MIGRATION AND INCLUSIVE CITIES: A GUIDE FOR ARAB CITY LEADERS

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MIGRATION AND INCLUSIVE CITIES:
A GUIDE FOR ARAB CITY LEADERS

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FOREWORD

Large scale migration and propelling rapid urbanization are two key and intrinsically related facets of the 21st century. People have been increasingly on the move into cities, following economic opportunities voluntarily or escaping forcibly from mounting political conflicts or unprecedented natural disasters. Associated with this development is the overwhelming demand for affordable housing, adequate jobs, quality health care, education facilities, social protection and other basic infrastructure and services in cities.

In that context, city leaders have been assuming growing responsibilities of including increasingly diverse newcomers into the urban fabric of their cities and enhancing their accessibility to services and opportunities. However, with already strained resources and limited capacities, local authorities' response has been mainly precarious, exposing migrants in addition to their local residents in conditions of exclusion and vulnerability. Migration, when adequately managed through inclusive urban planning and governance at the local level, could be turned into an opportunity to contribute to the socio-economic dynamism and sustainable development of host cities. As the New Urban Agenda states, City leaders must be equipped with enhanced capacities and tools to design, plan and manage inclusive urban development.

Arab cities are among the world's top destinations for migrants and displaced, owing to a multitude of reasons. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), they host more than 38 million international migrants (including registered refugees), 45 percent of the world's refugees and around 16 percent internally displaced persons. Although sudden surge in flows of migrants had different impacts on Arab countries, the protection and inclusion of these new entrants fell primarily upon local government.

The publication Migration and Inclusive Cities: A Guide for Arab City Leaders is part of the UN-Habitat City Leaders Guide series and launched as an issue paper by the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, co-chaired by International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the League of Arab States (LAS). It was developed to assist Arab city leaders with practical and insightful guidance to better understand both the pattern and causes of migration impacting the Arab region and how they can positively contribute to the development of the respective urban areas. Taking into consideration the variety of existing governance frameworks in Arab countries at the local level, the guide discerns the main pillars of an inclusive local governments that would enable them to engage successfully with the respective communities. It provides city leaders with evidence-based tools and well-grounded experiences to pursue in order to unravel the tremendous potential of migration that would bring mutually beneficial effects to both host communities and migrants; and drive the sustainable urban development of cities. Inclusion of displaced with host communities into the urban context can transform cities into melting pots of a wide array of social and economic groups, to serve as engines of productivity and sustainable service delivery.

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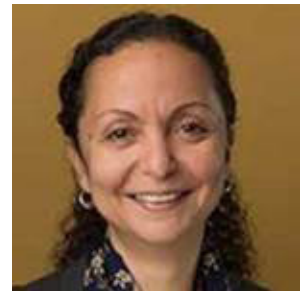
Arab and international migrants have been driving forces in this region's economic, social and cultural development, but the benefits and costs of migration often are unevenly distributed. Cities are the crucible where policy and practice determine whether migration advances or undermines greater equality and access to rights for all.

The Ford Foundation Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Office was pleased to support UN Habitat's Regional Office of Arab States to learn from the experiences of MENA cities and make them available to a larger audience of city leaders, urban practitioners, national governments, and humanitarian and development agencies and organizations. We believe that with the right support city leaders can play a crucial role creating the conditions for just, inclusive cities where both migrants and host communities can thrive. That support must begin with recognizing the city level leadership and successes already taking place, and connecting city leaders to each other and to other levels of government for mutual learning and regional solidarity.

The Ford Foundation's MENA Office is delighted that this publication and the accompanying toolkit and pilots can contribute to the shared goal of just, inclusive cities for all. This publication would not have been possible without the rigor and thoughtfulness of Katja Schäfer, Human Settlements Officer at the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States and the stewardship of Zena Ali Ahmad, Regional Director as well as Clarisa Bencomo, Program Officer for Migration and Equitable Development at the Ford Foundation.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CMI	Centre for Mediterranean Integration
COP21	21st Conference of the Parties
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OHCHR	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
ROAS	Regional Office for Arab States
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN-ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

THE TERM "MIGRANT" AS USED IN THIS GUIDE

The term "migrant" is used in this guide in the same way that the International Organization of Migration (IOM) has defined it, i.e. "as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/ her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is."[1]

The term, therefore, could refer to:

LABOUR MIGRANTS: People who moved from their country of origin to another one or within their own country — typically from rural to urban areas — for the purpose of work.

REFUGEES: People who fled from their own country to another owing to internal conflict, foreign aggression, occupation, violence, fear and/or other disturbing events that have threatened their lives and/ or interrupted the public order.

ASYLUM SEEKERS: People who fled or arrived to a country other than theirs and applied for a refugee status under relevant international and national instruments and are still waiting for the decision on the application.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED People who have been forced to flee or leave their place of residence, but who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border, due to reasons of generalized violence, conflicts, human rights violations, natural or human-made disasters as well as those displaced due to climate change and/or development projects.

CRISIS-DISPLACED PEOPLE: People who are international migrants who were affected by conflict, and human-made disasters in a country in which they work and reside and who become displaced within the country or forced to flee to a third country or return to their own country (returnees).

CLIMATE MIGRANTS[2]: People who are moving to urban areas, internally or internationally, as a way to cope with the intensification of the effects of climate change and environmental degradation and the decline in agriculture production. They seek to diversify their income and find employment opportunities that are not reliant on the environment.

THE GENTRIFIED OR EXPELLED: People displaced from their land, home or habitual place of residence by land grabbing deals, large infrastructure projects, urban renewal programmes and or market forces and powerful groups and who do not fit under the traditional categories of migrants, refugees or IDPs[3].

OTHER MIGRANTS: These are for instance students and families of labour migrants. In view of the significant distinction between the above categories of migrants the Guide attempts to be specific in the use of terminology whenever necessary to maintain clarity. Otherwise, it uses the term "migrant" as an umbrella term.

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[1] IOM — Key Migration Terms.

[2] IOM, 2017

[3] Sassen 2014.

A NOTE ON ARAB HOSTING STATES' RESPONSIBILITIES AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS TOWARDS MIGRANTS

Migration and migrants' rights are well acknowledged in international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and ... the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country" (Article 13), and that "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution" (Article 14). At the same time, the UDHR acknowledges, among other rights, the right of everyone to work (Article 23); "to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control" (Article 25), to education (Article 26), and "freely to participate in the cultural life of the community" (Article 27).

In principle, receiving States hold prime responsibility for all international migrants who reach their territory, including those who make a claim for protection there. In line with their human rights obligations and commitments, they are the principal duty bearers responsible and accountable for fulfilling the rights of those who reside within their national boundaries. This encompasses:

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS: right to nutritious food, adequate housing and living standards, water and sanitation, education, health care, social security, participation in cultural life, work, transport, and public services and utilities.

CIVIL RIGHTS: right to freedom of thought, speech, religion, press, assembly, and movement; and ensure the protection of individuals from discrimination on grounds such as race, gender, national origin, colour, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, or disability.

POLITICAL RIGHTS: right to participate in civil society and freedom of association, the right to assemble, the right to petition, the right of self-defence, and the right to vote.

Typically, hosting countries manage international migrants under national migration laws and procedures except for refugees and asylum seekers, given that the duty to protect and address the needs of this specific group of migrants is considered a collective responsibility, involving both national governments and the international community. At the request of refugee- and asylum seeker-hosting countries or the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides protection to refugees and asylum seekers and assists hosting countries in their local integration, voluntary repatriation, or resettlement to a third country, as deemed appropriate. In addition, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) assists Palestinian refugees stemming from the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars who reside in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan under a renewable three-year mandate. All other refugees, including Palestinian refugees outside UNRWA›s area of operations, are entitled to assistance and protection from UNHCR.

With the exception of Palestinian refugees in UNRWA's area of operations, the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol constitute the key legislative framework for addressing and protecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and for clarifying the obligations of the States that have signed one or both of these documents towards them. In the Arab region, seven countries (Algeria, Djibouti, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia, Tunisia and Yemen) are signatories to these international agreements and two (Egypt and Sudan) have signed them with reservation. In refugee hosting countries that have not ratified these international agreements, refugees and asylum seekers are administered in accordance to international refugee law, human rights treaties, and relevant domestic legislation that entitle them to live, like other persons, in health and dignity. In addition, the main aspects of refugee protection are regulated by bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed between UNHCR and the governments of Egypt (1954), Jordan (1998), and Lebanon (2003).[4]

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[4] Kagan 2011.

For various reasons, however, the migration status of certain forced international migrants can be blurred. For example, the Lebanese government does not officially recognize the Syrians who fled the fighting in Syria to Lebanon as "refugees" since Lebanon is not a signatory to 1951 UN Refugee Convention and since Syrians fall outside the scope of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that Lebanon signed with UNHCR in 2003. Instead, the Lebanese government refers to the Syrians who escaped to Lebanon as 'nazihun', i.e. the displaced, and is administering them since January 2015 in accordance with domestic immigration legislations and regulations[5]. In Egypt, the pan-Arab dialogue on Arab and Muslim brotherhood and the 1982 Integration Agreement between Egypt and Sudan have produced the blurred legal status of Sudanese "guests" and "brothers". Despite their protracted displacement situation or "permanent temporariness", the Sudanese nationals who fled to Egypt in the early 1990s could not claim asylum in Egypt in any meaningful way before 1995 when they were finally able to apply for the international refugee status[6].

Dealing with IDPs also falls under the realm of State sovereignty, given that IDPs are citizens of the country in which they are displaced and, hence, "entitled to enjoy equally and without discrimination, the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country."[7] The role of international organizations in addressing IDP situations is complementary to State institutions[8]. Like refugees, IDPs are protected by international law. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1998, is the first and foremost normative framework that addresses the issue of internal displacement. This document compiles and restates the responsibilities of States and other authorities towards IDPs under international human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law. The humanitarian response framework that ensued the adoption of Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, considered IDPs the joint responsibility of all humanitarian agencies coordinated by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. In line with this pledge, UNHCR is employing its expertise since many years to protect and assist IDPs, although it original mandate does not specifically cover this group of migrants[9].

The lack of clear national immigration and/or refugee policies and the confusion over the migration status of certain groups does not relieve hosting States from their binding human rights commitments towards all those who reside within their geographic boundaries. All States are bound to protect migrants and respect their basic human rights as outlined in international law and other binding international treaties, bilateral agreements and national legislations. In addition, hosting States are bound by the principle of "non-refoulement", which, as defined in article 33 of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, stipulates that no refugee shall be forcefully returned to a country "where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

As refugee and asylum seeker receiving States do not have the same capacity and resources, and as no country can effectively address sudden "mass influx" or "large-scale influx" of migrants on its own, international "responsibility-sharing" for hosting and supporting the world's refugees remains vital to address the needs of refugees and receiving States. This involves, as recent discussions carried under the aegis of the UN General Assembly have stressed, reinforcing inter-state cooperation and action, at both the regional and the global levels, and enhancing the level of coordination among concerned international, national and local actors and migrants themselves for the creation of comprehensive and resilience-based responses.[10]

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[5] Frangieh 2016.

[6] Fábos 2015.

[7] UNHCR 2017.

[8] OHCHR – Questions and Answers about IDPs.

[9] UNHCR – Internally Displaced People.

[10] Particularly the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants held in September 2016 in New York City.

1 - INTRODUCTION

MIGRATION AND THE CHALLENGES FACING ARAB CITIES

Migration, especially forced migration, is one of the defining phenomena of the 21st century. Millions of people across the global have fled armed conflicts, persecutions, natural disasters, and/or economic hardships in recent years. Whether they crossed national borders or stayed within the geographic limits of the country in which they originally resided, their ultimate movement has mostly been towards cities. It is impossible to stop the influx of migrants into urban areas in the foreseeable future. People will continue to move towards cities in search for livelihood opportunities, security, and a decent life. Unfortunately, due to lack of planning and resources, many end up in overcrowded and underserved settlements or in remote urban areas that lack basic infrastructure, social services and connectivity to labour markets. Denied access to formal job opportunities and social protection systems and excluded from the urban advantages that they are seeking in cities, migrants, particularly the most vulnerable ones, are often stigmatized as a problem rather than recognized for their energy and potential contribution to urban life.

The Arab region is at the core of the present global debate on migration and cities. Current migratory flows from, through and within the region are diverse, complex and vast (Boxes 1 & 2). The on-going conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, and State of Palestine have impacted recent global migration patterns tremendously and contributed to one of the world's biggest displacement crises in recent history. IOM has estimated that international migrants from Arab countries, including registered refugees, amount to nearly 24 million, or 10 per cent of the global figure. The number of international migrants within the region is even higher − around 38 million[11]. This figure is inclusive of registered refugees, who account for over one third of registered refugees in the world[12]. The region is also home to approximately one third of the world's IDPs[13]. In addition, it hosts a significant number of international labour migrants, with the oil-rich GCC countries acting as the main recipients of both intra and extra regional labourers.

