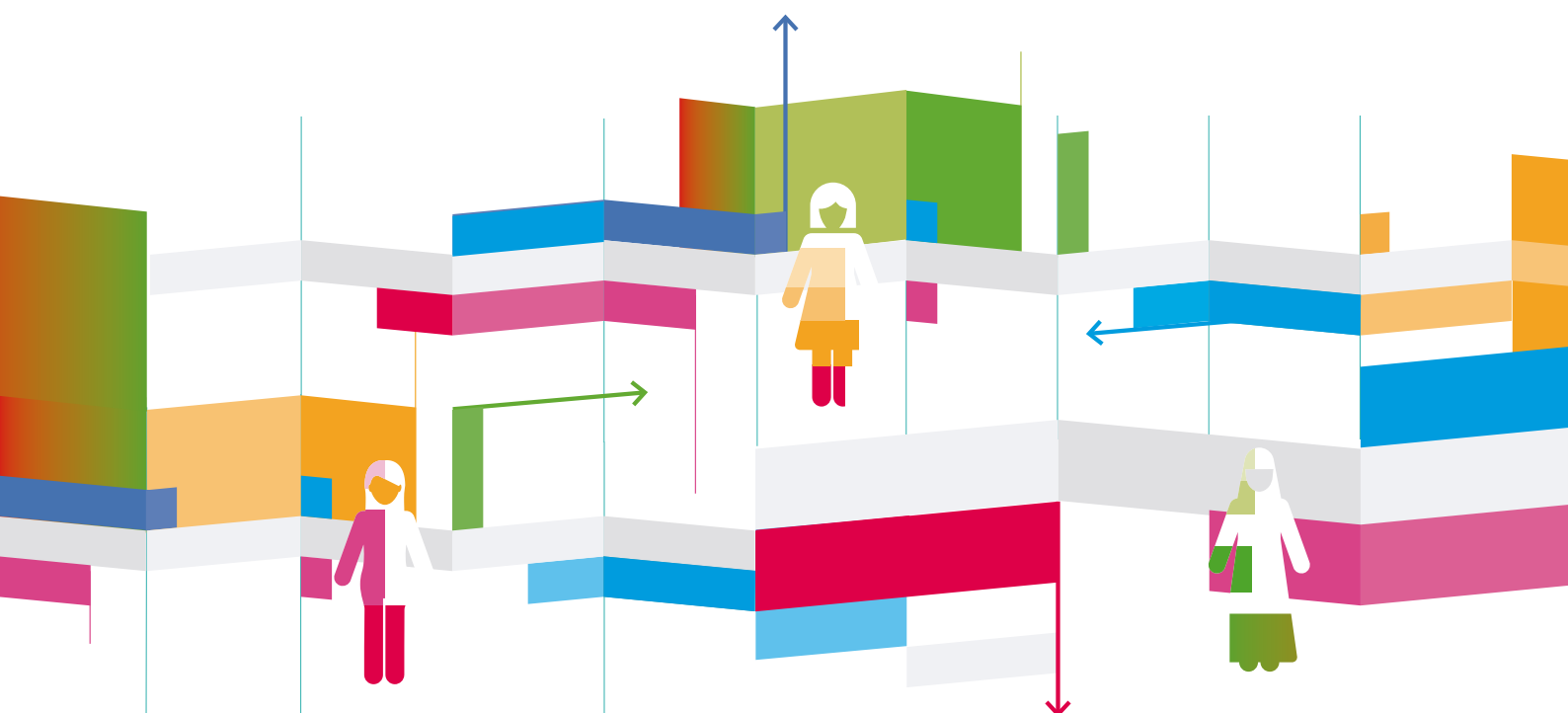# Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Migrant Women in Cities

**MC2CM - UCLG-CSIPDHR Working Session**
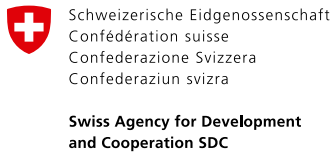
SEPTEMBER 10, 2020



# MC²CM

MEDITERRANEAN CIT Y - TO - CITY MIGRATION

UCLG
United Cities
and Local Governments

UCLG
Committee | Social Inclusion
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights

ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

UN@HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

![ICMPD logo] International Centre for Migration Policy Development

![UCLG logo] United Cities and Local Governments

![UN-HABITAT logo] FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

# ABOUT THE MC2CM PROJECT:

The Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM) Project, launched in 2015 and funded by the European Commission through the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement negotiations and co-founded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, is implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), UCLG and UN-Habitat as partner organizations.
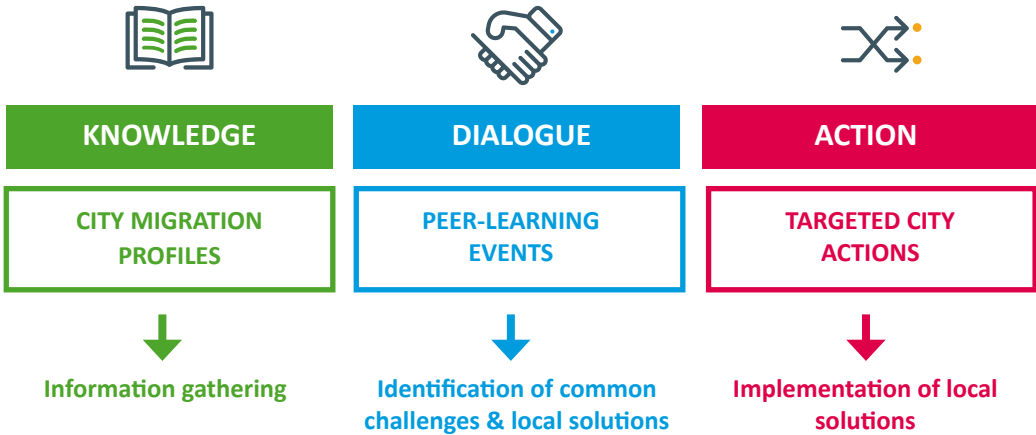
Presently in its second phase of implementation (2018 – 2021), the MC2CM project offers cities in the southern and northern Mediterranean a forum for exchange, capacity-building and networking, by bringing together city leaders, civil servants and local, national and international multi-disciplinary experts to discuss about, learn from and contribute to improved migration governance at urban level, including migrants' access to basic services and human rights. MC2CM aims at contributing to more open and inclusive cities by drawing on migrants' potential to benefit cities and their economies.

