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MIGRANTS' INCLUSION IN CITIES



INNOVATIVE URBAN POLICIES AND PRACTICES



UNESCO and UN-HABITAT would like to express their deep gratitude to the experts, city representatives, city network representatives, UNESCO Chair holders, the UNESCO Centre for Catalonia, NGO's, IOM in New York, and all individuals who provided invaluable contributions to this guide, drafted by two professors of George Washington University, Marie Price and Elizabeth Chacko.

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FOREWORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE-DIRECTOR OF UN-HABITAT

As the global population now tops the 7 billion mark, and as the number of people in our rapidly urbanising world living in towns and cities now surpasses the 50 per cent mark, more and more people are migrating.

Like moths to a flame, most migrants are lured to the bright lights of the city.

How many people will end up in the developing world's growing slums? Will they find jobs, shelter, water electricity, health services? The problem is similar in the north – will all those seeking a better life realize their dreams?

According to the latest United Nations research, the number of migrants has now reached some 1000 million people, representing about 14 percent of the world's population. The impact of international migration on countries of origin, transit and destination is profound. And its pace is accelerating. The increased flows of people across borders from diverse cultural backgrounds gives rise to a number of challenges in both host countries and countries of origin. International migration clearly raises new challenges for urban management.

Whether they are fleeing conflict, disasters, or simply seeking a better life somewhere else, the number people on the move today is greater than ever before.

It is very difficult to stop the movement of so many millions into cities and towns, and this is why urbanization is one of the most powerful and irreversible forces in the world. UN-HABITAT projections show that over 90 per cent of future urban population growth will occur in the cities of Asia and Africa, and to a lesser extent, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Local authorities have little, if any, say over national migration policies. Similarly, they have little capacity to control migratory flows into their cities. Yet it is local authorities who have to deal with the consequences; something that confronts their core mandate of providing housing, services, education and employment.

Like urbanization, migration too is one of the great irreversible forces of our modern world. Yet all too frequently, discussions on how to manage it are steeped in controversy and rancour. This is in part because policy making and coordination at the international, national and municipal level is lacking.

Some countries complain about the brain drain, but there is also the fact that the remittances migrants send home is far larger in financial terms than gross overseas development aid or foreign direct investment. Thus it is a question of striking a balance.

For those at the receiving end, building walls is not the way to deal with migration. Creating economically-sound and labour-sensitive public policies oriented towards a better “living together” is the key to integration. The living city must be an inclusive tolerant place for all irrespective of ethnic origin.

This is what I declared during a press conference for the launching of UN-HABITAT/UNESCO Publication *How to enhance inclusiveness for international migrants in our cities: various stakeholders view* at the Third Congress of United Cities and Local Government in Mexico in November 2010.

Walls are the physical proof of urban segregation and the tangible consequence of the inability to live together in a given city, particularly in border cities. With a view to promoting social urban cohesion, public policies should aim for inclusive cities where difference and human diversity are not only accepted, but celebrated. Indeed it constitutes one of the engines of economic development which ensure prosperity.

It is a fact that cities make countries rich. Countries which are highly urbanized have higher incomes, more

UN-HABITAT and UNESCO's common project, *Migrants' Inclusion in Cities: Innovative Urban Policies and Practices* is conceived both within the framework of UNESCO's instruments on cultural diversity and human rights, and as part of UN-HABITAT's new approach to urban planning.

The project aims to promote better integration among migrants and their host communities. Working with local authorities and city professionals, it encourages awareness-raising and capacity-building.

After all it is also a fact, according to United Nations figures that urban economic activities account for well over half of gross national product (GNP) in low income countries, over 70 per cent in middle income countries and still more in high income countries.

And let us always bear in mind that major contributors here are migrants who helped build many of the world's greatest cities. They are the people after all with the courage to pack up and move. This is reason enough for us to make our cities inclusive places able to provide for all.

Instead of buildings walls, we need to build more bridges.

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