It is believed that the great majority of migrants in Arab hosting countries live in urban areas or on the urban periphery. In Beirut, for instance, the ratio of refugees to the local population is estimated at one to four[14]. Indeed, as cities are social hubs and centres of wealth and economic development, most people opt to settle in cities, including international migrants, refugees and IDPs. According to UN estimates, more than half of the population in Arab countries live in urban areas. This rate is expected to increase by more than twofold over the next four decades. The unprecedented increase in urban population numbers, accelerated by massive migratory inflows, is yet not without its challenges, particularly:

- **Physical and environmental challenges** associated with increased pressure on infrastructure and basic urban services, affordable housing and public transportation systems, increased demand for urban land, public space and social facilities (mainly schools and health facilities), depletion of natural resources and the increase of pollution;

- **Socio-economic challenges** stemming from increased urban poverty rates, fragile labour markets, high unemployment levels (especially among women and youth), and competition between host and migrant communities over job opportunities (particularly seasonal and informal jobs);

- **Fiscal challenges** due to strains on municipal budgets and inability of many local authorities to raise their own funds to effectively cope with urban problems;

- **Urban governance challenges** linked to centralized decision-making and weak local institutions that do not have the sufficient tools and resources to administer city growth and maintain urban security and social cohesion.

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[11]IOM 2016a.
[12]Based on UNHCR Global Trends 2015.
[13]ibid.
[14]Fawaz 2016 (based on estimates published by UNHCR & UNRWA).

1 CURRENT MIGRATION TRENDS IN THE ARAB REGION

There are three broad interrelated types of migration in the Arab region today:

- **Labour migration:** referring to the often-temporary movement (whether regular or irregular) of working age persons for the purpose of employment and better livelihood and economic opportunities. Labour migration to and within the Arab region is mostly towards GCC countries. Driven by their rich resources and relatively small local labour force, employers in these countries have turned to both skilled and unskilled international workers, mainly from low and middle-income countries within and outside the region (South Asia, South-East Asia, and the Horn of Africa). Jordan and Lebanon are countries of origin and destination of migrant workers — they send out skilled migrants and receive less skilled ones.

- **Forced migration:** referring to forced population movements (whether across borders or within the same country) caused by on-going armed conflicts, unresolved crises, life threatening events; natural and human-made disasters, and development-induced displacements. Forced population movements in the Arab region are mostly large scale and protracted in nature. Particularly, the protracted crisis in both Syria and Iraq have generated tremendous numbers of refugees and IDPs. Likewise, conflicts in Sudan, Libya and Yemen have triggered massive numbers of forced displacement. Combined with drought and famine, Somalia's sustained conflict has also led to large-scale forced migratory flows.

- **Mixed migration:** referring to complex large-scale irregular cross-border movements of migrants (refugees, asylum-seekers, migrant workers and others) who fled their countries — often with the help of human traffickers — in search of international protection or economic opportunities, mainly in Europe. Several Arab countries are sending, transit and receiving of mixed migrants. Sudan, Libya, Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco are along the primary mixed migration routes stemming from or passing through the region.

2 SOME KEY FACTS AND FIGURES ON MIGRATION IN THE ARAB REGION

- GCC countries host nearly three quarters of international migrants in the Arab world. The top destinations are: Saudi Arabia (over 12 million) and United Arab Emirates (around 8 million). Other major destinations are: Jordan (over 3 million), Kuwait (3.1 million) and Lebanon (around 2 million)[15].

- Jordan and Lebanon are among the top host countries of refugees registered by UNHCR. Lebanon is the third largest refugee-hosting country in the world (and first if compared to the size of its national population) and Jordan the seventh with a registered refugee population of 1 million and 720,000 respectively, excluding Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate[16].

- The Syrian Arab Republic is the biggest sending country of refugees registered by UNHCR in the world (5.5 million out of a total of 18.5 million). It also has one of the highest numbers of IDPs in the world, reaching 6.3 million, and around 185,000 asylum-seekers ranking second in the world after Colombia in 2016[17].

- Iraq has the third biggest IDP population in the world with 3.5 million.. Somalia is the fourth refugee sending country in the world (1.5 million). In addition it has around 1.5 million IDPs. Sudan is the fifth refugee sending country in the world (650,0600) and has some 2.2 million registered IDPs. Yemen has over 2 million IDPs[18].

- The prolonged occupation of the State of Palestine and its ongoing pressures of forced evictions, demolition of homes and denial of building permits have caused the displacement of around 193,000 persons within the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, looking for better access to services and resources[19].

[15]IOM 2018
[16]UNHCR 2017b.
[17]ibid.
[18]ibid.
[19]IDMC 2016

1 - INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Notwithstanding the particular challenges associated with different migration types, local authorities in migrant-receiving cities are forefront actors in the daily management of migration and in responding to the strains that large migratory flows might inflict on urban infrastructure, public utilities, and social cohesion and ensuring people's wellbeing and the wider determinants of public safety and health. Cities with strong local administration and responsive urban policies and urban planning and management systems can better accommodate for and benefit from the migrants who arrive in their cities. On the contrary, migration in cities with weak local administrations and out-dated urban policies and plans — often cities struggling to fulfil the basic needs of their own citizens — can provoke social tension and lead to xenophobic responses or violence.

This operational Guide initiated by the UN-Habitat Regional Office of Arab States (ROAS), focuses on the multiple challenges associated with the massive flow of migrants from and into the cities of the Arab region[20]. It mainly targets Arab city leaders with the aim of supporting them in:

1. responding to migration related issues in their cities in an inclusive manner;
2. leveraging the capacities and know-how from a wide range of actors, including migrants and host communities, to address crucial urban development needs.

The Guide builds on existing risk fragility and resilience frameworks (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction - SFDRR), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) that aim to develop dynamic, preventive, and adaptive urban governance systems at the global, national, and local levels. It particularly embraces the commitments made at the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Urban Development (Habitat III) by representatives of the world's states, mayors, city council members, civil society groups, the private sector, professionals and practitioners, academics and think tanks, indigenous populations, and other concerned actors towards migrants and inclusive cities, as outlined in the New Urban Agenda — the outcome document of Habitat III (Box 3). More specifically,

the Guide builds on the "Right to the City" concept (or "Cities for All" as alternatively called in some countries) — that is, a collective right that seeks "to promote inclusivity and ensure that all inhabitants, of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements to foster prosperity and quality of life for all." [21]

This Guide has been produced in light of the elaboration of a Global Compact on Migration, and the respective preparatory stocktaking meetings on regional and substantive level. Particularly reference is made to the New York Declaration on Migrants and Refugees that contains commitments both to address migration and displacement as well as to prepare the world for future challenges. It builds on the Beirut, Lebanon based regional preparatory meetings by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (Regional Preparatory Meeting for Global Compact on Migration) and the civil society (MENA Civil Society Consultation on the Global Compact on Migration) as well as the 4th Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development in Berlin, Germany and the International Conference on Cities and Migration in Mechelen, Belgium that highlighted the importance of local government in migration management for inclusive urban development, in locations of origin, transit and destination. The content of the Guide has also been enriched by the presentations and discussions of several symposia and meetings on migration in the Arab region; particularly those organized by IOM, ESCWA, LAS and the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI)[22] ; as well a regional expert group meeting that was organized by the UN-Habitat ROAS in Beirut, Lebanon in October 2016 attended by twenty four local government representatives, academics, and urban development practitioners. Where information is available, relevant concrete examples from the Arab region have been incorporated in the Guide to illustrate particular issues and/or provide insights for making cities more inclusive. Examples were identified either through a desk review process or by UN-Habitat and partner agencies.

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[20]This includes the twenty-two member countries of the League of Arab States (LAS): Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

[21]The New Urban Agenda.
[22]A multi-partner network supported by online platform dedicated for municipalities hosting refugees in order to exchange and learn from each other's experiences and best practices to ensure the common welfare of host communities and refugees. The network comprises 80 local governments in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Palestine.

It is anticipated that this Guide will help:

1. Defining realistic, feasible and action-oriented interventions that can be performed at the local level to mitigate migration negative impacts and make a palpable positive difference in the daily-lives of all city residents;

2. Stimulating a city-to-city learning process and initiating a constructive dialogue on the reforms, resources and support needed to strengthen local actors and support them in benefiting from the economic, social and cultural contributions that migrants can bring to city life;

3. Identifying concrete entry points and actions that donor agencies and concerned international organizations can take to support central and municipal governments as well as local actors to develop sustainable urban development responses that pay due consideration to the human needs of people living under vulnerable conditions, irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, and occupation.

3 INCLUSIVE URBANIZATION AND MIGRATION IN THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Despite the remarkable achievements in improving the quality of life of millions of urban dwellers since the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements in Vancouver in 1976 (Habitat I) and in Istanbul in 1996 (Habitat II), major obstacles to the attainment of sustainable urban development persist. Poverty, income inequalities, social and economic exclusion, spatial segregation and environmental degradation are indisputable realities in many cities and human settlements around the world. Considering that more than half of the globe's population is currently living in urban areas, and close to 70 per cent will by 2050, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development held in Quito in Ecuador in October 2016 (Habitat III) has re-questioned the way we build, manage and live in cities.

Intended as an instrument to support city leaders and decision makers in addressing urbanization challenges and opportunities, the New Urban Agenda has reaffirmed the global commitments as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; particularly SDG11 which pledges to "make cities and human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable". Substantiated in the "Right to the City" concept, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other international human rights treaties and UN charters and declarations, it embraces a people-centred vision of cities and human settlements and promotes them "as places that strive to guarantee a decent and full life for all inhabitants" and as places "where all persons are able to enjoy equal rights and opportunities, as well as their fundamental freedoms." It specifically underscores the obligation of cities to fulfil their social function through working progressively towards the realization of:

1. the right to adequate housing, without discrimination;

2. universal access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation; and

3. equal access for all to public goods and quality services (e.g. food security and nutrition, health, education, infrastructure, mobility and transportation, energy, air quality and livelihoods).

At the same time, the New Urban Agenda commits to support migrants and vulnerable groups, including refugees and displaced people in urban settings, in gaining access to adequate standard of living and opportunities for productive and decent work while accounting for national circumstances. Concurrently, the New Urban Agenda highlights the significant "social, economic and cultural contributions" that migrants can potentially bring into urban life and underlines international commitment to:

1. extending help to migrants, regardless of their migration status, and crisis-affected persons as well as their host communities;

2. "strengthening synergies between international migration and development, at the global, regional, national, subnational, and local levels by ensuring safe, orderly, and regular migration through planned and well-managed migration policies";

3. "supporting local authorities in establishing frameworks that enable the positive contribution of migrants to cities and strengthened urban-rural linkages."

2 - KEY MIGRATION-RELATED ISSUES IN THE ARAB REGION

1- THE REGION'S RECENT LARGE-SCALE MIGRATORY OUTFLOWS ARE NOT ONLY DRIVEN BY WARS AND CONFLICTS; INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND EXCLUSION ARE ALSO KEY TRIGGERS

As is well known, the political and social unrest that swept the Arab world in recent years has destabilized several Arab countries and generated massive waves of refugees and forcefully displaced people. Most Arab countries have produced and received vulnerable migrants. Migratory flows from, to and through the region are however more complex than what can be attributed to war and conflict. Despair and loss of hope in one's country or place of origin have also compelled millions of people to leave their homes in search of a decent life elsewhere. Key triggers include:

- Lack of decent employment and educational opportunities, weak economies, worsening quality of life, soaring living expenses, lack of well-targeted social protection programmes, unequal distribution of public resources, rural-urban disparities in services and opportunities, repression of freedoms, and governance structures that reinforce rather than combat social exclusion and discrimination.

- Loss of habitat due to both environmental and human-made factors stemming from exploitation of natural resources, land grabs, sales and privatization of public assets, loss of fertile land, food insecurity, government neglect, massive infrastructure projects and gentrification-induced displacement.

2- POPULATION GROWTH IS NOT THE ONLY CAUSE OF URBAN CHALLENGES

The unprecedented pace and scale of population growth, particularly in cities, is a main concern in most Arab countries. Population growth has long surpassed the capacity of many governments in the region to expand infrastructure systems, deliver public services, and provide adequate living conditions for all. Population growth does not however offer a complete explanation for why many Arab cities and towns have grown out of control or why their infrastructure and public service systems are crumbling. There are other pertinent reasons that vary in intensity and urgency from one city to another, mainly:

- Out-dated urban planning and management systems and lack of a long-term vision and coherent policies to guide urban growth and development.

- Weak local public institutions that have neither sufficient financial and technical resources nor experienced professional staff to oversee and respond to urban growth challenges — mainly in view of the reluctance of central governments to decentralize financial and administrative authority to the local level.

- Privatization policies and the retreat of State institutions in many countries from their social responsibilities towards lower income groups, which eventually affected the access of these groups to decent urban infrastructure and services and led to increasing the vulnerabilities of both low- and middle-income earners.

