indicators was also tackled by **Francesca Lionetti, Project Manager at the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe**, who presented the Intercultural Cities Index (ICC), and by **Jesús Salcedo, Associate Expert from UN-Habitat**, who explained the UN-Habitat's City Prosperity Index (CPI).

***Intercultural City (ICC) Index,
Francesca Lionetti
Council of Europe***

The ICC Index is framed in the Intercultural Cities Programme, created in 2009 by the Council of Europe with 12 pioneer cities. The index is composed by a set of indicators that focus on policy inputs. In this regard, ICC supports capacity-building projects for cities willing to develop, implement and evaluate their intercultural policies. Its ultimate goal is to support cities in reaping on the benefits of diversity. Out of the 135 member cities, 97 so far have undergone the benchmarking exercise which includes a process of self-assessment comprised of 83 questions that tackle 12 dimensions of integration and inclusion.

Presentation available [here](#).

***City Prosperity Index (CPI),
Jesús Salcedo
UN-Habitat***

The CPI seeks to support cities in formulating evidence-based policies, as well as monitoring and evaluating their actions. It is framed in the City Prosperity Initiative, which aims at enhancing the monitoring capacities and the prospects of accountability of cities, in the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda as well as of the New Urban Agenda. Its ultimate goal is to help identify inhibitors and facilitators of city action related to six dimensions of urban prosperity. This initiative comprises also a perception index that addresses perceptions of citizenry.

Presentation available [here](#).

Challenges faced regarding data collection on migration at the local level

The ensuing discussions addressed the challenges related to data collection and treatment on migration at the local level. Among these:

Lack of data

- More information is needed to inform urban planning, service provision and to inform urban migration governance in general
- Migration management is a competence of national governments, and often so is collection and treatment of related migration data. National statistics are scantily disaggregated and local governments lack the competences to accomplish this task
- The indicators provided by global agendas are composed of data that are often unavailable or only available at the national level
- Likewise, it is difficult for local authorities to access information on migrants who are in transit or irregular situation

Lack of capacity and tools

- Even when data are readily available, local authorities lack tools to analyse, interpret and compare them
- Local governments lack the tools and mechanisms to retrieve data and conceive evidence-based policies, because they do not have the financial or human resources needed to achieve such purpose
- Lack of clear interdepartmental coordination mechanisms causes data to overlap or become impossible to compare
- The legal status of many migrants prevents them from reaching local authorities to access public services

Political will

- Need to prioritise evidence and devote resources to gather and present this to inform policy-making

Local data in a context of low decentralisation: the case of Cameroon

In countries like Cameroon, the low level of decentralisation and lack of resources of the Census Office (BUCREP in French), which last population census dates back to 2005, make it extremely difficult for municipalities and cities to collect reliable data on migration. In addition to these factors, there is a tendency to treat migration from a security point of view, allocating a large part of dedicated resources to border management. On the other hand, the growing tensions between the Anglophone and Francophone regions of the country are exacerbated by the different impact of human movements in the cross-border areas of the country. Faced with this, initiatives have emerged in various municipalities to fill this gap, but in an isolated and unreliable manner. In this sense, Communes et Villes Unies du Cameroun (CVUC) tries to unite the voice of the municipalities to provide local authorities with data for more rigorous and appropriate policy-making.

Presentation available [here](#).



Opportunities, learnings and way forward

GIS and coordination mechanisms

Taking advantage of the advance of digital technologies and in particular of geographic information systems (GIS) turned out to be one of the tools that raised the most interest during the event. The possibility of locating on the city map data ranging from the payment of taxes, to the collection of waste or registered emergencies (e.g. fires), with the opportunity to cross data between different departments in such systems, appeared as opportunities to monitor social inclusion and cohesion, as well as to conceive policies adapted to the identified needs.

