



GFMD 2019 Common Space

Quito, Ecuador - 23 January 2020

“Integrated approaches to foster migrants’ inclusion for sustainable development”

Theme 2 | Access to services for migrants: the role of cities and other stakeholders

Host: Mayors/Local Authorities – GFMD Mayors Mechanism

Thematic Expert: UNDP

Facilitating migrants and displaced populations’ access to a wide range of services has key implications not only for beneficiaries, but also for host communities. Access to basic services is a fundamental prerequisite for migrants to exercise their human rights and policies that ensure such access touch upon complex issues pertaining, among others, to the provision of public health and education, migrants’ socioeconomic and cultural integration, as well as social cohesion and development¹.

Migrants and displaced populations contribute to a number of sustainable development outcomes in hosting societies, but also support local development in their communities of origin. However, countries often limit migrants’ access to services. Barriers that prevent migrants and displaced populations from having access to those services are broad ranging: from migration and legal status to political, financial and cultural issues. The lack of information on the services they are entitled to also contributes to migrants’ limited access. Nevertheless, there are many contexts and concrete examples, in which migrants and displaced populations are guaranteed access to specific services, in particular relating to **education, health, housing, transport, financial services and access to justice**

Debates are shaped by diverse understandings of the underlying issues, the costs and benefits, risks and consequences of specific policy choices and availability of resources. Policy makers, following sometimes their public opinion anti-immigrants feelings, commonly mention the cost implications of providing and extending services to migrants, including refugees. Some also believe such provisions might have a pull effect. Yet, excluding parts of the resident population from accessing basic services may have negative consequences not only for the individuals concerned, but also for the hosting communities. By contrast, benefiting from a wide range of services helps migrants integrate into their host communities, which contributes to civic coexistence and social cohesion (see GFMD Background Paper 1.2: *“Facilitating social and economic inclusion”*).

While central governments are responsible for policies and legislation, cities and local authorities are often on the front line as service providers and have a thorough understanding of existing needs, challenges and consequences

¹ This world café will not address labour issues not to overlap with Theme 3 ‘Ensuring access to decent work and protection of labour rights’.

of specific policy choices for their communities. Urban planning *per se* may make access to services easier for individuals and communities. It also helps prevent social and spatial segregation, and plays a central role in facilitating migrants' inclusion and sustainable development. In addition to governments, cities and local authorities, actors from civil society and the private sector are key to fill vital gaps in service provision and constitute a source of innovative solutions. Citizens also contribute increasingly to fostering inclusion through direct engagement and bottom-up, community-based initiatives.

While each stakeholder has a perspective and a specific role to play in this field, lack of integrated approaches represents a challenge or an obstacle on the way to providing for basic needs of individuals and protecting the well-being and perspective of prosperity for entire communities. At the same time a wealth of experience exists, in particular from the local perspective. Facilitating peer learning and the fostering of **partnerships are therefore a vital dimension that needs to be nurtured.**

Against this backdrop, **this world café session aims at providing a common space for all stakeholders to exchange experiences and formulate proposals for joint action and stronger partnerships around concrete ideas.** Because **innovative solutions** are often the result of a creative process of exchange of perspectives and initiatives, participants are all invited to contribute their point of view, listen actively to the contributions of others and identify opportunities for partnerships that may help advance migrants' inclusion, while fostering social cohesion and sustainable development through improved access to services.

Guiding questions

First round

1. Could you share **one successful initiative** that has significantly improved migrants and displaced populations' access to services in your country/city? What challenges have you faced in its implementation?

Second round

2. What kind of **partnerships with other key stakeholders** could improve your work in the future to foster migrants' access to services?