Refugee hand on fence. ©Petlia Roman/Shutterstock.com

3- MIGRATION HAS CONTRIBUTED TO SHIFTING THE LOCUS OF POVERTY TO CITIES

As elsewhere, migration in the Arab region has contributed to shifting the locus of poverty to cities, a process commonly known as the "urbanization of poverty"[23]. Indeed, many migrants in Arab cities are poor, vulnerable and unable to attain the "urban advantage" that they initially sought in cities. Access to decent livelihood opportunities and formal housing has been particularly challenging for many, as manifested in the growth of informal settlements and informal economy. This problem is more acute in cities hosting large numbers of forced migrants (Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon), where, despite the tremendous efforts, neither governments nor supporting countries and organizations have been able thus far to respond effectively to increased demands for housing, jobs, public services and infrastructure.

Although mass influx of migrants has often been accompanied by humanitarian aid, the slowness of both humanitarian agencies and hosting countries in adjusting to numbers and to making the shift from a humanitarian to a development response, has contributed to the suffering of many migrants and the urban crisis of many cities. In Lebanon, for instance, "the consociational shape of governance, and at times actual lack of a government, has caused paralysis in the UN humanitarian aid system"[24]. The repercussions have been very serious at the environmental, economic, and social levels. In-depth assessments carried out in 12 municipalities show that the conditions of 71 per cent of the surveyed host communities have worsened as a result of the Syrian refugee influx, with service delivery (water, electricity, waste management, housing, and health and education service to refugees) being the greatest challenge[25]. Many of these municipalities were already poor and unable to meet the basic needs of their own population.

4- MIGRATION HAS WIDENED EXISTING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES AND DIVISIONS

Many cities in the Arab region exhibit multiple forms of polarization as manifested in their visible spatial fragmentation and the huge difference in the ability of different social groups to enjoy decent living conditions[26]. In some cities, market processes of spatial restructuring are triggering development-induced displacements and producing new territorialities along income lines. This is for instance the case of Beirut, Amman, and Cairo where gentrification and slum settlement growth are simultaneously taking place. The massive inflows of poor and vulnerable migrants into these cities are widening existing socio-economic divisions and produced new ones.

In parallel, regional conflict-induced displacements are directly contributing to changing the demographic composition and identity of previously socially mixed and culturally diverse geographic territories. The ultimate case is areas that fell under the control of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), where minority groups have been forcefully displaced leaving their property and belongings behind.

Although many Arab towns and cities have been welcoming of migrants, the huge influx of people into their territories has not been without its challenges. The general perception that labour migrants and refugees are competing with the locals over the limited available jobs opportunities and putting more pressure on already strained urban public resources have sparked xenophobic and intolerant responses in many cities. At the same time, the visible and invisible barriers on migrants' mobility and ability to get access to secure jobs, health services, human development opportunities, and a decent life in general, have exacerbated social inequalities and the marginalization of many migrants, particularly refugees, who as a result have become susceptible to exploitation and discrimination.

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[23]UN Habitat 2003.
[24]Chatty 2016.
[25]CMI 2016.
[26]ESCWA 2011.

3. TOWARDS INCLUSIVE ARAB CITIES

The inclusive city is grounded in the **"Right to the City"** concept — a concept that "aims to build cities for people, not for profit" and to provide "an alternative framework to re-think cities and urbanization on the basis of the principles of social justice, equity, effective fulfilment of all human rights, responsibility towards nature and future generations, and local democracy."[27]

The inclusive city, therefore, acknowledges the right of all its inhabitants to a decent and dignified life regardless of their nationality, income level, religion, ethnicity, race, age, gender, physical ability, occupation and urban location. It upholds human rights and liberties, fosters economic development and pro-poor economic policies, and celebrates social diversity. It is one where all inhabitants, particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups, can access urban resources and services, and are empowered to achieve their full human potential.[28]

More specifically, the inclusive city is one that provides all its dwellers — whether citizens, migrant workers, refugees or other displaced people — with access to adequate standards of living, including housing; jobs and livelihood opportunities; and infrastructure and urban services and facilities (mainly education and health facilities). At the same time, it is one that encourages civic engagement and the participation of all its inhabitants in city and community life.

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[27] Habitat III policy paper framework: The right to the city and cities for all.
[28] UN-Habitat 2010.

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While migration policies are generally addressed at the national level, the tangible physical, socio-economic and environmental impacts of human mobility are largely managed at the local level. Local governments hold the prime responsibility for creating local opportunities for social, economic, cultural and political inclusion. National governments and the international community have the obligation to support them in increasing these opportunities when confronting situations of mass influx of refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs. Still, local governments are the entities with the highest stake in building inclusive cities and sustainable models of urbanization.

With the support of higher tiers of government and concerned humanitarian and development agencies, inclusive local governments can effectively respond to the urban challenges associated with mass migratory inflows, and harness, at the same time, the significant social, economic and cultural contributions that migrants can bring to their cities.

More specifically, inclusive local government will embrace and mainstream the core principles of inclusion in all their functions. They will:

1. Enact urban policies and legalisations that align urban development with social equity.

2. Develop urban planning and design solutions that aim at making cities more inclusive, sustainable, resilient, vibrant and safe.

3. Promote the development of local economy and the creation of jobs that open up sustainable livelihood opportunities for vulnerable city residents.

4. Invest in basic urban services and essential infrastructure that improve the living conditions of disadvantaged households and respond to their distinct needs.

5. Communicate and engage effectively with their residents and advocate for their rights.

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A FRAMEWORK FOR COLLECTIVE LOCAL LEVEL ACTION

What follows is a framework to guide local governments and concerned actors in developing inclusive responses to the urban challenges facing their cities — particularly responses that can make a significant difference to the lives of vulnerable groups. Sections 4-7 of this Guide further elaborate on the guiding directions and possible interventions/practical recommendations listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Building inclusive cities — a framework for collective local level action

KEY COMPONENTS OF AN INCLUSIVE CITY	GUIDING DIRECTIONS
Access to Adequate Housing and Living Standards (See Section 4)	1. Recognize self-help housing arrangements and support vulnerable residents in gaining access to improved services and secure tenure
	2. Help increase the supply of adequate housing units through formal channels and support vulnerable groups to gain access to these units
	3. Manage urban growth and enact regulatory reforms that reduce the informal settlements sprawl in the future
Access to Livelihoods and Job Opportunities (See Section 5)	1. Support small businesses and start-ups, particularly innovative entrepreneurial initiatives that employ the skills of vulnerable urban dwellers including migrants
	2. Sustain informal activities through urban planning and regulatory mechanisms
	3. Launch new urban development initiatives that can create income generating opportunities for locals and migrants
Access to Infrastructure and Public Services and Facilities (See Section 6)	1. Form strategic coalitions and partnerships with a broad range of actors to finance, implement, and coordinate vital interventions in infrastructure and services provision
	2. Support scaling-up successful area-based approaches and linking them with long-term city or regional level planning efforts
Civic Engagement and Participation in City and Community Life (See Section 7)	1. Invest in the design and upgrading of shared communal spaces
	2. Facilitate community participation and dialogue to increase public trust in formal institutions
	3. Support the establishment of community organizational structures and social networks

PILLARS OF INCLUSIVE LOCAL ACTION

There are a number of factors that influence the effectiveness of interventions presented in the above framework and the subsequent sections of this Guide. These factors are listed below and linked to some practical examples/ case studies from the Arab region in Sections 4-7.

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1. Collective action:

Effective responses to the urban challenges associated with migration require the combined effort of a wide range of actors and the creation of multiple forms of vertical and horizontal collaboration between them – particularly between the different tiers of government, concerned humanitarian and development agencies, service providers and private sector employers. Partnering with non-governmental organizations that work closely with local communities (e.g. faith communities, local civil society, community based organizations, and migrants' associations) is equally important to ensure that proposed interventions meet the needs and demands of target groups.

2. Institutional coordination:

It is important that the various government levels involved in responding to migration-related urban challenges establish effective institutional arrangements to coordinate their efforts. This includes setting adequate and sustainable mechanisms to coordinate municipal level interventions with regional and national programmes and ensuring the work of the numerous humanitarian aid agencies, including civil society actors, involved in the provision of urban services is well coordinated.

3. Community participation:

Local communities are in best position to identify the urban problems of their areas and prioritize their own needs. It is therefore imperative for local authorities and concerned actors to harness their potential, engage them in decisions that affect their lives, and ensure that their concerns are well addressed in municipal and national level plans.

4. Replicability potential:

While a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach is recommended, it might not be possible to implement right away except in pilot areas of limited scale. Successful pilot initiatives should have replicability potential and/or the ability to be scaled up, otherwise their overall impact remains marginal.

5. Capacity building:

Building capacity of public institutions particularly at the local level is another key consideration. The support of higher levels of governments and international agencies to cities can only be effective if local governments have political support, devolved powers, basic tools and adequate resources to make a real difference in their cities. Capacity building and human skills development at the community level is as important to enhance the self-reliance of vulnerable groups.

6. Comprehensive response:

This involves combining spatial and physical interventions (such as access to housing, infrastructure, public services and facilities, communal public spaces) with social concerns (such as community-driven development, civic participation, safety and crime prevention among other social concerns) and socially-motivated economic considerations (such as job creation, livelihoods support, capacity building, and pro-poor economic strategies).

7. Reliable data:

Accurate, timely and disaggregated data is essential for governments to deliver urban services fairly and efficiently. Although access to such data is challenging in many cities, this can be addressed through stronger coordination and dialogue between local governments, city residents, service providers, private sector companies, and civil society organizations.

8. Mutual adaptation between locals and migrants:

To reduce likely social tensions, it is important to balance the needs of locals and migrants and to encourage them to engage in activities that involve their regular interaction. This process of "mutual adaptation" is essential to enrich social, economic and civic life and to ensure the security and stability of society as a whole.[29]

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29 Based on IOM definition of integration.

Adequate housing is a human right recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), and other international and regional treaties and declarations. It has also been incorporated into the national constitutions of several countries across the world and has been embraced by UN agencies. The New Urban Agenda has reaffirmed global commitment to the right to adequate housing as part of the right to an adequate standard of living without discrimination, and urged national governments to prioritize it since it is central to "achieving inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities in a world where rapid urbanization has exacerbated housing shortages."

City of Tripoli, Lebanon ©Milonk/Shutterstock.com

FRAMING QUESTIONS

What role can Arab local governments play in improving housing conditions and providing better living standards for urban dwellers in vulnerable situations, including migrants, refugees and displaced people? How can they influence the type and quality of housing development taking place in urban areas? What actions should they take?

GUIDING DIRECTIONS

Adequate housing is more than four walls and a roof. It is housing that fulfils the inherent human need for security, peace and dignity. Its characteristics also include privacy, protection against forced evictions and freedom of movement [30]. In order for housing to be adequate, it must, at a minimum, meet seven conditions: 1) legal security of tenure; 2) availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; 3) affordability; 4) habitability; 5) accessibility; 6) location; and 7) cultural adequacy [31].

National governments are duty bearers of the right to housing and have the obligation to respond to the housing needs and protect the housing rights of all those who live within national boundaries, including vulnerable labour migrants, refugees and IDPs. Whether directly involved in housing provision or not, local governments have a key role in realizing the right to adequate standards of living, including housing. Improving the access to adequate housing in cities is one of the fundamental pathways to further improvements in the dimensions of social and spatial inclusion of migrant populations.

With their urban management and service provision mandate, fiscal power, and authority over zoning regulations and the building permission process, they can positively influence the type, scale and location of new housing projects taking place in their areas in ways that reduce the need of vulnerable groups to resort to informal housing channels.

Inclusive local governments actively engage in designing and implementing policies, strategies and programmes that enhance the access to adequate housing and combat the negative externalities associated with informal modes of housing acquisition. They build on the agency of vulnerable city dwellers and combine curative and preventive approaches to dealing with the housing challenge i.e. reactive solutions that focus on fixing existing problems and proactive planning responses that guide urban growth and future housing development.   They:

1. Recognize self-help housing arrangements [32] and support vulnerable residents in gaining access to improved services and secure tenure.

2. Help increase the supply of adequate housing units through formal channels and support vulnerable groups to gain access to these units.

3. Manage urban growth and enact regulatory reforms that reduce the informal settlements sprawl in the future.

Refugee camp in Tunisia © Mohamed Ali Mhenni

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[30] Based on general Comments 4 and 7 of CESCR.

[31] Article 11(1) of CESCR.

[32] Self-help housing here should be understood in its broadest sense, as it refers to the informal practices of land acquisition, housing and low-cost rental market through their own resources for those under-privileged migrants wishing to settle in cities but have little access to the state-provided housing.

4. ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING AND LIVING STANDARDS

1. RECOGNIZE SELF-HELP HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS AND SUPPORT VULNERABLE RESIDENTS IN GAINING ACCESS TO IMPROVED SERVICES AND SECURE TENURE

Self-help housing involves a bottom-up approach to housing that social enterprises typically meet either through training disadvantaged groups and engaging them in the production of low-cost housing units or through bringing existing vacant or dilapidated housing units back into use and leasing them out at affordable rates to those who cannot otherwise gain access to housing in the respective urban areas. Alternatively, self-help housing is informally produced by vulnerable groups, often on publicly owned land (sometimes located in hazardous areas) and in violation of zoning regulations and building codes. Without formal tenure, many of the inhabitants of these areas live under constant fear of forced eviction and remain largely excluded from housing-related urban services. This second mode of self-help housing is the way through which a great number of vulnerable groups access housing in Arab cities[33]. For instance, in Baghdad over 220 informal settlements, mostly housing IDPs and economic migrants, have burgeoned on public land after 2003 with no or little access to basic urban services (water, sanitation, electricity) and facilities (mainly schools and health centres).[34]

Instead, other IDPs, refugees, migrant workers and vulnerable citizens have relied on rental markets, both formal and informal, to gain access to housing. In Lebanon, for example, the flexibility and responsiveness of rental housing markets allowed urban areas to absorb massive numbers of Syrians refugees. The majority however settled in crowded and poorly maintained shared accommodation, located in both legally and illegally constructed buildings, without signing legally binding rental agreements with their landlords. Some Syrian families have even taken shelter in unfinished buildings that barely represent a protection from the elements, especially with the harsh winters. Expectedly, this mode of housing acquisition exacerbated the vulnerability of both the Syrians and the initial inhabitants of crisis-affected neighbourhoods due to lack of tenure security, poor living conditions and exploitation by middlemen and landlords.[35]

Whether formal, informal, or occupying a "grey space" between formality and informality, self-help housing is "a solution to a housing problem rather than a housing problem by itself"[36]. It is, therefore, imperative for governments, at all levels, to recognize it and support its residents in gaining access to improved services and secure tenure. In this regard, urban growth should be better managed in order to expand or densify urban areas towards mixed use at neighbourhood scale.

Cases of informal settlements

There are no straightforward solutions to addressing the sprawl of informal settlements. Governments need to assess the state of each, as different situations require different intervention strategies. These typically involve: upgrading, redevelopment, or relocation. A combination of approaches might also be viable in one city; such as in Baghdad where all three approaches are deemed appropriate to deal with settlements housing IDPs.

- **Upgrading and incorporation with the formal areas of the city:** This is the preferred option where land value is not high as it allows informal dwellers to stay in their current housing. It involves physical improvements to existing housing units and providing area dwellers with access to basic infrastructure and services and to secure tenure. In Baghdad, the Iraqi government is providing infrastructure in certain settlements in accordance with Iraqi standards and facilitating the access of their dwellers to formal land ownership through a system of regular affordable payments. Individual land ownership is however only one form of tenure and is not necessarily the best option, as it might, in certain situations, trigger the eviction of area residents by market forces. As such, governments need to explore and promote alternative tenure types (e.g. collective land ownership, usufruct land rights, temporary land rental, and community land trust).[37]

- **Settlement redevelopment into a higher density mixed residential-commercial area:** This is a viable strategy where land value is high and where vacant land is scarce and demand for public housing is high. It is considered a "value-capture" mechanism as it promotes higher built-up residential densities and an economically viable mixture of social housing, private housing, and commercial uses. Investment in these latter two components is usually favoured to offset investment costs in social housing for the most vulnerable households. Again, this is a socially responsible approach as it allows informal dwellers to remain where they are, which is essential to retain livelihoods and community cohesion.

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[33]ESCWA 2011.
[34]United Nations Iraq.
[35]Fawaz 2016

[36]United Nations Habitat meeting of 1976.
[37]ESCWA 2008.

City of Tripoli, Lebanon ©Milonk/Shutterstock.com

- **Demolition and relocation of residents to an alternative adequate location:** This is the least preferred option and is often a costly and complicated process. Resettlement can however be crucial in certain situations particularly when the informal settlement has emerged in hazardous areas. Where relocation is unavoidable, local governments and other concerned actors need to ensure that the new location is well served and adequately located with respect to job opportunities and public transportation systems.

Cases of unregulated rental markets

Where unregulated rental housing predominates, it would be imperative for local governments to:

- **Enact legal measures to protect the housing rights of vulnerable tenants.** This involves developing and enforcing acceptable minimal standards of living and requesting from landlords to have legally binding contractual agreements with their tenants, including with migrants. "Migrant workers shall enjoy equality of treatment with nationals of the State of employment in relation to … (d) Access to housing, including social housing schemes, and protection against exploitation in respect of rents.[38]" Kuwait's social inclusion programme of migrant workers is an informative example in this regard. The programme has introduced a set of legal measures that aim at improving the living conditions of migrant workers and preventing violation of their housing rights and unlawful rent increases by landlords (Box 4).

- **Establish information and logistical support centres** to facilitate the access of migrants and other vulnerable groups to information on the locations of housing units that meet the acceptable minimal standards, along with their rental prices. Ideally these centres would also provide migrants with information and support regarding their housing rights and referral services to available financial resources when necessary.

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[38]Article 43.1 of ICRMW

4 KUWAIT'S VIBRANT AND ATTRACTIVE WORKERS' HOUSING PROJECTS

According to official estimates, foreign workers — mostly working in low-wage service jobs — represent 70 per cent of Kuwait's total population. Although the country's labour laws acknowledge their human rights, including their right to adequate living standards, many low-paid foreign workers live in deteriorated and over-crowded residential areas that lack basic. The only advantage of these housing units is their relative proximity to job sites and public transportation systems.

As Kuwait's economy will continue to rely on expatriate workforce in the near future, the Government of Kuwait sought to undertake concrete actions to improve the housing conditions of low-income expatriate workers. As per the criteria it set, adequate workers' housing should have good access to main transport axes and urban infrastructure and should be in close proximity to work places. It should, moreover, promote social inclusion and diversity, and be able to accommodate single and young family households who can choose between several types of housing accommodating. To ensure that the minimum standards for workers' housing and met, the Government of Kuwait consequently enacted several laws and regulations that oblige private employers (or sponsors) to obtain an official approval on the housing they are offering to their workers.

While the programme is well intended, oversight of housing provided by private sponsors is still challenging. Dealing with this particular situation would require the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (the authority that monitors and inspects commercial licenses of private sponsors and the location of workers' housing) to coordinate more closely with the Ministry of Interior (the authority responsible for issuing work permits for expatriates) and municipalities (who hold the responsibility for planning and designing new public housing projects under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour) and cross-check their database in order to identify workers under fake sponsorship and physically inspect their housing conditions.

In response to this situation, there is a suggestion to establish an inter-ministerial committee that brings together all relevant ministries and municipalities as well as representatives from the private sector and workers' unions to coordinate efforts and agree on mechanisms for promoting vibrant and attractive workers' housing projects. There are also suggestions to involve local non-governmental actors in housing inspection and in to engage UN agencies in building the capacity of inspectors and providing technical advice for public institutions on legal and regulatory issues pertaining to workers' housing. The success of the programme is therefore contingent on the effective coordination and active participation of the various concerned stakeholders.

As migrants' needs are mounting along with their growing numbers, institutional arrangements to coordinate municipal level interventions with regional and national housing strategies is vital to increase the efficiency of local level action. An inter-ministerial and cross-sectorial mechanism would help to synchronize local level acute needs to the municipal, governorate and national priorities.

Sources: UN-Habitat/IOM/ILO 2012.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

2. HELP INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF ADEQUATE HOUSING UNITS THROUGH FORMAL CHANNELS AND SUPPORT VULNERABLE GROUPS TO GAIN ACCESS TO THESE UNITS

Increasing the supply of adequate housing units through formal channels is essential to realizing the right to adequate housing for all. This does not mean that governments have to build housing for all underprivileged citizens and migrants. Adequate housing can rather be achieved through an enabling approach that incentivizes the private sector to invest in the production and improvement of this type of housing for the benefit of both the local population and migrants. Especially in cities where demand on affordable housing units is high and public resources are scarce, an enabling approach to shelter is crucial.

The devolution of affordable housing production and maintenance to the private sector does not exempt governments from their social obligations and responsibilities towards lower income groups. On the contrary, an enabling approach to housing requires governments, at all levels, to think and intervene in strategic and innovative ways that can positively impact housing markets. Key actions involve:

- **Designing and enacting economic and financial incentives that encourage private developers to invest in affordable housing** (e.g. tax reductions, administrative facilitations, built-up area bonuses or other mechanisms deemed appropriate to the particular context in question). Alternatively, in cities with a high number of vacant housing units, incentives to encourage the owners of these units to put them into use for the benefit of lower-income groups are vital (e.g. easy access to affordable loans, fast permitting process, and reduced renovation permit fees). Inclusive local governments would pay due consideration to balancing the interests of local and migrant families and would work closely with concerned humanitarian and development agencies to identify most vulnerable families and housing units that can potentially be renovated to meet increased demands for affordable rental housing. The programme implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Jordan and Lebanon is a good example to learn from (Box 5).

5 THE NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (NRC) UNFINISHED RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS PROGRAMME IN JORDAN AND LEBANON

Concerned with developing a win-win strategy to improving the living conditions of both vulnerable Syrian refugees and host communities, NRC initiated a programme in Lebanon and Jordan to provide cash grants to host landlords to upgrade sub-standard housing units or complete unfinished residential buildings to meet the agreed standard of adequacy, on the condition of housing Syrian refugees for a rent-free period up to 18 months. On the short term, this cash-based intervention has added to the available rental housing stock, injected money into the local economy, and reduced tensions between both host communities and refugees. It has also reduced the pressure on the housing rental expense for beneficiaries. Nevertheless, longer-term shelter planning and investment in infrastructure expansion for host communities would strengthen this kind of programs. Alongside, the most deserving refugee groups that would benefit from this newly available housing stock have to be identified on the basis of reliable data and supported with livelihoods and income generation activities to enable them to meet their monthly costs and contribute to the economy.

Sources: Culbertson et al. 2016; NRC, 2017.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

4. ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING AND LIVING STANDARDS

- **Developing construction standards and quality control measures and procedures** to ensure that market produced units meet the minimum acceptable requirements. Lessons learnt from the first concluded phase of Jordan's Affordable Housing Programme proves this point. Building on the wide range of market-based approaches to housing provision in the country, the programme counts on creating partnerships among various stakeholders to complement the grant-funded emergency shelter of Syrian refugees with more durable housing solutions and sustainable housing finance schemes designed in the interest of both refugees and vulnerable local families (Box 6).

6 THE MARKET-BASED JORDAN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME

With the influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan, housing prices and rents skyrocketed to unprecedented levels. Access to affordable housing has been limited to both refugees as well low-income Jordanian families. In response to this acute need for housing, the Jordanian Government, in collaboration with municipalities, financial institutions, housing actors and UN-Habitat, launched the market-driven "Jordan Affordable Housing Programme" (JAH) to enable scaled delivery of affordable houses to lower-middle income Jordanians interested in making an incremental property investment with the help of housing finance from local banks. More specifically, this innovative programme aimed to engage the private sector in the provision of 30,000 unsubsidized small housing units of 65 m2 (expandable to around 100-130 m2) over a period of three years. The programme targeted low-income families earning JD 300 -500 per month who would be able to access housing loans of up to 80 per cent of the dwelling cost. Confidence of small scale developers in investing in affordable housing has been improved by the provision of accurate market information and pre-selection letters provided by banks to interested buyers. Houses were designed to be incrementally extended. As Jordanian families move from rented accommodation to ownership, and as some units were purchased for rent, it was hoped that if JAH can be implemented at scale, the significantly improved availability of rental stock will stabilize rental costs.

In addition to addressing the acute shortage of affordable housing and creating new jobs in the construction sector, the programme aspired to improve the flexibility of housing markets, stabilize housing rent, realize the Right to Adequate Housing, and protect vulnerable groups from forced evictions. To this end, programme partners drafted a set of principles to ensure quality of construction and price fairness and are working towards facilitating the participation of eligible Jordanians in the programme. Participating municipalities worked towards ensuring that the necessary basic infrastructure and services were in place, oversaw the timely execution of projects, and supported the establishment of a refugee rental scheme. The second phase of the project would capitalize on the high interest and buy-in demonstrated by the key stakeholders to embrace the concept of the JAH and their willingness to run it on their own, to replicate and scale up more affordable housing delivery and provide stronger incentives for allocating rental units to the most vulnerable refugees and hosting communities.

Sources: Zaki 2016, UN-Habitat 2016.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

- **Monitoring housing and land markets and introducing legal measures to curb real estate speculation and financial mechanisms to maintain housing affordability.** This involves developing property taxation systems to regulate land values and housing prices and measures to ensure that affordable units go to their right target groups. The initiative of Ben Arous municipality is a good example to learn from (Box 7).

- **Facilitating the access of lower income groups to affordable credit for housing** e.g. through promoting community-based housing finance mechanisms, including for migrants, and establishing special agreements with financial institutions and micro-finance organizations to support vulnerable groups in accessing affordable credit for housing. Again the case of Ben Arous is informative in this regard (Box 7).