Embedded in the intergovernmental "Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Dialogue", the network represents an important interface between the local and regional levels and provides concrete policy recommendations on migration and urbanisation addressed to cities, national governments and international organisations. At present, the MC2CM comprises a network of 20 participating cities – Amman, Beirut, Lyon, Lisbon, Madrid, Tangier, Turin, Tunis, Vienna, Casablanca, Dortmund, Grenoble, FAMSI ("Andalusian fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity" represented in the project by the cities of Seville & Cadiz), Naples, Oujda, Rabat, Sfax, Sousse, Tripoli and Tajoura.

![MC2CM logo]

## Rebalancing the Narrative on Migration: Cross-Cutting Activities

| KNOWLEDGE | DIALOGUE | ACTION |
|---|---|---|
| CITY MIGRATION PROFILES | PEER-LEARNING EVENTS | TARGETED CITY ACTIONS |
| ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| Information gathering | Identification of common challenges & local solutions | Implementation of local solutions |

More information at:

🌐 icmpd.org/mc2cm

🐦 urban_migration

in MC2CM

# Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Migrant Women in Cities

**MC2CM - UCLG-CSIPDHR Working Session**
SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

Around 100 participants took part in the interactive working session "MC2CM Dialogue on Migrant Women in Cities" co-organized by the Mediterranean City to City Migration (MC2CM) project and the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights (UCLG-CSIPDHR) last 10th September. More than 20 cities participated in this collective brainstorming exercise to explore gender-sensitive approaches to local migration governance, together with international organisations, city networks, civil society, migrant women associations and academia, sharing global and territorial insights into the challenges faced by migrant women and identifying barriers and opportunities for local action. Violence and insecurity stood out among the most pressing challenges for women throughout all phases of migratory processses, comprising human trafficking and exploitation, domestic violence and insecurity in accessing public space, among others. For local governments, limited mandates and capacities, as well as lack of dedicated resources, remain strong barriers to address realities on the ground. Cross-cutting approaches, tackling together gender, accessibility, protection and inclusion, were addressed as essential. This exploratory conversation is a first step towards strengthening gender-sensitive approaches and urban migration at the Mediterranean and at global level, in cooperation with States and stakeholders, comprising migrants, civil society, academia and the private sector.

# 1 Territorial perspectives on women on the move

Throughout differing city and territorial contexts in terms of scale, diversity and approach to migratory issues, the challenges faced by migrant women and girls are universal, manifold and intersecting with pre-existing inequalities and discrimination in terms of gender and accessibility.

Although half of the world migrants are women, their challenges, needs and expectations remain insufficiently accounted for in local, national and global governance of human mobility. For women and girls on the move, the drivers of migration differ, to a large extent, from those of men, as do the specific challenges they meet in the migratory process and in the places where they settle. However, many of these obstacles remain insufficiently accounted for in local and global policies. This lacuna further reproduces their greater risk of discrimination and violence, hence reinforcing existing gender inequalities in countries of origin, transit, and destination. Failure to take these elements into account hinders access to fundamental human rights and adds further difficulties to their full enjoyment of the right to the city. The COVID-19 impact is harshest on migrant women and girls who faced precarious situations before the crisis, with heightened risk of exposure to gender based violence abuse and exploitation and limited access to protection and response services to ensure safe, inclusive and equitable migration. Recent data projected by UN Women and UNDP reveal that the poverty rate for women, which was expected to decrease by 2.7% between 2019 and 2021, is likely to increase by 9.1%, due to the impact of the pandemic; also women's employment is 19% more at risk than males.[1]

The interactive working session "MC2CM Dialogue on Migrant Women in Cities" sought to address this emerging policy priority in many local government agendas from a bottom-up and territorial perspective that also included the contribution of key international partners. The discussion was framed by an all-women panel putting forward a reflection about how local and global agendas are tackling the gendered impact of migration, also listening to the civil society perspective on opportunities for multi-stakeholder progress towards a better recognition of the particular needs of women.

As recalled by Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG, this session was a first step "to make sure that gender equality and women empowerment remain a very high political agenda for the constituency of local governments, but also for the partners that we work with", particularly at a time when **"border closures and barriers to mobility in the midst of the pandemic challenge local and global narratives on migration and shed light on the factors that hinder women inclusion at many levels".**

Iris Kristjansdottir, Gender and Humanitarian Specialist at the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, reminded that "the exacerbation in women's poverty rate, amongst other challenges, are embedded in the ways our societies and economies have been constructed". She asserted that such **"evidence of multiple inequalities faced by women overall, should become a critical driving force to shift restorative policy action that puts women at the heart of the pandemic recovery and towards the formulation of gender-specific migration policy".**

Anila Noor, founder of New Women Connectors (see box) warned about outdated policies of integration in host countries, which often neglect the gendered reality and the different needs of migrant women and their cultural and religious preferences. She emphasised on the **"urgent need for including women migrant associations and women led initiatives in** order to put forth their needs and challenges, get resources to address them and to mitigate the systemic bottlenecks in host countries" and the structural barriers that hinder their inclusion process.

