LOCAL AUTHORITIES, MIGRATION AND YOUTH *

Chapter 14

More migrants will arrive in city centres during the next 40 years than ever before.[1] Policy interventions generally fall into two broad categories, those related to: *entry* (how, where and for how long a migrant enters), and *integration* (the two-way relationship between migrants and local societies). National policies are required to address entry issues, while local governments can take the lead in creating an enabling environment for social, economic and political integration of all migrants, including young people. National policy environments that recognise the importance of local-level integration can greatly facilitate this process.

Efforts to promote integration are now understood to be just as important as entry issues. The (2010) EC-UN 'Joint Migration and Development Initiative' (JMDI) Report, which explores the role of local authorities in promoting migration and development, points to the seemingly contradictory challenge of ensuring both meaningful integration and effective circularity. It is widely considered that the more integrated the migrant is, the more he or she can contribute – socially, economically and otherwise – to *both* origin and destination countries.

Another emerging trend is an increased focus on the role and support of local community representatives in promoting integration and social cohesion through thoughtful urban planning and the effective provision of basic services, including health and education, to newcomers.

Indeed, with few exceptions around the world, cities and regions facilitate access to rights, benefits and services for migrants. This is why, as a 2012 Cities of Migration Report concludes: *"Cities are lead actors on the stage of global migration. As the level of government closest to the people, local governments are most directly and immediately impacted by the lives, successes and challenges of immigrants….local governments can succeed where many national governments are challenged.*[2] At a meeting convened by the Mayor of New York in April 2013, this view was echoed from personal experience when one mayor stated that his city has implemented its version of immigration reform, while Washington figures out what it plans for the country.[3]

> **Box 14.1. Cities are Corridors of Diversity**
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> A July 2012 expert meeting organised by UNITAR and the City of Antwerp concluded that cities are composed of communities, and increasingly, communities are corridors of diversity. It is therefore imperative that policymakers understand that all major cities need well-functioning place(s) of arrival, and that managing these neighbourhoods needs a specific approach... There is little alternative but for local authorities to think, plan, envision with courage and design cities to emancipate.
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> *Source*: UNITAR, "Expert Meeting on The Learning Platform on Human Mobility: Capacity Development for Local Leaders", 9-10 July 2012, Antwerp, Outcome Document available on: https://www.unitar.org/ldp/strengthening-local-governance

The existence of dedicated migration policy decision-making structures within national governments is a fairly new phenomenon, and opens up opportunities for both local authorities and stakeholders, including civil society organisations (CSOs), to influence the policy debate. Such opportunities for engagement were limited when concern focused almost exclusively on entry-related issues.[4] "State partnerships with CSOs...are known to infuse policy debates with new perspectives and critical on-the-ground knowledge of what migrants need and want."[5]

Creative, evidence-based policies and programmes put forward by local authorities can make a qualitative difference to the lives of all migrant youth and have a multiplier effect in communities. Such policies and programmes should be sensitive to the particular needs of migrant youth, and facilitate their engagement and dialogue with local authorities. The same is true for linkages with CSOs working in partnership with migrant youth. Over time and through open dialogue, a new social compact can emerge between local government and migrant youth.

This chapter discusses the role of local authorities in migration policy, especially in relation to integration and social cohesion, and how they can work to promote the inclusion of migrant youth. It describes four obstacles that CSOs (such as those representing migrant youth) face when seeking to engage with local authorities, and points to opportunities for overcoming these obstacles, thereby contributing to the creation of more inclusive communities.

LOCAL APPROACHES AND CONVERGING CONTEXTS

"Local authorities are at the forefront in confronting the transformations and the opportunities that migration brings about."[6] Decentralisation — defined as the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from central to intermediate and local governments — is a key vehicle for allowing local authorities to efficiently and effectively harness the challenges and opportunities that migration offers. In Europe and North America decentralisation has advanced significantly, however this is not always the case in other regions, particularly in Africa, where the process began later and has not reached the same scale.[7] The level of decentralisation will have an impact on the scope of authority for local government.[8] Despite these differences, local leaders everywhere face similar migration-related challenges.