7 THE INTERVENTIONS OF BEN AROUS MUNICIPALITY IN THE HOUSING SECTOR (TUNISIA)

Given its affordability, job opportunities and good public transportation network, the Governorate of Ben Arous in Tunisia attracted a massive influx of internal migrants after 2010, mostly middle-income class families. Population growth has nonetheless led to the illegal occupation of abandoned residential buildings and to serious encroachments on state vacant land, where new residential areas characterized by their hazardous unauthorized construction and lack of basic services (schools, health services, transportation, drainage system, electricity) and public spaces emerged. To address this grave situation, the municipality of Ben Arous prioritized two mechanisms which they applied in different cities and towns in the governorate:

(1) The establishment of "areas of real estate intervention", a coordination mechanism that aims at curbing real estate speculation, defining land use and keeping land and housing market prices affordable to the biggest segment of the population through public intervention in the property sector. It gives the state powers of expropriation, acquisition and servicing of land before on-selling to developers and eligible households at low cost, the municipality or other specific public institutions in 2016, the Housing Real Estate Agency of Ben Arous purchased 3,500 hectares of land for non-profit purposes.

(2) Reviewing land use regulations and building codes for the purpose of improving the living conditions within informal neighbourhoods through public investments in basic infrastructure, services and public facilities. Public agencies in Ben Arous Governorate intervened in 6 neighbourhoods in the last 5 years and have plans to intervene in 5 other neighbourhoods.

In addition, Ben Arous municipality launched a social housing programme that aims at replacing inadequate housing constructed in the governorate with new adequate structures and/or rehabilitating and improving existing structures for the benefit of low-income people. Currently, 330 social housing units are under construction in Dares Municipality and 625 units in the other municipalities of Ben Arous. A total of 400 families have benefited from this programme, thanks to the national housing upgrade fund that gave lower income groups access to grants and affordable interest-free loan, and 1,606 benefited from infrastructure projects through the regional development programme.

Sources: UN-Habitat (ROAS) 2016.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

4. ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING AND LIVING STANDARDS

- **Embracing a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach to housing:** The IDP integration programme in Somalia is a good example to learn from (Box 8). The programme - launched by UN-Habitat in collaboration with Somali municipalities - combines the spatial, legal, economic, institutional and financial aspects of housing production and area upgrading mentioned above. Despite its limitations, it successfully supported investments in infrastructure, improved housing tenure rights, and enhanced housing finance for Somali local governments. The programme has a high replicability potential in countries with large IDP populations (e.g. Iraq and Yemen), where governments hold the prime responsibility of protecting their own citizens and supporting them to resume their lives in a productive and dignified manner.

Unidentified refugee digs a hole for a construction of new hovel in displaced persons camp © Vlad Karavaev/Shutterstock.com

City of Tripoli, Lebanon ©Milonk/Shutterstock.com

8 SOMALIA'S PERMANENT SHELTER PROGRAMME FOR REINTEGRATION AND IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS FOR IDPS AND RETURNEES

Following two decades of resurgent political turmoil and endemic environmental hazards, Somalia has produced around 1.1 million IDPs, more than 80 per cent of whom are women and children. Largely concentrated in south-central urban areas, the number of IDPs is expected to escalate due to the increasing drought conditions and forced evictions that severely affect people's coping capacities. In response to this grave situation, UN-Habitat with IDP-hosting Somali municipalities launched the "Permanent Shelter Programme for Reintegration and Improved livelihoods for IDPs and Returnees". Given the scale and protracted nature of the displacement crisis, the programme focused on integrating IDPs with host communities. Programme beneficiaries were selected carefully based on their vulnerability status. They received various types of vocational trainings and were provided with low-cost housing units and property certificates from the Government to secure permanently their land tenure. At the settlement level, the programme invested in a range of community services including a social centre, medical dispensary, communal water reservoir, primary school, police station, tree planting, and solar lighting. In other words, IDP settlements were designed to fit legally and spatially into the urban fabric of Somali cities as to help integrating IDPs into urban life as legitimate and productive residents.

Along with that, the programme worked on improving housing finance for Somali local governments. It adopted an "enabling approach to shelter" that shifted the role of the public sector from a direct provider of housing to an enabler who mobilizes other actors and facilitates the deployment of their resources for an efficient provision of adequate housing. More specifically, the programme focused on:

(1) Developing local finance policies that provide a framework for devolving financial functions (e.g. revenue generation and budget preparation and execution) to local governments.

(2) Strengthening local revenue generation and financial systems by: a) developing an up-to-date database for taxation; b) establishing an automated accounting and billing system to improve accountability, transparency, and efficiency; and c) designing an enforceable legal framework with delegation of authority for tax collection within the established legal framework.

(3) Building property taxation, urban planning, and mapping capacities of municipal staff, data clerks and surveyors; setting up GIS databases and offices in municipalities; and organizing a number of sensitization sessions for the community of tax obligations to increase public awareness.

Participating municipalities witnessed a significant increase in property tax revenue. Nevertheless, a property tax regime for urban areas is still required to serve as an overarching framework for better and fair tax collection across the Somali region, improving accountability and enforcement, and establishing conditions for exemptions for the urban poor. In sum, UN-Habitat has completed the construction of 475 low-cost housing units for 3,577 internally displaced persons divided among three main towns of Somaliland: Berbera (125 housing units), Boroma (150 units), and Burao (200 units). It has also provided skills training to 150 heads of households, to provide the newly resettled communities with a basis to generate better livelihoods in the future.

Sources: OCHA 2016, UN-Habitat 2016b, UN-Habitat 2015, UN-Habitat 2004.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

4. ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING AND LIVING STANDARDS

3. MANAGE URBAN GROWTH AND ENACT REGULATORY REFORMS THAT REDUCE THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS SPRAWL IN THE FUTURE

Although informal settlements are a housing solution that poor and vulnerable groups have devised to house themselves, guided urban expansion is vital for sustainable urbanization to minimize urban sprawl and its severe negative effects on the natural and built environment as well as on human health and wellbeing. To address the housing challenge, it is imperative for governments (at all levels) to simultaneously guide urban growth and revisit

planning and building regulations that prevent vulnerable groups from gaining access to decent housing. This involves:

- **Optimizing urban densities,** particularly in cities where land is scarce and future urban expansion possibilities are limited. Local governments and other concerned actors have to carefully think through possible urban densification schemes in a manner that simultaneously respect the existing urban fabric, contain urban sprawl, maintain efficient access to urban services and facilities, and protect people's right to the city. Accordingly, concerned authorities need to revise existing zoning and land use regulations to promote higher residential densities and mix-uses in designated locations. The "Refugee City" approach implemented in the State of Palestine offers an inspiring practice in that regard (Box 9).

9 THE "REFUGEE CITY" MODEL IN THE STATE OF PALESTINE

The "Refugee City" model is an innovative rehousing scheme to provide vulnerable Palestinian refugees living in urbanized camps in Gaza Strip with long-term, affordable and diverse accommodation according to their income levels, based on the principles of densification and mixed land use. Through an integrative urban renewal perspective, a neighbourhood consisted of three-storey buildings, was developed in front of the camp as a "new town" to relocate refugees and integrate the newly established neighbourhood into the urban fabric of the city, rather than segregating a camp situation. Step-by-step, with the participation of the beneficiaries in the planning and design process, extended families were allowed to choose and share the same newly-built housing unit (with possibility of extension) and plot in a context of family and tribal ownership. Released camp areas were re-planned to be used as green parks, shops, microbusinesses and for other new purposes. The participation of the community to be rehoused and the flexible design offered vulnerable refugees and displaced with a permanent alternative housing and more resilience in a clearly volatile environment with long history of protracted urban displacement. The coordination between UNRWA and the municipality has been an essential success factor for that project to take place especially that it has been halted for several years given due to the Israeli military operations and occupation restrictions over the movement and trade of construction material.

Sources: Murillo, 2007.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

City of Tripoli, Lebanon ©Milonk/Shutterstock.com

•Planning for urban growth and extending road infrastructure and urban services to projected urban expansion zones. Population growth also requires concerned authorities to: 1) devise proactive planning responses to guide urban growth, and 2) leverage public resources to invest in the provision of sustainable and environmentally sound physical infrastructure and public services in the city's planned expansion zones. The Regional Spatial Planning Strategy of Darfur (RSPSD) is worth highlighting (Box 10). In response to massive internal displacement, the strategy aims to establish durable solutions to address emerging urban issues that will face IDPs who decide to return to their villages once it is safe for them to do so. Given the scale of displacement, the strategy underlines the need for establishing a network of new urban settlements with connecting services and infrastructure as a cornerstone of the region's recovery and reconstruction process.

10 THE REGIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING STRATEGY OF DARFUR (RSPSD)

The Regional Spatial Planning Strategy of Darfur (RSPSD) is a functional methodology designed to facilitate a smooth transition from humanitarian relief to early recovery, reconstruction and economic development. The RSPSD aims to maximise the benefits of infrastructural investment, identifying priorities against a background of scarce resources and capacities, in an effort to bring about a more balanced spatial development, ultimately contributing to peace, stabilisation and economic growth. The Strategy advocates for the establishment of a network of urban settlements that can efficiently integrate a broad range of socioeconomic, basic services and infrastructure dimensions. This will benefit the population of Darfur as a whole, while at the same time laying the foundations of its future development.

The RSPSD requires high-level political validation in both Darfur and Sudan. Spatial State Action Plans (SSAPs) are now being developed and more detailed spatial and cross-sector plans will be developed at a later stage at the locality level with a number of activities and investments and related budgeting. These plans need to be thoroughly discussed and endorsed at State level. Institutionally, Sudan National Council for Physical Development will monitor the implementation of the RSPSD with coordination by the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) at the next sub-level of government, with implementation on the ground left to the individual State Governments of Darfur. For this purpose, a proper dissemination of the RSPSD at the regional, State and locality levels is vital.

Source: UN-Habitat 2015b.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

4. ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING AND LIVING STANDARDS

- **Revisiting existing land use plans and zoning regulations.** The urban challenges facing migrant hosting cities, particularly the growing need for adequate housing, requires city governments to review their existing urban planning, zoning regulations (including minimum plot areas and construction quality and standards) and control mechanisms in socially-motivated ways. Where the process of reviewing the city's out-dated master plan is long and complex, the development of interim planning schemes and flexible building regulations that guide the location of new housing projects is indispensable. This is for instance the case in Mosul city where the city's existing master plan is impeding the development of new housing projects for the IDPs who settled in the city.[39]

- **Identifying and clearly demarcating hazardous locations for housing and sensitive areas where construction is forbidden** (e.g. environmentally sensitive areas and areas allocated for future road and urban infrastructure construction). Concerned authorities need to identify and demarcate hazardous areas, environmentally sensitive zones, natural reserves, and public lands allocated for recreational spaces and facilities of public nature for the benefit of all city dwellers; and to consequently set and implement measures that prevent the encroachment of informal construction on these areas.

- **Facilitate the formalisation and restitution of Housing, Land and Property rights (HLP) of refugees and displaced, and their dispute resolution** through disseminating information about HLP rights and obligations of both landlords and tenants, developing eviction monitoring programs and contingency plans with national government, undertaking HLP surveys to scale the pertaining challenges, establishing joint host-refugee community committees to engage them and bring their perspective in addressing HLP issues and avoid potential social tensions.[40]

[39]UN-Habitat 2016a.
[40]UN-Habitat & UNHCR, 2014.

City of Tripoli, Lebanon ©Milonk/Shutterstock.com

Yazidi Refugee Camp, Dohuk, Kurdistan, Iraq. ©answer5/Shutterstock.com

The **Right to Work** is an all-inclusive universal right recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 23.1) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 6). All men and women of all ages and backgrounds have the right to live in dignity and to become self-reliant, including refugees whose right to work and to livelihood opportunities is acknowledged by the 1951 Refugee Convention (Articles 17, 18 and 19).

In line with human rights principles and obligations, receiving countries and the international community hold a fundamental responsibility towards the economic wellbeing of forced migrants and supporting them in applying their skills and developing new capacities that would allow them to gain access to decent work in host cities, and/or prepare them — depending on emerging circumstances — for a successful repatriation or a productive life once it is safe for them to return home.

In migrant receiving countries that are also sending countries of vulnerable people and asylum seekers, the challenge is twofold: 1) responding to the economic triggers of forced emigration, including the brain drain of educated youth; and 2) reducing rivalry between locals and labour migrants and refugees over available job opportunities, particularly seasonal and informal jobs.

South Asian immigrant laborers work at the construction site of Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE ©Rob Crandall/Shutterstock.com

FRAMING QUESTIONS

What can local governments do to bolster local economies and create decent and sustainable jobs and livelihood opportunities for all? How can refugee-hosting cities benefit from the skills and capacities of incoming populations without instigating a negative competition with the local population?

GUIDING DIRECTIONS

The responsibility towards the economic inclusion of migrants and the realization of their right to work falls beyond the authority of local governments. Still, city leaders can play a key role in alleviating possible socio-economic pressures in refugee and IDPs host communities and creating decent and sustainable jobs and livelihood opportunities for the benefit of both local people and migrants. Inclusive local governments embrace Local Economic Development (LED) approaches that aim "to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future

and the quality of life for all.[41]" They identify "public, business and nongovernmental sector partners and work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation.[42]" They recognize and utilize migrants' skills and labour to develop local economies in ways that can contribute to the wellbeing all city dwellers.