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[1] UN Women (2020). Press release: COVID-19 will widen poverty gap between women and men, new UN Women and UNDP data shows. https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/8/press-release-covid-19-will-widen-poverty-gap-between-women-and-men

Christophe Lalande, Housing Unit Leader at UN-Habitat, highlighted the difficulties faced by migrant women in access to housing - **"Migrant women experience compounded barriers to accessing adequate housing: in addition to the barriers experienced by migrant men (low income, language difficulty and not understanding the housing market and their rights), greater responsibility for childcare that limits their ability to generate income and therefore to afford independent housing."** and asserted the need for migrant women to be involved in decision making, implementation and evaluation of policies and initiatives, especially with regards to migrant access to adequate housing.

Sandra Willis, Director for Learning and Development at World Enabled (see box) reminded about the importance of introducing key cross-cutting issues like f accessibility and disabilities into the debate, highlighting the misrepresentation and limited consideration of women and elderly, particularly those with disabilities,despite international treaties, conventions and SDGs. She called for inclusive legal frameworks that remove discriminatory provisions and mainstream gender and disability approaches to make migration work for all. Elaborating on the contrasting. realities of higher need for healthcare and numerous barriers in access by these migrant groups during transit and in the host city, she urged local governments to address their migration situation by providing comprehensive frameworks that protect and include vulnerable groups.

**New Women Connectors** is an initiative led by a collective of migrant and refugee women in Europe. Aiming at raising awareness about the challenges and opportunities for refugee and migrant women in Europe, the NWC platform provides them support to map their challenges, recommend solutions and become change-makers, in order to create a shift in communities and policies at large. **At the local level,** the NWC platform works as a tool to identify the existing gaps of integration policies addressed at refugees and newcomers. With the goal of creating a support system for female refugees, they advocate for women-friendly policy reforms. The NWC platform tries to bring the local voices **to the EU level** and engages in debates around the issue of refugee representation in policy making to bridge the gaps between the agenda and reality through their recommendations and actions.

**World Enabled** is a strategic consulting group started in 2003 with the goal to educate, inspire and inform a global audience about the capabilities and potential of people with disabilities. They provide innovative and cost effective research and programmatic services to international agencies, NGOs and governments, to further innovative approaches to inclusive urban development. They engage with and create effective partnerships between governments and civil society organisations with the purpose of implementing inclusive disability programs and policies with a human and civil rights approach. With their international partners, they help build inclusive societies where people with disabilities and older persons can fully develop their talents and reach their full potential.

# 2 Stakeholders involved

25 Local governments and city networks

ANVITA

Grenoble

Torino

Gipuzkoa

Barcelona

FAMSI

Campillos

Bizerte

Sousse

Sfax

Tunis

Rabat

Irbid

Casablanca

Conseil de la région de l"oriental

Amman

Ramallah

Gwangju International Center

Mexico City

Banjul (Gambia)

Libreville

ABELO - REFELA Burundi

São Paulo

Mandlakazi
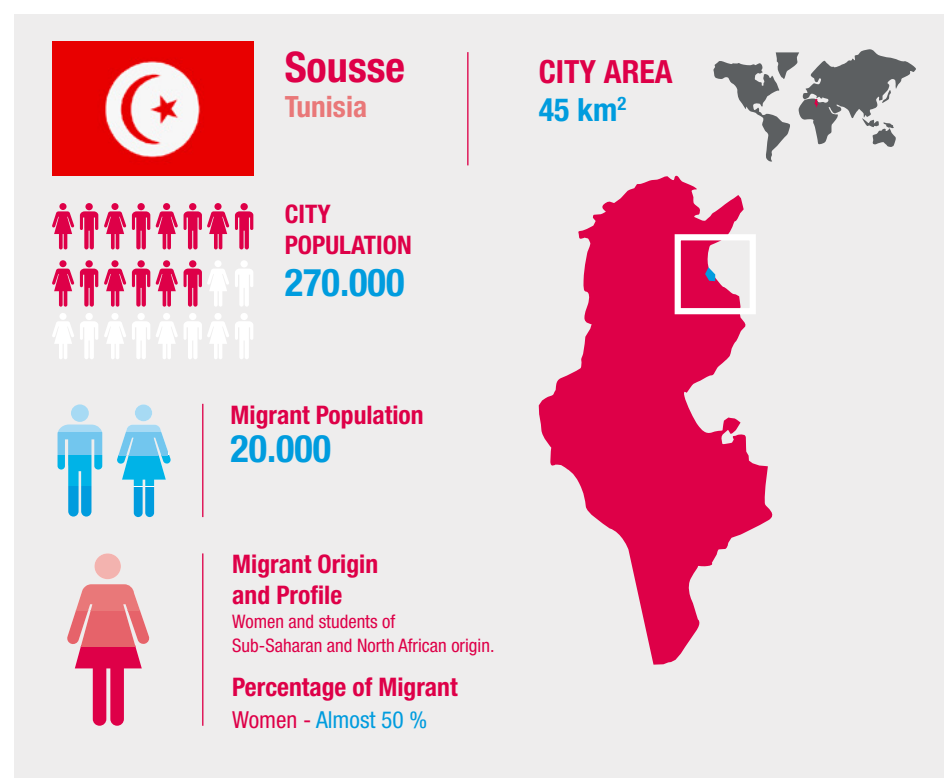
Montevideo

# 3 Local initiatives to address migrant women needs

The first segment of the seminar focused on voices from cities in the Mediterranean and beyond. Political representatives from Sousse, Turin and Sao Paulo shared their experiences from the front line, from existing local policies and actions addressing the needs of migrant women, to insights on how the role of local governments could be enhanced in this area.