With no common past shared amongst immigrant groups, local authorities must learn how to shape policies that apply across a divergent populace. Further, since a growing number of cities are heavily populated by immigrants, local authorities must consider how integration policies cut across and equalize the rich diversity of immigrant groups. Some consider that "the best integration policies are urban policies."[9] A number of cities have adopted an approach in which little or no distinction is made between migrants and original city residents,[10] with an overriding message of "participation over segregation." The 'Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership (AMICALL)' project recommends that community messaging on tolerance be geared towards "telling the story to *everyone*."[11] In the same vein, the City of Bremen, Germany, which is working to recruit more minority youth for local civil service jobs, shifted its campaign messaging from targeting under-represented minorities to an approach in which minority youth feel "equal among equals."[12]

Cities must also be fluid and flexible in adapting policy to changing circumstances. In New York City, for example, migration policies have had to adapt to an ever-changing influx of different migrant population groups. In many European cities as well, circular mobility patterns overshadow traditional immigration patterns. The challenge becomes more complex when attempting to respond to differing needs, especially in an economically fragile climate.

Local authorities must have the tools to assess the most urgent needs of different migrant groups, particularly children and adolescents, through processes that encourage their participation.

The challenges and opportunities faced by local authorities in less-developed regions are magnified by climate and environmental change, rapid population growth and insufficient infrastructure, such as health centres and schools.

Box 14.2. Access to Rights and Responsibilities

Rural-urban migrants have also received attention from local governments. Shenzhen, China, has 2.1 million registered residents – and 8 million migrant workers. In July 2008 Shenzhen became the first Chinese city to offer "citizenship" to migrants. Residents ages 16 to 60 living in the area for at least 30 days, but registered elsewhere, can obtain 10-year residence certificate "smart cards" that allow them to apply for driving licenses and business visas to visit Hong Kong or Macao. Children of card-holders can attend local public schools, and their families are permitted to apply for low-cost public housing.

Source: Philip Martin, UNDP Human Development Research Paper 2009/32, "Migration in the Asia-Pacific Region: Trends, factors, impacts", p. 81.

MIGRATION AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES: EMERGING ISSUES

Capacity Building Development for Local Authorities

Capacity development not only entails increasing the technical capabilities of local authorities but also ensuring the efficient provision of basic needs and services. Empirical evidence suggests that decentralised management of social services and public goods provide optimal "value-for-money" in development planning and delivery. Several global actors continue to expand or promote decentralisation and local governance programmes, in line with national poverty-reduction strategies. These agencies point to the accompanying merits of transparency, accountability, resource-efficiency (both human and financial) and, most importantly, the proximity of programme planning and design to actual beneficiary needs.

Nexus of National and Local Policies

Local authorities must work within the broader context of national or federal policy-making. The coherence and interplay between national migration policies and local initiatives to provide services and protection to migrant youth and promote their social inclusion is an area that merits further attention. At a minimum, local governments need the authority and resources to respond appropriately to the needs of migrant youth in the communities under their jurisdiction. Optimally, they should be able to operate in an overall policy environment that favours an inclusive approach. At an LPHM Course organised in October 2013 in light of the growing concerns of marginalised European Muslim youth going to fight in Syria, the close and crucial partnership between federal and local law enforcement and responsible municipal focal points on youth in the City of Antwerp were highlighted as a model for other cities in Europe.

Local Authorities: Well Positioned to Support Migrant Youth

Local authorities are clearly on the front lines in addressing migration challenges, given their mandate and presence "on the ground" and experience in the day-to-day realities of increasingly diverse societies. Although little research is available on the interface between migrant youth associations and government, anecdotal evidence suggests that youth often press for change first through locally-based public institutions.