There are three key lines of action that local governments can take to simultaneously bolster local economies and promote the economic inclusion of migrants in their cities:

1. **Support small businesses and start-ups, particularly innovative entrepreneurial initiatives that employ the skills of vulnerable urban dwellers, including migrants**

2. **Sustain informal activities through urban planning and regulatory mechanisms**

3. **Launch innovative urban development initiatives that can create new income-generating opportunities for both locals and migrants**

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[41]World Bank – What is LED?
[42]ibid.

1. SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES AND START-UPS, PARTICULARLY INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES THAT EMPLOY THE SKILLS OF VULNERABLE URBAN DWELLERS, INCLUDING MIGRANTS

Local economic development does not necessarily require spending public resources on attracting big businesses and investors (e.g. through tax or land incentives). The inclusive economic growth of Arab cities is contingent to a large extent on the promotion of small businesses and entrepreneurship initiatives that can provide new sustainable jobs and income generating opportunities for both local residents and migrants. To promote inclusive economic growth, Arab cities - particularly the ones hosting large numbers of migrant workers, refugees and/or IDPs - need to embrace an entrepreneurial economic development approach that seeks to grow and nurture the local economy from within. More specifically, they need to "promote and encourage hybrid economies in which micro-businesses can co-exist alongside small, medium, and large businesses: in which the street vendors can co-exist alongside the kiosks, retail shops, and large malls[43]". Crucial actions include:

- **Identifying and assessing local needs and resources: Identifying local needs and resources** is a first step that city leaders need to consider in the process of planning for local economic development. In view of their awareness of the specific strengths and weaknesses of their localities and their closeness to people, local governments are in best position to guide the process, ensure the effectiveness of implemented interventions, and to monitor and evaluate the results. Key steps include: 1) conducting comprehensive and participatory socio-economic and livelihood assessments (covering both refugees and local populations) to identify the most vulnerable groups and the specific needs of each; 2) identifying existing local businesses and available public assets and analysing their strengths and weaknesses, and 3) exploring best strategies to benefit from local resources and/or to reinvigorate existing businesses and harness their job creation potential.

- **Partnering with the business community.** Engaging the local businesses community in identifying priority programmes and/or actions to improve local economy is particularly crucial. This involves creating and maintaining open information and communication channels with existing businesses (including small emerging ones), potential entrepreneurs and their representative bodies (e.g. chambers of commerce, syndicates, and/or informal leaders) regarding local economic development priorities, the current regulatory environment, and available assistance services.

- **Facilitating the work of organizations that provide demand-driven skill and vocational training, job counselling and recruitment services, and/or financial support for start-ups and small businesses that have a growth potential.** Actions such as grant assistance for micro-business development, targeted vocational or entrepreneurship training, individual skills training, job placement, career counselling, business support services, and access to formal financial services require specific kinds of expertise and resources that local Arab governments do not have in-house (being outside their mandate). Cities can however achieve major improvements in access to decent jobs and livelihoods for citizens and migrants by partnering with and supporting organizations working in these fields. The one-stop shops that some Egyptian and Tunisian cities created with the support of ILO to help reintegrate migrant workers who were forced to return home from Libya are good examples to learn from and replicate in other cities (Box 11).

- **Offering services to entrepreneurs and helping them navigate the regulatory environment and city departments,** which can be difficult and time consuming due to unavailability of directly accessible reliable information, bureaucratic procedures and work dispersal among different government departments. For example, local governments can bolster existing local enterprises and assist new entrepreneurs in overcoming regulatory barriers through establishing one-stop business support centres that provide them with relevant information, help them in handling business registration procedures and fees, and linking them with organizations that provide staff apprenticeship training and employment services. Importantly, these business support centres should have trained staff and, in an increasingly digital world, computerized equipment to help entrepreneurs navigate online resources for necessary information.

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[43] Hamilton-Pennell 2010.

South Asian immigrant laborers work at the construction site of Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE ©Rob Crandall/Shutterstock.com

11 EMPLOYMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR RETURNEES, TUNISIA AND EGYPT

Following the eruption of the Libyan conflict in 2011, thousands of Egyptian and Tunisian migrant workers were forced to return to their home countries despite the fragile political situation, severe economic slowdowns and high levels of poverty and unemployment there. In these bleak circumstances, Egypt and Tunisia had therefore to absorb and reintegrate returnees, who were mostly the sole providers for their families.

In an effort to improve youth employability, the governments of Egypt and Tunisia, with the support of IOM, established "Information, Counselling, and Referral Services" (ICRS) offices in a number of economically marginalized governorates that have witnessed high rate of returnees from Libya. These offices act as one-stop shops connecting job-seekers, employers, and service providers. Their services include skills enhancement through training, tailored one-on-one counselling sessions, job placement and referral to appropriate available job opportunities, and promotion of promising business start-ups through in-kind grants, entrepreneurship trainings and mentorship. Furthermore, the ICRS organize employment fairs and information sessions to reach a wider pool of job-seekers in target communities with the support of local NGOs, universities and private companies.

In addition to ICRS offices, Tunisia created migrant Resource Centres to promote legal channels of migration and to provide vulnerable young Tunisians with information about available work opportunities in Tunisia, and study and employment options abroad, as to deter them from considering irregular migration options and fraudulent jobs offered by human smugglers and traffickers. In tandem, Tunisia created an online platform to connect local entrepreneurs with Arab expatriate investors willing to support their business ideas and projects. All these interventions targeted vulnerable areas based on comprehensive needs assessment and were designed in ways that complement Tunisia's decentralization strategy. Hence they focused on strengthening local and regional authorities, expanding the reach of local institutions in their communities, and identifying synergies with other local development projects across the country.

At least 1,700 individuals in Egypt and Tunisia benefitted from the career counselling services of the ICRS offices and more than 2,800 individuals benefitted from job referrals and/or advise on possible entrepreneurship paths. Tunisia online platform attracted numerous job seekers. At least 1,433 individuals looked for information on emigration for education and employment opportunities abroad in 2014-2015.

Sources: IOM 2016a, IOM 2016b.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

2. SUSTAIN INFORMAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES THROUGH URBAN PLANNING AND REGULATORY MECHANISMS

Understanding informal economies is critical to reducing urban poverty and making cities more inclusive. Informality is a survival strategy for many poor urban dwellers, rural migrants, foreign workers and refugees and a significant contributor to the urban economy in many countries. Nonetheless, many governments in the Arab region, and around the world, criminalize and stigmatize the informal sector and have taken disciplinary measures that undermine and abolish urban informal livelihoods. A closer look at street vendors, for instance, reveals the challenges facing refugees in the informal trade sector. Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian street vendor who sparked the Tunisian revolution – and the wider "Arab Spring" – after setting himself on fire in 2010 in reaction to the confiscation of his merchandise and harassment, is case in point. In Cairo, "the question of street vending has also been at the centre of controversy and heated debate, raising fundamental questions with respect to who has the right to the city and public space, and who gets to make decisions regarding their control and use."[44]

Arab governments need to pay more attention to the informal sector in view of the sheer size of the urban poor, both men and women, who earn a living through engaging in informal activities. Through good urban management and adequate regulatory mechanisms, they can organize informal traders, many of whom are street vendors, in ways that can be mutually beneficial to migrants and to the local economy. This involves:

- **Allocating dedicated and legally sanctioned spaces where informal vending activities are permitted.** To reduce congestion and maintain sanitary conditions in public spaces, municipalities can allocate dedicated and legally sanctioned spaces where informal vending activities are permitted at certain times of the day or week. Municipal authorities can also collaborate with concerned partners (e.g. civil society organizations and/or universities) and formal businesses to design and construct attractive kiosks that can be rented to informal vendors and/or their unions and informal associations. This later group is likely to collaborate with authorities if it feels that its interests are met and

unlikely to cooperate if official plans discriminate against it.

A good example to learn from is a new market place that the three Tunisian municipalities of Arianna, Raoued and La Soukra created with the technical support of the Agence Foncière d'Habitation (AFH) to regulate informal activities within their administrative boundaries. Located in the city of Arianna, this 6-hectare market was intended to serve as a place where itinerant merchants (mostly rural migrants) can sell their goods. The initiative however failed despite its good intention. The vendors abandoned the market on the pretext that the spaces that the city offered them are not visible which made their situation worse than before [45]. This example demonstrates that the effective management of street trade requires concerned local authorities to: 1) negotiate with street vendors and understand their concerns and the way they operate; and 2) develop inclusive solutions that meet the needs of such vulnerable groups in terms of visibility, security, and necessary basic urban services in order to support them in earning a decent living.

- **Developing detailed specifications to regulate street vending activities in ways** that ensure hygiene and public safety, along with measures to ensure compliance with these specifications (e.g. specifications regarding street vendor carts and equipment).

- **Developing a licencing system that enables informal traders to work and provides taxes and levies to municipalities.** This involves reviewing laws pertaining to vendors in ways that legitimize their activities and facilitate the access of registered vendors to micro loans that allow them to grow their businesses.

- **Clarifying and communicating the rules and regulations pertaining to vendor**s to both street vendors and the police. This includes advertising areas where vending is permissible, vendor registration fees, and cost of fines.

- **Supporting the formation of street vendors' associations** that protect the rights of their members and allow local governments to communicate easier with traders, discuss their collective needs and concerns, and mediate the often-conflicting interests and priorities of the diverse groups who share the same urban space.

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[44] CLUSTER - Street Vendors Initiative.
[45] Ltifi 2015.

South Asian immigrant laborers work at the construction site of Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE ©Rob Crandall/Shutterstock.com

3. LAUNCH NEW URBAN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES THAT CAN BOLSTER LOCAL ECONOMIES AND CREATE NEW INCOME-GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH LOCALS AND MIGRANTS

The pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges facing Arab cities require local governments to prioritize innovative programmes and project ideas that simultaneously address urban problems, promote local and regional economic development, and create employment opportunities for the vulnerable youth, including migrants and refugees. Naturally, these programmes should be tailored according to the particular needs and resources of each city. For example, urban agriculture, solid waste collection and recycling, and renewable technologies programmes can potentially act as tools to enhance city liveability, bolster livelihoods, promote social inclusion, and adapt to climate change.

As relevant to their specific local context, local governments can help create new jobs and livelihood opportunities if they:

- **Promote urban agriculture as a livelihood strategy:** Local municipalities can partner with international organizations, local universities, micro-credit institutions and other concerned actors to establish dedicated offices or centres for urban agriculture that would introduce vulnerable local citizens, refugees and IDPs living in urban areas, particularly women, to roof gardening, waste water treatment and reuse, and ways of cleaning and packaging vegetables; support them in financing their activities; and later on in having a direct access to consumer markets. This is a viable intervention in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon where humanitarian actors are already implementing pilot urban agriculture programmes in refugee and IDP camps[46]. Local governments can adopt and scale-up these initiatives to the appropriate scale. The Jordan's Urban Agriculture programme, which is it is increasingly becoming integrated in the development strategy of the Greater Amman Municipality, is worth highlighting. The programme has created the Amman's Urban Agriculture bureau, which is considered a promising start. The programme is also potentially replicable, provided it has strong administrative support.[47]

- **Launch a solid waste management programme that employs migrants:** Solid waste management programmes can also have combined environmental and socio-economic benefits. A good example to highlight is the one that UNDP supported in Irbid Governorate in Jordan[48]. By establishing a cooperative society for recycling and marketable products, the programme aims at promoting small and medium-sized recycling businesses, increasing community income and enhancing livelihood opportunities. The programme gives many vulnerable and unskilled youth an opportunity to earn a living and become self-reliant and is potentially replicable in several Arab cities. In Lebanon — where Syrian refugees are only allowed to work in the agriculture, construction and cleaning sectors — the start-up social business group "Recycle Beirut" is employing 17 poor Syrian refugees at a living wage to pick up, sort, and recycle solid waste in the greater Beirut area. The group is, hence, supporting Lebanese municipalities to address two crucial crises facing Lebanon, the Syrian refugee crisis and the garbage crisis, the latter being among Lebanon's chief problems [49]. Despite the good intents of initiative of this kind, it is important to remember that employing young refugees in waste collections and recycling and other low paid jobs cannot happen at the expense of breaching their right to education and to a better life. To help refugees and other vulnerable migrants find sustainable job opportunities, investment in human skills development and capacity building would be crucial. As such, hosting governments need to facilitate the establishment of training centres and vocational schools that address the human development needs of refugees and other displaced populations, and to develop measures to evaluate and monitor the quality of training that these centres offer and its relevance to job markets.

- **Benefit from migrant skills to enhance the economic development of secondary and tertiary cities:** Economic incentives to attract businesses and migrants to secondary and tertiary cities are vital to support the economic development of these cities and create sustainable and decent job opportunities. This is the stance that Jordan has assumed (Box 12).

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[46] Lemon Tree Trust.
[47] GIZ 2014.