## A | Sousse - A new type of cooperation with migrant women associations



**Sousse**
Tunisia

**CITY AREA**
**45 km²**

**CITY POPULATION**
**270.000**

**Migrant Population**
**20.000**

**Migrant Origin and Profile**
Women and students of Sub-Saharan and North African origin.

**Percentage of Migrant**
Women - Almost 50 %

Although in terms of migration Tunisia remains a sending country, migratory trends vary across territories. The city of Sousse is one of the most touristic spots and the second university hub of Tunisia. Both features, combined with the position of the city in Mediterranean migratory routes, entail a high level of mobility at territorial level and attract internal and external migration. Although migration remains outside of municipal mandates, the local administration has been strengthening its efforts to launch and carry out programs and initiatives to include migrants in public space and socioeconomic activities.
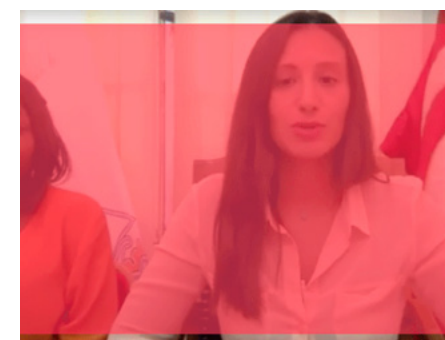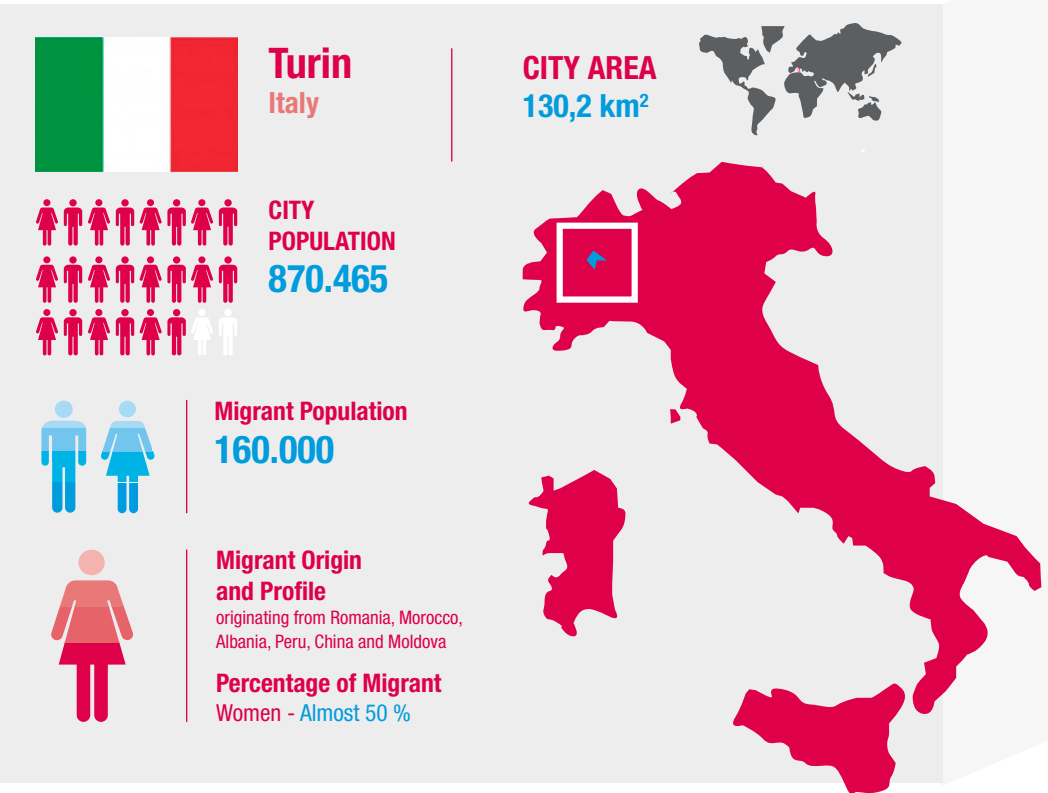
**Imen Ouardani, Vice Mayor of Sousse** and Chair of the Gender Equality Committee, highlighted the importance of local inclusion, placing a strong emphasis on the **provision of social assistance** to migrant *women with children, pregnant women,* and *working women,* who face higher difficulties in the host society. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, **new ties of cooperation** were forged with *local partners and migrants,* especially with migrant women. Several surveys have also been conducted to assess the situation of migrants and especially women amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the **barriers** identified in Sousse, some migrant women face *precarious working conditions* and *a higher risk of exposure to exploitation, abuse and violence.* Such barriers are particularly difficult to tackle for those facing *irregular residence status* and *employment in the informal sector,* mostly in domestic work. *Domestic violence* also increased under mandatory lockdown. During the period of confinement, another major shortcoming observed was the *limited access to information and health services,* particularly for migrant women with children. The municipality acknowledged that the regional healthcare authorities and service agents are not fully aware about the rights of migrants and urged to address this lacuna in universal access to healthcare, as well as to open gateways to ensure the economic *integration and regularization of working migrant women.*

Among the opportunities, the **role of migrant women's associations** became prominent in the **COVID-19 crisis management,** particularly through the establishment of dialogue with migrant communities. The reinforcement of **trust-based relationships** between the local administration, civil society organisations and migrant women associations for **crisis management** has become a key part of the local agenda in Sousse.