Proxy indicators available locally

Throughout the activities carried out, the participants identified indicators and tools that, despite not being completely aligned with certain standard indicators or not offering a comprehensive picture of the migration situation, can contribute to the consolidation of evidence-based policies. In particular, participants identified data sources for the development of indicators at the local level that could contribute to the monitoring of recommendations related to labour market access, political participation, education, urban planning and the provision of welcoming instruments. In many cases, the possibility of collecting data (through questionnaires or counting people, projects, etc.) required the prior construction of spaces and services that would allow for closer contact with migrants, either through welcoming instruments, capacity-building or the promotion of inclusion in the urban territory.

Big Data as a window of opportunity

Several interventions recalled the fact that the private sector is already exploiting citizens' data without public authorities capitalising on it as much as they should. In this respect, big data should be looked at as a window of opportunity for local and regional authorities, as many of its potentialities remain to be explored. Big data refers to large amounts of data generated through digital devices such as internet platforms, mobile devices and online remittances services. Anonymised call detail records (CDRs) collected by mobile networks are also being used in the field of migration.

Cooperation with CSOs and migrants' associations

The ability to collect data and formulate evidence-based policies is directly linked to the ability to create trusted spaces, reach migrant populations regardless of their legal status, and ensure data protection and their right to privacy. In this regard, many NGOs, migrant associations or charitable organisations maintain stronger links with migrants in the field and have access to more detailed information than local authorities. For this reason, involving civil society and establishing coordination mechanisms with the aim of guaranteeing migrants' right to the city is of particular importance at the local level, where governments often lack the means and legitimacy to implement these policies autonomously.

Key learnings and way forward

- 1. Evidence-based policies are key to support a balanced narrative of migration.** Adequate and rigorous knowledge of the migratory phenomenon helps to prevent policy-making based on emotional, distorted and discriminatory arguments.
- 2. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are a key player in building trust and knowledge.** By promoting services and building trust with migrants, civil society can help bring local authorities closer to all the people living in the city.
- 3. Inter-institutional coordination is essential.** Multilevel governance is essential to ensure the non-duplication of data collection and generation, as well as good policy coherence amongst governance levels.
- 4. Data need to be accurate, comparable and timely.** In order for local authorities to contribute to guaranteeing migrants' access to rights and services, as outlined in global and national agendas, their data must be rigorous, comparable and up to date.
- 5. Global indicators allow for international benchmarking, but full alignment to them is not always feasible.** A number of the indicators proposed by global agendas, such as Agenda 2030, have been designed for the national level and are difficult or impossible to disaggregate at the local level.

Next steps of the project

Ana Feder, MC2CM Project Manager at ICMPD, outlined the next steps of the project, comprising the following activities:

- Call for actions open until 27 March
- Sub-regional Peer-Learning Event in Sfax (Tunisia) on 25- 26 June
- Peer-Learning Event in Beirut (Lebanon) in September
- Next webinars

Presentation available [here](#).

Closing remarks

Julien Simon, Regional Coordinator for the Mediterranean at ICMPD, concluded the event by reiterating that migration is to be tackled through multi-stakeholder approaches and that dialogue-based projects need to strive for quality and relevance to effectively support decision-makers. Mr. Simon warned against emotion-driven policies and reminded that data are not only essential to conceive efficient policies, but also to monitor and evaluate their progress. Data comparability is an ambitious and long term process that relies on the strengthening of capacity-building in order to foster cities' ownership, will and responsibility over this issue.

Nisreen Alaraj, Mayor's advisor for Projects and International Cooperation at the Greater Amman Municipality, reminded that the history of Amman is shaped by the rich culture brought about by several waves of migrants. Accordingly, everyone living in Amman is a citizen. Ms. Alaraj underlined that local inclusion means leaving no one behind and catering for the needs of all.