[48] UNDP 2015.
[49] UNHCR 2016 — Recycle Beirut

South Asian immigrant laborers work at the construction site of Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE©Rob Crandall/Shutterstock.com

12 FORMALIZING THE WORK OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

With the intent of encouraging socially responsible corporate behaviour and increasing legal employment opportunities for refugees, Jordan entered into an agreement with the EU to grant sought-after trade concessions for businesses that open in special economic zones (SEZ) located outside major cities provided they employ Syrian refugees on their premises. Although the Jordanian government introduced in March 2016 new measures to facilitate it for Syrian refugees to get work permits, hence to work formally in Jordan, the potential of Jordan's SEZs to make a real tangible difference to the living and working conditions of Syrian refugees is yet to materialize. Pilot projects hiring Syrians for SEZ garment factories initially appealed to live-in women workers who prioritized working in a safe and respectful workplace that offers them access to childcare. Generally speaking, however, employment in the SEZs had limited uptake from Syrians due to lack of an economic imperative and financial incentives to attract them to move to the SEZs looking for jobs.

Jordan's SEZs have also raised some outstanding human rights concerns. Human rights advocates have particularly questioned the idea of separating refugees in camps and employing them in special work areas rather than effectively integrating them into the local communities. They also raised concerns as to whether employing Syrians in SEZs would be understood as discriminatory towards Jordanians already suffering from unemployment and the right proportion that need to be pre-set in order to reduce the tension between the two communities. The effectiveness of experiments like Jordan's SEZs has to be enhanced through a few additional steps including: 1) broad-based political support in the host country; 2) a dedicated and capable public authority with legal power to enforce workers' rights and ensure that employers do not compromise on these rights or on minimum wage; 3) anti discriminatory policies and job quotas that balance between migrants and locals suffering from unemployment; and 4) complementary investments in education, training opportunities, healthcare, adequate living conditions and public service to attract potential workers and their families to job sites. These are issues that governments at national, regional and local scales need to prioritize if they wish to benefit from migrant skills to enhance the economic development of secondary and tertiary cities. In that regard, it is worth noting the recent proactive decision of the Jordanian government - first of its kind in the region - to issue work permits for Syrian refugees working in the construction sector, at a cheaper administrative cost. While that sector-specific decision indicates a good progress towards safeguarding the refugees' legal right to work, it has to be complemented with inspection and oversight mechanisms to enforce the application of permits and ensure better wage and labour safety conditions for refugees.

Source: Dunmore & Gaynor 2016, Staton 2016, UiO 2016, ILO 2017

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

6. ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Roads and transportation infrastructure, social infrastructure (e.g. public schools, health centres, and open spaces), and basic public utilities (water, sanitation, and electricity, street lighting, solid waste management) are central to the attainment of a wide spectrum of human rights. They should be people-centred and universally accessible to all people without discrimination, and should necessarily be complemented by well-targeted social protection programmes (e.g. housing support programmes, health care services, unemployment guarantees) that address the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

Cairo Market Streets, Egypt © eFesenko/Shutterstock.com

FRAMING QUESTIONS

How can local governments improve the living conditions and preserve the dignity of vulnerable and marginalized poor migrants who are languishing in camps or informal settlements without access to essential urban facilities and needs? How can they mitigate the negative impacts of population growth and ensure that adequate basic public services and infrastructure systems are accessible and affordable to all?

GUIDING DIRECTIONS

Road infrastructure, water supply and sanitation, electricity and telecommunications are critical priorities to reinvigorate the economic sector, increase productive employment, reduce the vulnerability of the urban poor and improve urban life quality for the benefit of all city residents and businesses. As such, concerned public authorities need to focus, as a matter of priority, on improving the array and quality of these services and ensuring their accessibility to all.

In theory, the functional or administrative responsibility of providing access to public services falls on local governments. In reality, the actions of most local governments in the Arab region are limited by lack of sufficient financial and technical resources and centralised decision-making processes. The situation is more challenging in conflict-affected areas where large inflows of refugees and/ or IDPs have put additional pressures on already strained public services and infrastructure systems.

Despite challenges, local governments are in a unique position to assess the quality and adequacy of the public services available in their areas vis-à-vis emerging needs and can contribute significantly to promoting effective and sustainable solutions to public infrastructure and service deficiencies in their areas, if they:

1. **Form strategic coalitions and partnerships with a broad range of actors to finance, implement, and coordinate vital interventions in infrastructure and services provision**

2. **Support scaling-up successful area-based approaches and linking them with long-term city or regional level planning efforts**

1. FORM STRATEGIC COALITIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH A BROAD RANGE OF ACTORS TO FINANCE, IMPLEMENT, AND COORDINATE VITAL INTERVENTIONS IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVISION

Small-scale interventions

Local governments can potentially undertake vital and cost effective small-scale interventions in infrastructure and services provision in their areas — like installing additional streetlights to improve security of local areas and managing solid waste collection and disposal in ways that safeguard human health and avoid environment hazard. Municipalities with limited financial and technical resources can achieve better results if they leverage political capital and develop institutional partnerships and strategic alliances with service providers, the business sector, international agencies and community-based organizations. This involves:

- **Forming public-private partnerships for project finance and implementation:** Especially in countries with a thriving private sector and large refugee population (e.g. Lebanon and Jordan), private sector engagement in service provision can make a transformational impact. Public-private partnerships for financing and implementing infrastructure projects are necessary — provided measures are put in place to circumvent corruption and favouritism in private companies selection and monitor their performance.

- **Engaging civil society in monitoring the quality of public services:** Civil society groups also have an important role in social accountability for quality service delivery and targeting. Hence, partnering with local NGOs and CBOs including faith-based organizations is essential for expanding the reach of urban services and infrastructure to vulnerable areas and for ensuring that those services are the right kind and quality to meet local needs.

Larger interventions

Larger interventions, particularly investments in connective infrastructure and sustainable public transportation systems that would facilitate people's mobility and access to cities and/or city districts in which job opportunities and public facilities and services are located, require the combined efforts of a wide range of actors. Interventions that encompass cooperation across multiple municipal jurisdictions are vital here. Given the disparity between different geographic locations in terms of wealth and access to services and resources, investments in road infrastructure and public transportation systems could be sought as a strategy to link lagging areas with thriving areas. This would require:

- **Strengthening inter-municipal cooperation** and establishing effective mechanisms to coordinate the efforts

of all those involved in service provision in the different municipalities. Liaison of adjacent municipalities is also important for serving areas that fall between different municipal jurisdictions, and that would otherwise be marginalised or neglected. A good case is that of Sahel El Zahrani in Lebanon where the Union of Municipalities established area-based coordination mechanisms to coordinate the responses of all humanitarian agencies working on the Syrian refugee crisis in Sahel El Zahrani. The Union's relative success is largely attributable to both the efforts of its Regional Technical Office (RTO) and the leadership role that the head of the Union has played. This is certainty something commendable in a country like Lebanon where coordinating the initiatives of international, national, local authorities is politically and logistically challenging (Box 13).

13 REGIONAL TECHNICAL OFFICES (RTOS) AS COORDINATION MECHANISMS, LEBANON.

The "RTO-approach" has been championed in Lebanon by UN-Habitat as early as 2006. The concept was introduced after the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, addressing capacities of local authorities for the reconstruction of shelter and basic urban services in affected neighbourhoods in South Lebanon. RTOs were established in support of individual and unions of municipalities in order to provide the necessary additional technical capacities for damage and needs assessments, preparation of reconstruction documentation (Bills-of-Quantity, Tender documents) and also for the drafting of mid- and long-term Strategic Development Plans for the localities. RTOs continued to function beyond the reconstruction period and were institutionally hinged to the governance structure of the localities.

During the recent Syria crisis, the need of municipalities to respond to the massive influx of refugees to urban and rural areas has renewed the importance of RTOs. Building on earlier successes of RTOs in Lebanon, UN-Habitat supported the Union of Municipalities (UoM) of Sahel el-Zahrani to establish its RTO. Sahel el-Zahrani RTO has played an important role in strengthening coordination among the different international and local humanitarian agencies working in Sahel el Zahrani. The bi-weekly meetings that Sahel el-Zahrani RTO organized at the UoM's premises in the presence of all concerned agencies, the mayor, and members of the union of municipalities allowed the different actors to engage in a constructive discussion and coordinate their current interventions and planned programmes in more effective and efficient ways that simultaneously address the needs of host and refugee communities.

Sources: Boustani et al. 2016.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

Cairo Market Streets, Egypt © eFesenko/Shutterstock.com

2. SUPPORT SCALING-UP SUCCESSFUL AREA-BASED APPROACHES AND LINKING THEM WITH LONG-TERM CITY OR REGIONAL LEVEL PLANNING EFFORTS

Currently, UN agencies and international organizations are playing a chief role in the provision of basic urban services and infrastructure in areas hosting large numbers of refugees and/or IDPs and in facilitating the communication between various governmental entities and local communities. Although these efforts are of utmost importance, they remain quite scattered and limited in their geographic focus. By virtue of their mandate, humanitarian actors focus on supporting vulnerable individuals and households, and increasingly, in urban contexts, on "area-based approaches" to improving the overall living conditions of vulnerable groups (Box 14). Vulnerabilities associated with access to infrastructure and services are however often shared citywide, or at least across a wider area than areas geographically targeted by humanitarian agencies.

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14 AREA-BASED APPROACH

"Area-based approach", increasingly used by humanitarian actors in crisis-affected areas, is effectively similar to the integrated urban upgrading and renewal programmes deployed by development agencies. These are geographically-targeted, multi-sectoral and participatory approaches that focus on addressing the problems of a defined area rather than on the needs of a certain sector or target group. In conflict settings, area-based approach allows humanitarian actors to: 1) engage and provide assistance more effectively to all those living in the target area, and 2) avoid the "consultation fatigue" through focusing their efforts on selected areas and specific target communities. By addressing the needs of all those affected by crises within the intervention area, such approach, when appropriately applied, can contribute to improving social cohesion and offsetting the tensions and inequalities between host communities and incoming populations; especially in areas where the host populations are themselves vulnerable and poor and conceive the displaced population to have a "better quality of life"' and to be favoured by international aid.

Sources: Parker & Maynard 2015.

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6. ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

To avoid social tension that arises when those living outside targeted areas conceive the choice of target areas to involve favouritism of one group over another, local governments need to work towards scaling-up successful initiatives. This objective demands:

- **Building on the success of pilot initiatives and mainstreaming them into official city and neighbourhood**

planning processes. UN-Habitat's Kurani Ainkawa pilot slum upgrading project in Erbil is good example that governments should support and encourage (Box 15). Building on the success of this pilot initiative and other successful pilots intervention in slum settlements, UN-Habitat scaled up its efforts and supported slum upgrading programmes in Morocco, Iraq and Egypt at both city and country wide levels.

15 KURANI AINKAWA PILOT UPGRADING PROJECT, ERBIL, IRAQ

Iraq has experienced several prolonged waves of forced internal displacements induced by political conflicts, sectarian tensions and natural disasters. To improve IDPs access to adequate housing and basic infrastructure and services, the Governor of Erbil, with the assistance of both UN-Habitat and UNDP, initiated a pro-poor urban settlement-upgrading project that builds on Iraq's national slum upgrading strategy. The project targeted the informal neighbourhood of Kurani Ainakawa, an informal settlement that grew on government-owned land and adjacent privately owned parcels located on the periphery of Erbil, without proper access to infrastructure systems and public services.

Kurani Ainakawa pilot upgrading project aimed to improve the living conditions of the IDPs with minimal relocation. In addition to re-planning the neighbourhood to meet city planning standards and investing in urban services and infrastructure upgrading, the project focused on building the capacities of public institutions involved in housing, land management and planning and supporting them in developing an in-situ slum upgrading methodology that can be potentially institutionalized and scaled-up to the national level.

A steering committee headed by Erbil governorate and including Erbil municipality, private stakeholders and representatives of UN agencies working in the area as members was established to guide the project, mobilize resources and facilitate coordination among the different actors. Furthermore, to engage the community in project planning and implementation, a local facilitation unit was formed to mediate between the community and the authorities. The establishment of this unit was deemed crucial given the lack of active civil society groups in neighbourhood. By bringing together architects and trained social workers from the community, including women, the unit's team members gained the trust of the local community. They conducted consultation meetings and house-to-house surveys in the area; and were consequently able to tailor project plans to community needs. The team of women belonging to the neighbourhood who was recruited to act as Local Housing Facilitators helped to give the opportunity for women to voice their needs in the process through household surveys and balance the predominantly male representation at public consultations. Therefore, the involvement of the community has been crucial to inform project decision-making, develop consensus on anticipated plans and build a sense of community ownership of the process.

Sources: UN-Habitat 2013.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

Cairo Market Streets, Egypt © eFesenko/Shutterstock.com

- **Establishing stronger engagement of municipal and national governments with urban infrastructure systems and services** so as to ensure their quality and accessibility to all city dwellers. Again the combined effort of government authorities (at the national, regional, and local), concerned humanitarian and development organizations, the private sector civil society organizations and academic institutions is paramount here. The joint NRC/UN-Habitat programmes in Baghdad, mentioned earlier, is a good example of initiatives that deployed successful pilot projects at the neighbourhood level to influence provincial and national scale urban development policies (Box 16).