## B | **Turin -** Listening to migrants' needs and bringing them to the Municipality

**Turin**
**Italy**

**CITY AREA**
**130,2 km²**

**CITY POPULATION**
**870.465**

**Migrant Population**
**160.000**

**Migrant Origin and Profile**
originating from Romania, Morocco, Albania, Peru, China and Moldova

**Percentage of Migrant**
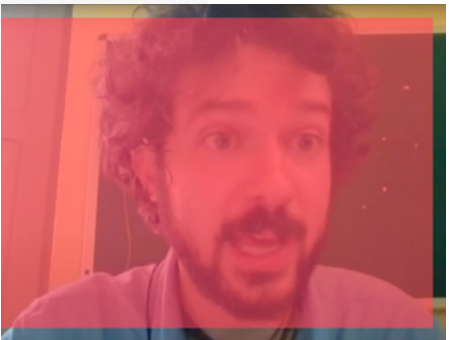Women - Almost 50 %

Turin is the 4th largest Italian city. The phenomenon of **family reunifications** in the city has *balanced the gender ratio* over time, and today *migrant women constitute half of the migrant population.* Although the role of the municipality in migrant inclusion has not been defined by law, it emanates from national and regional public funding strategies, as well as from municipal mandates in policy areas with a direct bearing on migrant inclusion, such as employment and vocational training. A large part of migrant inclusion measures carried out at metropolitan level are the result of local stakeholders' initiatives.

Claudio Tocchi, from the Cabinet of the Deputy Mayor for Human Rights of the City of Turin shared two initiatives undertaken in the city to address the needs of migrants, particularly women. The first initiative, a **'Women in the neighbourhood'** scheme, supports migrant women who have been in the city for many years to *get access to the services in a private peer to peer relationship with commercial enterprises.*

The second, a 'Community Association' initiative, *incorporates local stakeholders from diverse migrant communities,* in terms of age, nationality, minority, generation and others as working groups in community associations. These established channels with the local stakeholders are a core resource for the municipality to identify the needs of migrant communities and connect them with the different municipal departments. The main challenge to achieve that connection remains the *limited access to services* by migrants and their frequent experiences of *structural racism.* Especially during the COVID-19 emergency, it was very difficult for migrants to access State or municipal support. Thus, the priority for the city has been to assess those needs and to connect them to the requisite resources.

## C | São Paulo - 10 year Municipal plan and policies for migrants



**São Paulo**
Brasil

**CITY AREA**
1.521 km²

**CITY POPULATION**
12 million

**Migrant Population**
361.201

**Migrant Origin and Profile**
Portugal, Italy, Spain, Germany, Japan, China, Angola, Peru, Bolivia, Haiti and numerous African countries.
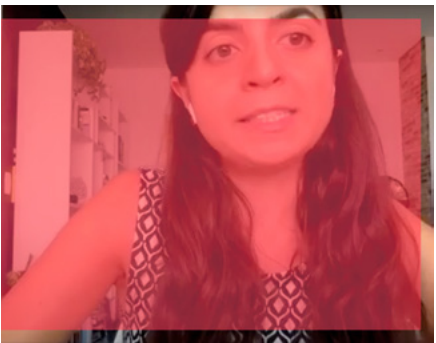
**Percentage of Migrant Women** - Almost 50 %

São Paulo is the largest Latin American city by population, with high regional and international immigration flows. The municipalities in Brazil are responsible for the provision of a number of basic public services for all the residents, including immigrants. Moreover, the legislation of the municipality of São Paulo also foresees the **inclusion of migrants into the community** as a municipal mandate.

Patricia Dichtchekenian, General Coordinator of the Human Rights and Citizenship Office in São Paulo and a migrant of Armenian origin, shared **specific regulations** in place *fostering migrant womens' inclusion and participation in the municipal council.* The municipality has adopted a **progressive framework** over the last 10 years and applies a **five pillar approach** to address urban migration issues.

The first pillar looks at ensuring **universal access** to *housing, education - public schooling, health and social services,* regardless of legal status and demographic characteristics. São Paulo was the first city in Brazil to develop a municipal law for migrants. This action is aligned to their second goal, aiming to promote migrant rights and to support their inclusion. This is particularly relevant since migrants are not allowed to vote as per the federal legislation; thus the municipal council for migrants *ensures their participation in the decision-making process.* The third goal is to ensure a *leadership position and participation of migrant women in the municipal council.* The city has established a *minimum 50% quota for women migrants* of different nationalities within their municipal council for migrants since 2015. There are also mechanisms set in place to ensure that the needs of migrant women are considered. As part of the fourth pillar, in August 2020, the municipality launched the **first municipal plan for migrant policy**, which encompasses *80 actions to be implemented from 2021.* Aligned to its fifth goal of **access to services,** the municipality provides different kinds of services that guarantee *more autonomy to migrants.* These include access to a center for migrants since 2014 to ensure migrants have access to services and information in various languages.

The second segment of the working session consisted of an interactive exercise with municipal staff, CSO representatives, academics and practitioners, devoted to identifying the main challenges faced by migrant women in urban territories, as well as the barriers and opportunities of local government action in addressing those. Three multi-stakeholder breakout sessions were set to allow all participants to share their thoughts on this matter on the basis of their experiences.