Migrants often concentrate in localities where fellow countrymen/women reside. As a result, transnational links emerge from communities of migrants living within local host communities. Local authorities can play a role in strengthening "intra-community" social cohesion, including fostering links with migrants' homelands. Far from undermining inclusion in destination cities, celebrating the origins of migrant groups can support a positive dual identity for the young and facilitate parents' acceptance of their children's embrace of more than one culture.[13]

Youth Migrant Organisations

Youth migrants coalesce for differing reasons, including common nationalities and/or ethnic origins, or as a result of similar challenges – such as their undocumented status and/or barriers to education, employment or social mobility. The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) stresses that: "Youth organizations are important forums for developing skills necessary for effective participation in society, promoting tolerance and increased cooperation and exchanges…"[14]

In Germany, for example, Turkish migrants or descendants of migrants have coalesced to ensure better access to quality education, and in the United States young migrants from a variety of national origins joined forces to press for federal enactment of the Dream Act, which, through what is now known as "deferred action," has allowed over a million children born of undocumented parents to remain in the United States, work legally and apply for drivers' licences and other forms of documentation.[15] Under its rigorous provisions, qualifying undocumented youth would be eligible for a six-year conditional path to citizenship, after completing a college degree or two years of military service.

CHALLENGES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES' ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG MIGRANTS

Although recognition of the role of local authorities in addressing migration challenges is growing,[16] significant obstacles remain in relation to their engagement with CSOs in general, and perhaps specifically with migrant youth associations. Even if local authorities want to reach out in a meaningful way to migrant communities and migrant youth, certain obstacles must be overcome.

Representation and legitimacy: Until recently, CSOs (e.g., non-governmental community-based, faith-based, diaspora and advocacy groups) have had a relatively limited role in the migration policy debate. Literature on the role of CSOs in influencing migration policy points particularly to dilemmas related to proper representation and associated legitimacy. Regarding representation, "a critical aspect in establishing successful relationships with migrant associations is the capacity of the associations to represent a wider community, i.e. whether they can be considered as legitimate representatives of community interests." Size of membership is one criterion, but is not sufficient. Local authorities have developed criteria that can measure the extent to which a migrant association is representative of the wider community.[17] Legitimacy is tied to representation, as well as how well a CSO performs its functions – which should be for the common good, rather than to advance private interests.[18]

Effective participation: A second challenge pertains to securing effective participation; that is, ensuring that migrant youth are part of a process, factoring in their unique perspectives. The WPAY points to an overall lack of opportunities for young people to participate in the life of society and contribute to its development: "In addition to their intellectual contribution and ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account."[19]

By capturing youth needs and priorities, local leaders can actively include youth agendas in the development of responsive policies that involve and engage these populations, to sustainably build the local communities of tomorrow – irrespective of youth's citizenship status.

Access: A third, related, challenge pertains to the channels that allow, or inhibit, CSOs' direct access to local authorities. Where local authorities are well-defined, the challenge can be to identify those responsible for migration (and/or migration and development) objectives.[20] Often there is little coordination between national, regional

and municipal officials dealing with migration, and given its multi-sectoral nature, migration may be addressed by a number of agencies or task forces. "A current deficiency identified by local authorities in on-going migration management is the lack of efficient and effective coordination within the administration and with other stakeholders."[21]

Limited resources: A recurring challenge for CSOs is the legislative and financial climate in which they operate. The current state of the global economy makes resource mobilisation particularly difficult, but CSOs have long faced challenges in generating funding support. Some foundations have targeted migrant youth for grants,[22] but few funds are available to migrant youth associations.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGING WITH YOUNG MIGRANTS

Forming coalitions of interest: Migrant youth associations might be able to exert greater influence over decision-making processes if they joined together with other interest groups.[23] In addition to strength in numbers, coalitions facilitate the bundling of priorities. Coalitions of interest amongst different groups that affect or are affected by migration can provide mutual strategic support, information sharing, network building and technical expertise. Such coalitions can link local civil society efforts with international processes and vice-versa. Further, international support for local groups can have a "boomerang effect," as sustained transnational mobilisation provides the support and pressure needed by local actors, which can in turn lead to improved practice at all governance levels.[24]

Use of new technologies: Civil expression, as starkly exemplified during the Arab Spring, continues to reflect the results of social, economic and other policies that neglected for too long the vital role of youth in today's societal structure. Governments can innovate by using fast-growing technologies (such as social networking) to share information, experiences and good practices.[25] Social media and technology can help give overlooked sectors of society a voice. Since young people are particularly well-versed in using technology, they should receive support in efforts to apply their creative and tech-savvy efforts to effect desired change.