16 COMMUNITY MOBILISATION AND SERVICE COORDINATION (CMSC) PROGRAMME/ DURABLE SOLUTIONS PROGRAMME, BAGHDAD, IRAQ

In recognition that other vulnerable people and not only IDPs are facing multiple legal and administrative barriers that limit their ability to access urban services, and rights and entitlements such as education, healthcare and food rations, the joint NRC/UN-Habitat programme in Baghdad embraced an 'inclusive approach' that aimed at providing support to all residents in targeted settlements in addition prompting city-wide changes and lasting solutions. More specifically, the programme, "combined an area-based approach that aimed to 'improve the living conditions of IDPs in the immediate term' with a broader package of works that sought to 'promote a change in national policy in the longer term'. In order to do this, [the two organizations] worked at a variety of scales, with neighbourhoods, district councils, provincial councils, service providers and national ministries. NRC and UN-Habitat each took on 'different responsibilities within this programme, with UN-Habitat working at the policy and national government level, while NRC focused on working at the community and local government level'. Over two years, three pilot projects were carried out in three informal settlements focusing on land sharing, relocation and in-situ upgrading. The engagement with government authorities at a higher level promoted acceptance and support for a range of alternative durable solutions for IDPs who are unable to return to their places of origin. Communication and advocacy capacities of technical staff within the government were strengthened. The NRC and UN-Habitat partnership, and the complementary activities undertaken by each, the two agencies were able to tackle the same problem at different scales; using the success of pilot projects at neighbourhood level to influence provincial and national policy, which in turn could drive change in an increasing number of areas."

Sources: Parker and Maynard 2015.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

Any person living within a certain society, citizen and permanent or temporary resident, has the **Right to Participate** in the civil life of that society and to access its communal spaces (e.g. public and religious buildings, markets, community centres, public open spaces) without oppression or discrimination.

FRAMING QUESTIONS

What can local governments do to promote social cohesion between local and migrant populations? How can they encourage the dynamic interaction among different groups and bring them together around mutual concerns to achieve better outcomes?

GUIDING DIRECTIONS

Civic engagement, or civic participation, is about bringing the general public, individuals or specific communities, groups and organizations together and involving them in decisions and/or activities that improve their collective wellbeing. In areas with high number of migrants, refugees, and/or IDPs, participatory initiatives can potentially promote social cohesion and build solidarity and mutual trust between host and migrant communities while enhancing their knowledge of one another.

Civic engagement initiatives can be proposed and carried out by municipal authorities, local civil organizations, activist groups and urban communities themselves or any other entity concerned with human rights and the promotion of social cohesion and harmony. Regardless of who leads these initiatives, the role of local government is crucial in their success. In principle, each act of public character or utility within municipal jurisdiction boundaries is the prerogative of municipal councils, or local governments. And proactive municipalities can significantly contribute to the promotion of an inclusive public culture when they:

1. **Invest in the design and upgrading of shared communal spaces**

2. **Facilitate community participation and dialogue to increase public trust in formal institutions**

3. **Support the establishment of community organizational structures**

1. INVEST IN THE DESIGN AND UPGRADING OF SHARED COMMUNAL SPACES

Streets, public open spaces, beaches, town halls, public sport fields and libraries, religious buildings and other spaces where people can mingle, trade, exchange, interact and/or celebrate are shared communal spaces. Local governments have the mandate to enhance these spaces and ensure that they are publically accessible and safe. They can:

- **Undertake strategic investments in public space design and upgrading** for the benefit of all city inhabitants.

- **Incentivize the private sector to invest in the creation of public and communal spaces** where such spaces are most needed (e.g. by using incentive zoning regulations which allow property developers more density in exchange for providing community improvements).

- **Facilitate the work of civil society organizations concerned with the social use of public spaces**, particularly organizations that use public spaces as a catalyst to promote social cohesion and to improve the lives of poor urban migrants (e.g. through easing the administrative procedures that allow non-governmental actors to create temporary parks and play spaces on vacant municipal lands). An example to learn from is Geneina initiative in Masakin Othman in Greater Cairo (Box 17).

- **Promote participatory approaches to public space design, implementation and management**. Whether designed and implemented by municipalities themselves, the private sector, or local civic society organizations, public spaces cannot be successful unless they cater for the needs and aspirations of their end-user groups who should be actively engaged in all steps of public space making: design, implementation and management. Again, Geneina initiative in Cairo is an informative example (Box 17).

17 GENEINA PROJECT, A PLACE FOR ALL

Geneina project in Masakin Othman in 6th of October City (Greater Cairo, Egypt), conceived by Takween Integrated Development (Takween ICD) and Make Space for Play, provides the Egyptians, Syrian and Sudanese families living in the area with a safe and friendly public open space where children can play, parents interact and a range of basic recreational activities take place. The project builds on the efforts of the organizations working in the area, particularly UNHCR, which identified open spaces to be a crucial priority in Masakin Othman. To create an inclusive public space, the project team engaged both the local and refugee communities in the planning, to design, to implementation of the project.

The project was implemented on an empty public land locate in the vicinity of the Public Service Centre of Masakin Othman. With support from UNHCR, the project team approached 6th of October City Administration (CA) and the New Urban Communities Authorities – affiliated with the Ministry of Housing – and negotiated to obtain the selected site. Although concerned public authorities showed willingness to collaborate, the acquisition of the land and the process of official approvals took some time. This is mainly due to the unconventional combination of stakeholders involved in project including a UN entity (UNHCR), a private social enterprise (Takween ICD), and governmental agencies (the City Administration and the New Urban Communities Authorities). Although this institutional setup posed administrative challenges and delayed access to public utilities, the city administration eventually approved the project on condition that no permanent structures would be built on site. The role of local authorities in the success of the project has been pivotal. They allocated the selected site for the project, approved the design and provided advice and support in addressing some of the challenges that faced project implementation. Despite its limitations and pending institutional challenges, there is a crucial need to capitalize on this initiative and similar ones, strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships, and devise long-term strategies to facilitate collaborative efforts.

Sources: Geneina in Action.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INITIATIVE:

2. FACILITATE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND DIALOGUE TO INCREASE PUBLIC TRUST IN FORMAL INSTITUTIONS

Community engagement in decision-making is one of the crucial trust-building means between local authorities and city dwellers. The mounting numbers of urban migrants have to be informed, consulted and take part in local plans and policies that would affect their living conditions. It is a process of dual responsibility and mutual benefits that recognizes the agency of both, cities in influencing migration flows and, migrants in affecting local policies. On one hand, local authorities have to disseminate accurate information about migrants' rights and responsibilities to prevent their risks of abuse and exploitation. In result, better informed migrants would have more access to local services, more confidence in local governors and willingness to cooperate with them. On another hand, city leaders, when facilitating the participation of migrants - with local residents - in local governance processes, will benefit from their skills, know-how and diversity and have better understanding of their needs, areas of settlement and movement patterns. Subsequently, they will be able to craft more responsive plans and decisions to their needs, inclusive and widely supported by all city residents.

Moreover, migrant-hosting municipalities play a key role in fighting xenophobia and class-based prejudices in their cities when they collaborate with NGOs, CBOs, and the private sector in activities that bring together local and migrant communities. For example, Bourj Hammoud municipality in Lebanon established a choir that brought together Lebanese and Syrian refugee children and that had tremendous effect on 150 families[50]. The street festivals and the open markets in Lebanese cities — mostly initiated by private entities or by civil society organizations in partnership with local municipalities or under their patronage and support — are also good examples of activities that should be promoted and supported by local governments. In Darfour, the Darfour Joint Assessment Mission (DJAM) aims to deploy sports as a useful tool for facilitating the reintegration of internally displaced and conflict-affected youth into society and encouraged the rehabilitation of existing sports facilities and the creation of new facilities that meet Olympic standards. The implementation of this promising proposition is however contingent on political and financial considerations.[51]

Training programs, art projects, street performance, design competitions, joint sport activities, neighbourhood clean-up days are also tools through which municipalities, in partnership with civil society and grassroots organizations, can bring migrant and local communities together, encourage them to contribute their time and skills in ways that strengthen their human bonds and counter anti-immigrant prejudice.

3. SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Inclusive urbanization is not the end product of "a linear progression that starts from a state of exclusion and ends at one of inclusion"[52]. It is the outcome of a negotiation process that involves individuals, groups and local authorities in a constructive dialogue aimed at improving urban life for all. Inclusive urbanization is a democratically constructed process that cannot happen without political will and commitment to "pro-poor development policies; equitable distribution of public services and available resources; and the promotion of greater participatory democracy and cultural diversity in cities".[53]

The right to participate in civil society and freedom of association are well acknowledged human rights that democratic governments would support and promote given that community associations are the ones best apt to negotiate and protect their group's rights. At the neighbourhood scale, community organizing — i.e. the process of the coming together of people living in the vicinity to each other — is corner stone of inclusive urbanization. Pursuant to the principle of subsidiarity, which holds that functions that can be carried out efficiently at the lower level should be devolved to that level rather than being carried by the larger body, inclusive local governments would encourage and support community organizing since community groups are best fit to: 1) identify the critical problems of their communities and neighbourhoods and to propose possible solutions to these problems, 2) contribute to ensuring the durability of interventions carried by local governments and/or other actors, and 3)facilitate coalitions and assist in the development of awareness campaigns.

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[50] UN-Habitat (ROAS) 2016.
[51] The Darfur Regional Authority.

[52] APG 2003.
[53] ESCWA 2011.

7. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY LIFE

Humanitarian food for poor children in refugee camp ©ESB Professional/ Shutterstock.com

In migrant-housing cities, it is particularly crucial for governments to:

- **Encourage community organizational structures that bring locals and migrant communities together** as this can positively contribute to building social cohesion and reducing likely tensions between different interest groups.

- **Mobilize community groups at the neighbourhood level and help them get organized.** This involves: 1) identifying and strengthening existing informal community organizing structures, and supporting the creation of new ones when necessary; and 2) supporting these groups establishing effective coordination and communication mechanisms among themselves and with municipal authorities and concerned humanitarian and development actors.

Initiatives by international and local civil society organizations and UN agencies that supported the formation of community organizational structures that include migrants and host communities abound. Kurani Ainakawa pilot upgrading project in Erbil (Box 15) and the NRC/UN-Habitat joint programmes in Baghdad (Box 16) are examples. To ensure that the liaison between public officials and community groups is maintained beyond the timeframe of the programme, NRC/UN-Habitat joint programmes supported the formation of neighbourhood committees and a District Council Coordination Meetings (DCCMs) platform that brought inhabitants of the informal settlements (IDPs and locals) and district councils together. The success of such promising initiatives is reliant on their ability to maintain effective channels of communication and coordination between government institutions, vulnerable city residents, including those in informal settlements and their representatives after external support ends.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHER ACTORS

Despite their limited powers over immigration policies, local governments in partnership with civil society and private sector are pivotal actors in improving social inclusion at the local level. They can play a vital role in enhancing migrants' living conditions, livelihood opportunities and relations with host societies; and can provide central governments and the international community with valuable perspectives on local area problems, needs, potentials, and priority areas for intervention. As such, empowering them and building their capacity and ability to develop and implement practical strategies to promote social, economic and political inclusion is essential. This overarching objective requires serious action from national governments, donor agencies and humanitarian and development organizations.

Recommendations to national governments

- Embrace the principles of decentralisation, participation and community engagement in urban affairs and devise practical strategies to engage the private sector, civil society organizations, and community-based associations in initiatives that aim at improving the liveability of urban areas and reducing the tension and rivalry between local communities and migrants.

- Respond to the municipal finance challenge and support in improving the service delivery capacity of municipalities and building the technical and administrative skills of their staff members.

- Allow for more flexibility in the distribution of institutional responsibilities and enhance coordination between the different tiers of government and within and between the different public institutions.

Recommendations to local civil society and host communities

- Advocate for the participation and inclusion of migrants and city newcomers in public consultations about local policy design, planning and implementation to ensure that their voices and rights are considered in decision-making

- Partner with local government and migrants-run associations to foster migrants' access to local services and urban infrastructure and defy negative perceptions around them

- Provide specialized services to migrants that would help them to cope with their new communities (language, vocational services and skills training) and foster their self-reliance along with establishing spaces of direct dialogue and interaction between displaced and locals that would trigger cooperation, rather than competition, and build bridges between them.

Recommendations to donor agencies

- Reinforce the role of municipalities through requesting all external humanitarian and development actors engaged in donor-funded projects to work closely with local governments and support in building their capacities.

- Prioritize interventions and durable solutions that can potentially have long-term positive impacts on urban areas and their populations, including the informal initiatives that migrants and vulnerable local citizens have devised to help themselves.

Recommendations to humanitarian and development organisations

- Understand local contexts and promote localized responses to locally identified problems and priorities.

- Coordinate humanitarian and development aid efforts tightly with local governments and support in strengthening local action and building institutional capacity at all levels.

- Ensure that good initiatives are sustainable after humanitarian and development aid ends.

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