# Dialogue: Migrant Women in Cities

MC2OM

## GROUP A - Multilingual

1. Very briefly introduce yourself and add any missing challenges/issues faced by migrant women using orange post-its. (5 minutes)
2. Identify barriers (yellow post-its) LRGs face when tackling these issues. (10 minutes)
3. Identify opportunities/strengths (green post-its) LRGs can use to tackle these issues. Feel free to include references to specific examples/cases. (10 minutes)
4. Select a rapporteur, and 2 barriers and 2 opportunities to present back to the main floor. Put selected post its in **BOLD** (5 minutes)

### Issues for Migrant Women

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender-based violence | Lacking legal aid and documentation | lack of legislative frameworks supporting women led enterprises | Language barriers for accessing services |
| Limited opportunities for inclusion | Job Insecurity | Insecurities in public spaces | limited training opportunities for women |
| Human trafficking | Economic empowerment of women | Insecurities in host society | limited educational opp for their children |

### Barriers for Local Governments

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (MEWA) - stereotypes regarding traditional role of women | Inadequate data collection & representation | COVID-19 : Lack of coordination between local and National Govt. | Local Govt. role needs to be strengthened |
| Limited participation in policy formulation & program development | Need for stakeholder engagement plan, strategies | Consider needs of migrant women with disabilities | LatAm - not enough specific policies or social programs |
| Interventions need to be evaluated in terms of quality | Lack of communication with CSOs and public institutions | Ensure policies and services are accessible & inclusive | |

### Opportunities & Roles for Local Governments

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Developing 'work from home' opp for migrant women | Subsidising women led enterprises | Migrant women's socio-economic integration | UCLG & others can establish migration policy checklist - mainstream women & girls |
| Focus on well-being, resilience, empowerment, inclusion of migrant girls & youth | Internal action at regional level - food, services, etc. targetting mig. women | Triangular cooperation proj. - Student and women conventions | Networking between Govt. & NGOs for women solidarity economy projects |
| Local econ. opportunities supporting migrant women | Provide opportunities for their children | Involve the corporates (private sector) as well | Consider disabled & elderly women and LGBTQ community |

Moderator: Lamine / Mural & screen-share: Prachi

## GRUPO B - Castellano

1. Introducase muy brevemente y comparta aquellos retos a los que las mujeres migrantes hacen frente que cree aún no se han visto reflejados a lo largo de la sesión i post-its naranjas (5 minutos)
2. Identifique barreras a los que los gobiernos locales hacen frente en tratar de abordar estos retos i post-its violetas (10 minutos)
3. Identifique oportunidades o fortalezas a la disposición de los gobiernos locales que pueden servir para abordar estos retos. Incluya ejemplos de políticas específicas si los conoce i post-its verdes (10 minutos)
4. Seleccione una persona portavoz, 2 barreras y 2 oportunidades que hayan identificado como grupo.  Marque estos 4 post-its (2+2) en negrita. Esta persona presentará vuestra selección al resto del grupo una vez se termine la sesión break-out (5 minutos)

### Retos para las mujeres migrantes

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Violencia machista | Falta de apoyo legal / situación administrativa | Asistencia psicológica (mujeres con niños a cargo) | Acceso a educación reproductiva y sexual | Acceso a información de relevancia en formatos plurilingues |
| Oportunidades de inclusión limitadas | Precariedad en el empleo | Brecha digital (sobretodo en el contexto actual) | Falta de formación / oportunidades para realizar incidencia política | Pueblos indígenas / diversidad de perfiles |
| Victimes de trata y explotación | Acceso a salud integral | Convalidación académica | Abocados a ciertos segmentos del mercado laboral / falta de alternativas | Empleo informal / en negro |
| Falta de acceso a la cédula legal | Falta de espacios feministas descolonizados | | | |

### Barreras para la gobiernos locales

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Limitaciones de acceso a perfiles específicos | Limitaciones para promover políticas de acceso al empleo | Acceso a la información / datos | Limitaciones en el diálogo multinivel |
| Falta de competencias | ¿Cómo acercarnos / generar confianza de parte de las mujeres migrantes (inclusión a largo plazo)? | Falta de formación del personal municipal | |

### Oportunidades y roles para los gobiernos locales

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Compartir prácticas y tejer redes a nivel nacional | Acción política para la incidencia política a nivel nacional | Diálogo multinivel y políticas coordinadas | Diseño de los espacios públicos | Ofrecer espacios de acogida temporal y refugio |
| Ofrecer atención psicológica y espacios seguros | Acceso a alimentación gratuita para poblaciones en tránsito | Proyecto Inclucities | Junta nacional de inmigración de Uruguay (participación de los gobiernos locales) | Inversión en barrios vulnerables |
| Alianzas locales > sociedad civil local + investigación | Facilitar el aprendizaje de la lengua | Programa "Ciudad Hospitalaria" de la CDMX | Trabajo en red de gobiernos locales a nivel regional | Incorporar la perspectiva de género en el diseño de espacio público |
| | | | Generar conocimiento + escalar proyectos sobre cuestiones concretas | Territorialización e implementación de programas multilaterales |

Moderator: Amanda / Mural & screen-share: Jau

## GROUPE C - Français

1. Veuillez vous présenter très brièvement et partager les défis auxquels les femmes migrantes sont confrontées qui, selon vous, n'ont pas encore été reflétés tout au long de la session i post-its oranges (5 minutes)
2. Identifiez les obstacles auxquels les gouvernements locaux sont confrontés pour tenter de relever ces défis i post-its roses (10 minutes)
3. Identifiez les opportunités ou les forces dont disposent les gouvernements locaux et qui peuvent servir à relever ces défis. Mentionnez des exemples de politiques spécifiques si vous les connaissez i post-its verts (10 minutes)
4. Sélectionnez un porte-parole, 2 obstacles et 2 opportunités que vous avez identifiés en tant que groupe. Surlignez ces 4 posts-its (2 + 2) en gras. Le porte-parole présentera votre sélection au reste du groupe une fois la session terminée (5 minutes)

### Défis pour les femmes migrantes

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Violence sexiste | Manque de soutien juridique / situation administrative | Manque d'information / méconnaissance des institutions | Responsabilité familiale - éducation, accès au logement |
| Opportunités d'inclusion limitées | Précarité de l'emploi | Accès à la santé, nutrition | Régularisation des situations, naissances |
| Trafic et exploitation | Manque d'information / barrière linguistique | Accès à l'emploi | |