Annex: Examples of practices on local data collection by MC2CM cities

Vienna's Integration Monitoring

Up to 38% of the residents in Vienna were born outside of Austria or hold a foreign passport. In 2007, the city launched an Integration and Diversity Monitoring Scheme, a tool which enables the ongoing monitoring of the level of integration among its citizenry and the quality assessment of the city administration in managing diversity. The [Vienna Integration Monitoring](#) is composed by a set of databases that aim at promoting objectivity on public debates about migration and integration while acting as a source for evidence-based policy-making. It gathers around one database experts from different departments of the city administration, as well as researchers and experts from various fields of Social Sciences. This tool monitors data on access to employment, education, political participation, housing, etc. in order to check to what extent does migration have an impact on citizens' social standing, their participation in education, work mobility, etc. To do so, it relies on a register based data set launched in 2001 and, to a great extent, on the EU Labour Force Survey & EU-SILC. In particular, this tool measures eight subject areas: (i) equality and participation, (ii) education, (iii) employment and labour market, (iv) income and social security, (v) health, (vi) housing, (vii) infrastructure and (viii) public space and living together. Along its ten years of existence, the Integration Monitor has supported the diversity-oriented policy approach of the city with rather satisfying results. Link to presentation [here](#).

The Geographical Database System of Gaziantep

With the ambition of increasing coordinated actions in municipal policy, the city of [Gaziantep](#) devised a few years ago a geographic information system in which different departments had to enter and update the data relating to their area in order to cross them all on a city map that offers varied information on incidents, emergencies, etc. The purpose is not only to monitor phenomena such as fires or other emergencies, but also to offer adequate responses where such phenomena have the greatest incidence. For example, through the information entered by the fire department in the database, the geographic information system allows the development of "heat maps" that identify the areas where fire has the greatest impact. In this way, local authorities are not only able to follow the area more closely, but they can also carry out informative and awareness-raising actions for the citizens of those areas, so that they know how to prevent and react to this phenomenon. In addition to the different municipal departments, other actors such as neighbourhood representatives, universities, NGOs and chambers of commerce participate in this project. Link to presentation [here](#).

The Geographical Information System "WeRamallah"

GIS Ramallah is an integrated cross-sectoral platform that collects, manages, reviews, analyses and visualises spatial data using the power of maps to bring together information that describes city details. Aiming at benefiting both citizens and visitors, this GIS Data Collector updates data from the field to enhance the quality and inclusiveness while providing reliable information for urban planning and decision-making. The development of this system was accompanied by the creation of a number of interactive web applications for the staff and for the general public, which are freely available on www.ramallah.ps/gis. The collector's apps enable field workers of all experience levels with map-driven mechanisms to capture and return accurate data into the municipal database. For any asset or observation, a number of details can be documented using descriptive information, photos, videos, audios or any other type of attachment. The ultimate goal is to allow for sound geo-spatial analysis that helps to "understand the why's of where". Link to presentation [here](#).

Bilbao and the Local Application of the Intercultural Cities Index

Within the framework of the Intercultural Cities Initiative of the Council of Europe, the city of [Bilbao](#) was involved in the elaboration of this index to check the sensitivity of its local policies to diversity and to act on those aspects in which improvements were needed. Thus, starting from the need to incorporate the [intercultural perspective](#) into its municipal policies and from the willingness to learn from other cities, the city was also able to contribute to remedying its demographic challenges and combating discrimination. In this way, the city gained access to a transversal and participative tool that also offers the support of experts and actors involved in this transnational initiative. Through questionnaires, surveys and inter-institutional work, the city of Bilbao proved in 2013 that one of its main weaknesses was the absence of a policy favourable to interculturality and against discrimination in the media sector. In accordance with this, the city has been able to get involved in this issue during the last six years and to improve its performance to surpass the average of the cities participating in the initiative. Link to presentation [here](#).

RECOMIG: The Moroccan strategy for capacity building of local and regional authorities in the field of migration

"Strengthening the capacities of Moroccan local authorities in the field of migration" (RECOMIG), is a project launched in 2016 by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, which aims to support the territorialisation of the National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum (SNIA) of the Ministry of Foreign Residents and Migration Affairs (MCMREAM) in partnership with the General Directorate of Local Authorities (DGCL) of the Ministry of the Interior. The project aims to improve the conditions for the social, cultural and economic integration of migrants at local level, thus improving cohesion in partner local authorities. Link to presentation [here](#).