Platforms for dialogue and access: One of the main developments in migration policy since its progressive "internationalisation" in the mid-1990s has been the

establishment of platforms for the exchange of views, information and policy making. Globally, the multiplication of this cooperation model (also defined as "informal, network-based governance"[26]) reflects both states' recognition that they can benefit from cooperation on migration issues, and their willingness to come together in an informal, non-binding way to do so. For local authorities, a central recommendation is "the establishment and maintenance over time of institutional set-ups that serve as dialogue and coordination frameworks."[27] At the UN General Assembly High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development on 4 October 2013, the Mayor of Barcelona announced that his City would host the Mayoral Forum on Migration, Mobility and Development on 20 June 2014. In gathering 30 mayors from around the world, the Forum serves to: catalyse policy leaders in cities and regions around the key challenges and opportunities of mobility and development; shape a vision for what is required to carry a "mobility and development" agenda forward for cities and regions; and channel global visibility on the role played by sub-national government in this field.[28]

Such platforms, or "local consultative processes," should include a platform dedicated to interface with migrant youth associations.

Local authorities and stakeholders, until recently relatively uninvolved [in the migration policy debate], have increased their commitment…. In this sense, the establishment of good lines of communication at the horizontal and vertical level, the exposure to other experiences, and the increasing relevance of migration in social cohesion policy become pivotal elements of local authorities' increased awareness and action…. To [achieve] this aim, local authorities can beneficially promote vertical partnerships within other levels of government and horizontal partnerships with other actors operating at the same level[29]

KEY MESSAGES

- Cities are the epicentres of human mobility. Local authorities along with local institutions, policies and programmes are in the best position to address important migration-related challenges for adolescents and youth, such as: education, employment, empowerment, access to health services, social cohesion and adapting to change.

- A national policy environment that encourages the integration of migrants will assist local authorities' to promote inclusive cities and neighbourhoods in which young migrants can actively participate in policy-making and contribute to the development of their arrival communities as well as their communities of origin.

- Local authorities need support from national governments to address the challenges of migration and mobility. While important policy and research networks already exist, national governments should help contribute more resources, and support emerging consultative processes (or expand them to the local level) and ensure the presence of a favourable environment for an inclusive approach toward migrant youth.

- A city's "body language" is a barometer for inclusion.30 Local authorities should work to develop neighbourhoods in which young migrants are ensured access to what they need to prosper (adequate housing, viable schools, participation rights, employment opportunities, healthcare, etc.), and where they are not subjected to attitudes or practices aimed at social exclusion.

- Regular, meaningful interface with migrant associations, including those representing youth as well as women's organizations, will help local authorities to accurately assess specific needs. The scope of migrant youth associations' influence will depend on their ability to secure legitimacy, achieve effective participation, enjoy direct access to local government channels, and overcome material constraints.

- More comparative research is required on migrant youth associations' engagement with local authorities (challenges, obstacles, successful initiatives, etc.). Research should also focus on how migrant youth associations can (or do) benefit from building larger coalitions of interest, employing new technologies to achieve their objectives, and engaging with youth through participatory "local consultative processes" (or their equivalent).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish local assessments, policies, institutions, mechanisms, programmes and actions to facilitate migrant reception and integration, with particular attention to migrant youth and adolescents.

- Ensure that local authorities responsible for designing and implementing policies and programmes related to migration and diversity are clearly identifiable by and accessible to the general public, including migrant youth.

- Provide support to local authorities (by national governments) on migration and mobility.

- Establish consultative processes incorporating local authorities and migrant youth.

- Facilitate and support migrant youth associations, migrant women's associations and migrant civil society participation.

- Institutionalise collection of migration data on adolescents and migrant youth at the local level and conduct research on migrant youth's engagement with local authorities.

NOTES

[1] Between 2007 and 2050 the world's cities will have absorbed 3.1 billion people, what Doug Sanders describes as "the largest migration in human history." Saunders (2010), *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History is Reshaping our World*, New York: Pantheon Books.