### Obstacles pour les collectivités locales

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Créer des espaces multiculturels dédiés (sans quota) | Accès aux données, profils et besoins | Manque d'information décentralisée | Compétences des collectivités limitées (cadre légal) |
| Manque de sensibilisation, d'orientation | Absence de coordination échelon local-central | Budgets limités | Besoin d'une plus grande marge de manoeuvre |

### Opportunités et rôles pour les collectivités locales

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Certification droits de l'Homme pour entreprises et ONG | Coordination avec les acteurs locaux | Formation des services locaux pour réponse adaptée | Intégration dans des centres de formation |
| Sensibilisation, faciliter l'information | Renforcer partenariat avec OSC | Impliquer les gouvernements locaux dans la régularisation | Réseautage / échange transnational (éco et culturel) |
| Intégration pb migrations dans les politiques publiques | | | |

Moderator: Fatima / Mural & screen-share: Mathilde

# 4 Protection and inclusion of migrant women in cities

## Role and opportunities of local government action

### A. Getting migrant women challenges right



- Violence and insecurity
- Precarious legal status
- Limited rights
- Barriers for their societal inclusion
- Barriers to their empowerment

Following the first insights by the diverse opening panel of cities, the initial part of the breakout sessions left the floor open for participants to map local challenges. **Violence and insecurity** stood out as some of the most pressing difficulties – from the risks and impacts of *human trafficking and exploitation* in the migratory process and beyond, to proneness in experiencing *gender-based violence* or *insecurity in accessing public space.*
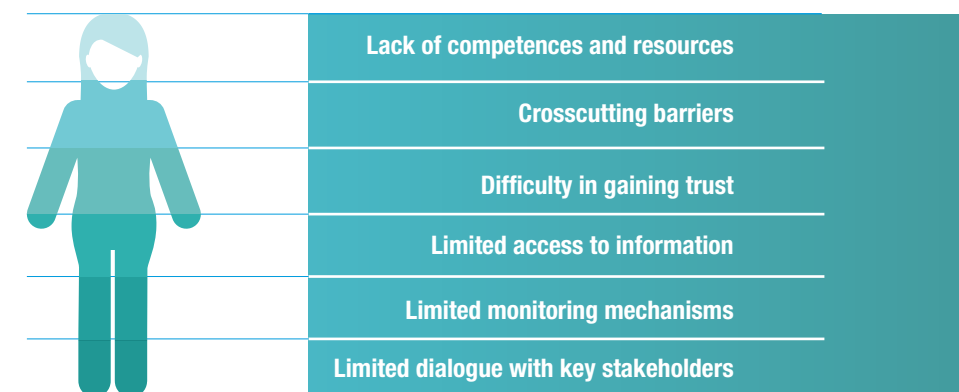
How barriers related to how the **legal status** of migrant women affect their **access to rights** was another topical issue. This becomes particularly crucial in areas such as access to *maternal and child health care*, *social benefits* or *housing*. However, legal discrimination was not seen as the only **barrier for inclusion** in the host society; indeed, many participants referred also to mistrust in public authorities, language barriers in information provision or lack of accessibility as key in this regard. In the same vein, others emphasized how migrant women tend to participate less in local participatory democracy mechanisms,also hindered by the lack of dedicated spaces for community organizing and social networking and interaction.

Migrant women find specific **barriers to their empowerment** too, and *access to the labor market* remains among the most relevant. Some participants mentioned the *lack of training opportunities* or formal channels for *recognition of diplomas* as barriers preventing migrant women from accessing qualified jobs. These factors contribute to higher rates of unemployment, job insecurity or *informal employment.* Women role as

*caregivers*– in conjunction to the lack of adequate care policies and networks in the host society – is another specific burden for their empowerment and inclusion in local public life. Participants also noted the scarce *support to entrepreneur migrant women* that decide to found their own enterprises. Besides economic inclusion, other participants also mentioned *stereotypes* at all levels (family context, public perceptions) regarding the gendered attribution of roles as key to understanding the added difficulties to their empowerment.

### B. Migrant women protection and inclusion: What barriers for local government action on the subject?



- Lack of competences and resources
- Crosscutting barriers
- Difficulty in gaining trust
- Limited access to information
- Limited monitoring mechanisms
- Limited dialogue with key stakeholders

*Lack of competences* and *dedicated resources* are the most pressing barriers local governments encounter when addressing the identified challenges. Other **crosscutting barriers** mentioned by participants are *the lack of trained municipal staff, lack of awareness* or *insufficient prioritization* of the needs of migrant women. They emphasized how these barriers prevented cities from developing *targeted gender policies* aiming to bridge the gaps in access to the labor market or long-term inclusion faced by women.

Other barriers are related to socio-political aspects. The *lack of participation* or *mistrust in public institutions* by migrant women pervade, for instance, local governments' capacity **to gain their trust** and enhance the accessibility and inclusiveness of local public service provision. This, in turn, also affects local governments capacity **to access**

**information** and put in place **monitoring mechanisms.** Some participants noted how public intervention on this matter *does not receive enough evaluation* and how local governments usually count with inadequate means for *data collection* or *access capacity* to migrant women at high risk of vulnerability and marginalization.

The last group of barriers refers to local government **dialogue with key stakeholders** in migration governance and support networks to migrant women in particular. In this regard, some participants stressed the need to further enhance local governments' *stakeholders' engagement plans and strategies* in order to make sure they are meaningful and impactful. The *lack of coordination between national and local governments* was another key aspect of this equation.

## C. Migrant women protection and inclusion: What opportunities for local government action?



- transforming policy-making
- providing protection
- fostering inclusion
- involving all stakeholders
- Coordination and networking among local governments

In spite of their limited capacities in many country contexts, local governments can play a major role in enhancing the protection and inclusion process of migrant women in cities. Some participants referred to the need of **transforming policy-making** to make it more sensitive to the particular needs of this group –focusing on their well-being, strengthening their resilience or supporting them to harness their empowerment. Some local governments are *mainstreaming the gender-based or intersectionality approaches* to better address migrant women specific needs. Practical applications of this can be found in gender-sensitive *design of public spaces, training of municipal employees* or *public information provision.*

When it comes to **providing protection,** local governments find ways to contribute to migrant women's well-being by providing them with *psychological attention* and s*afe spaces (temporary accommodation and shelter)* at different locations of migratory routes or once they reach their final destination. When it comes to **fostering inclusion,** local governments can help young migrant women access higher education or facilitate access to *local language learning* by offering courses tailored to their needs. The role of local government was deemed as key especially regarding migrant women labor inclusion, as they can subsidize women led enterprises, support projects that provide opportunities for this group or even offer care services such as kindergartens or retirement homes.

In order to drive forward these initiatives, many participants referred to the need of **involving all stakeholders** at a city level and beyond – from the *private sector* (key to foster their access to the labor market) to *civil society* (whose contribution is key in terms of care, support and organizing) and *academia* (as it can provide accurate knowledge and support the policy development and innovation process). Practical examples in this regard include developing accreditations for private business showing their engagement on this matter to partnership with NGOs to foster entrepreneurship and social and solidarity economy projects. Several examples of *successful coordination between national and local authorities* were also presented by participants, who recalled how multi-level coordination can help produce better-informed implementation of policies.

**Coordination and networking among local governments**, both at a national level as well as at a regional or even global one, can also help deliver better local responses to the needs of migrant women. Networking between cities can help *share practices, scale-up promising initiatives or create knowledge.* It can also help create common policy checklists and *monitoring mechanisms.* Finally, it can also help local governments find a platform to advance their own demands on this matter and *develop advocacy initiatives* at a national or international level.

# 4 Key takeaways and way forward

This exploratory working session about women and migration was a first step to approach territorial realities and explore gender-sensitive approaches to policy-making and urban planning in the Mediterranean and at global level, in cooperation with States and stakeholders, comprising migrants, civil society, academia and the private sector.

Among specific **challenges that migrant women** face, violence and insecurity were identified as cornerstone. These factors can take many shapes across territories and circumstances, ranging from the domestic level to the public space and the different phases of the migratory process. Other obstacles regard the lack of certainty and access to services caused by illegal administrative situations, which is accentuated by language barriers and a lack of trust in public authorities. Challenges related to care-giving gendered roles were identified as major barriers for the economic inclusion of migrant women.

From the point of view of **local governments, the most relevant obstacles** addressed relate to insufficient mandates, resources and capacities. In this regard, participants stressed the need to enhance women's trust and to strengthen access to information and monitoring mechanisms. Finally, dialogue with key local stakeholders was pointed out as essential to drive change in this area.

On the other hand, among the **opportunities for local governments**, participants stressed the importance of both mainstreaming gender-based and intersectional approaches across municipal policies, as well as to cooperate with local civil society and grassroots stakeholders to deliver a more effective public action on this matter. This includes also other transformatory approaches to local public policy, such as the one of human rights cities or the right to the city. Local governments were identified as key actors to spur gender-sensitive design of public spaces, training of employees or providing adapted public information. It was also pointed out that the municipal level is an essential actor to protect migrant women and foster their economic and social inclusion, taking advantage also of participatory democracy mechanism and fostering migrant women's contribution in local civic life. Finally, coordination and networking among local governments through city-to-city cooperation was addressed as an opportunity to both enhance policy capacities as well as provide cities with a platform to amplify the impact of their demands and initiatives.

This session showcased the variety of actors committed to protect and support women on the move at the local level. Going forward, gender sensitive approaches to urban migration governance may benefit from the following practices addressed during this exploratory conversation:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Comprehensive approaches:** | Identification of local measures and policy approaches (E.g: rights-based approach, intersectionality) that could benefit the inclusion of migrant women even though they are not specifically addressed to them |
| **Monitoring women specific challenges:** | Review social policies from the angle of the specific challenges of migrant women and their active participation in the policy process, to ensure that their needs are adequately addressed |
| **Multi-stakeholder cooperation:** | Identify actors at the local, national, regional and global level who are dealing with issues related to migrant women in order to<br>• *Seek advice on gender-sensitive policy development*<br>• *Facilitate the participation of migrant women in urban policies and improve their confidence in local institutions*<br>• *Increase local capacity to deliver services through strategic partnerships with civil society and other actors with the capacity to act where the local mandate does not allow* |
| **City-to-city cooperation:** | Exchange practices and improve technical cooperation and knowledge among between cities |
| **Local-National dialogue:** | Strengthen dialogue with other levels of government to obtain the necessary support to address the challenges of migrant women at the territorial level |
| **Promoting trust and enhance safety:** | Addressing the drivers of violence and insecurity that women face in the domestic and public space, enhancing their trust and access to municipal instances that can provide support and protection |

# Resources

For further information on the topic of Women Migrants in cities, please refer to the related resources included below.

- IOM "Mainstreaming Gender in Pre-Departure Orientation: Guidelines for Practitioners"

- IOM "Migrant Women and Gender Violence – Strategies and Perspectives for Interventions" ( EN | ES )

- Live Learning Experience: Beyond the immediate response to the outbreak of COVID-19 "Women's leadership: Critical for rethinking the future in the post COVID-19 era"

- Refugees International "Gender Matters: COVID-19's outsized impact on displaced women and girls"

- UNDP Latin America and the Carribean "The Economic Impacts of COVID-19 and Gender Inequality: Recommendations for policymaking"

- UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants: "Impact of migration on migrant women and girls: a gender perspective"

- UN Women Guidance note: "Addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women migrant workers"