[2] Good Ideas from Successful Cities Report (September 2012), Cities of Migration Report, Maytree Foundation, citiesofmigration.org, p.12

[3] "Convening of Cities for Immigration Integration: Supporting and Engaging Immigrant Communities", hosted by the Office of the Mayor, City of New York, 25 April 2013

[4] Thouez (2004) in The Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), "The Role of Civil Society in the Migration Policy Debate" *Global Migration Perspectives*, No. 12, available at http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/42ce4ac54.html

[5] Natalia Bonelescu-Bogdan (2011), "Improving US and EU Immigration Systems: The Role of Civil Society in European Migration Policy: Perspectives on the European's Engagement in its Neighbourhood." http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/EUcivilsociety.pdf

[6] "Migration to Development: Lessons drawn from the experience of local authorities" EC-UN JMDI Final Report, p. 19

[7] Giorgio Brosio, "Decentralisation in Africa" (2000) http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/2000/fiscal/brosio.pdf

[8] *Ibid*, p. 22.

[9] See UNITAR 'Expert Meeting on The Learning Platform on Human Mobility: Capacity Development for Local Leaders', 9-10 July 2012, Antwerp, Outcome Document available on: https://www.unitar.org/ldp/strengthening-local-governance

[10] Lord Mayor Wolfgang Schuster, Stuttgart, Germany, cited in Maytree Foundation, "Good Ideas from Successful Cities," (September 2012), *Cities of Migration Report*, Maytree Foundation, p .16. www.citiesofmigration.org

[11] Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership (AMICALL) is an eighteen-month-old transnational project funded by the European Union's Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (European Integration Fund – EIF) under its Community Actions 2009 programme. See: http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/research/urbanchange/amicall/#c2211

[12] Maytree Foundation, op. cit, pp.34-35.

[13] UNITAR (2012) op. cit.: 7

[14] DESA, *World Programme of Action for Youth* 2010, p. 42.

[15] Under the new policy, migrants who came to the United States before age 16, have lived here for at least five years, and are in school, are high school graduates or are military veterans in good standing will have the option to remain temporarily. The immigrants must also be 30 or younger and have clean criminal records. *NY Times*, "Obama to Permit Young Migrants to Remain in US," http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/16/us/us-to-stop-deporting-some-illegal-immigrants.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

[16] Though the focus here is on integration and social cohesion, it is important to note that local authorities work closely with federal authorities on migration and security issues. As stated at the UNITAR July Expert Meeting, local authorities play a vital role in countering radicalization, and in "working to avoid a culture of fear". The concern in most countries and cities is on extremism (which goes beyond radicalization). Federal authorities "depend" on sub-national government offices to achieve results, and they are increasingly being drawn in to assist. UNITAR (2012) op. cit.: 7

[17] EC-UN JMDI Report 2010, "From Migration to Development: Lessons Drawn from the Experience of Local Authorities", http://www.migration4development.org/content/migration-development-lessons-drawn-experience-local-authorities, p. 55.

[18] T. Risse, in Ann M. Florini (ed.) *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*. Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange and Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000, p. 186.

[19] DESA, *UN World Youth Report* 2010, p. 42.

[20] EC-UN JMDI Report 2010, "From Migration to Development: Lessons Drawn from the Experience of Local Authorities", http://www.migration4development.org/content/migration-development-lessons-drawn-experience-local-authorities, p. 24.

[21] *Ibid*, p, 24.

[22] http://www.pdsoros.org

[23] See Thouez, *op. cit.* and Bonelescu-Bogdan, *op.cit.*

[24] Thomas Risse, "The Power of Norms versus the Norms of Power: Transnational Civil Society and Human Rights" in Florini (ed.) *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*. Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange and Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2000, p. 192.

[25] Bonelescu-Bogdan, *op. cit.* http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/EUcivilsociety.pdf

[26] Alexander Betts (2010), "Global Migration Governance-the Emergence of a New Debate", Briefing Paper, November 2010 www.globaleconomicgovernance.org

[27] EC-UN JMDI Report 2010, "From Migration to Development: Lessons Drawn from the Experience of Local Authorities", http://www.migration4development.org/content/migration-development-lessons-drawn-experience-local-authorities, p. 56.

[28] http://www.unitar.org/ldp/facilitating-policy-dialogue

[29] *Ibid*, p. 23-24.

[30] Term borrowed from Elisabeth Collett, MPI Director, Europe.