

2nd Annual Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop of the
Mediterranean Host Municipalities Learning Network

“Improving local economic opportunities for host communities and refugees”

May 09 pm - May 12, 2017

Mövenpick Hotel, Beirut, Lebanon

Concept Note & Agenda

Context

Over the five years of the Syrian conflict, affected municipalities have had to develop extraordinary resources and solutions to host refugees and ensure service delivery for all. 89% of Syrian refugees are hosted in by 3 of Syria’s neighbors (Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey), and affecting already vulnerable contexts in the region such as Iraq¹. In the region in average, 90 % of the refugees are not hosted in camps, but reside within the host communities. As a consequence of refugee influx, local governments experienced positive (increased consumption) and negative socio-economic consequences for local communities (e.g. increased pressure on public services and resources, lower wages, social cohesion at risk).

Due to the protracted nature of the Syrian refugee crisis, there is a consensus among the international community that a key objective of mid-term policies should be to increase the welfare of both refugee and host communities. This will ensure the ongoing development of host countries, boost the contributions of refugees to their respective economies and also allow them to maintain their skills, creating the conditions for repatriation and Syria’s reconstruction. As available resources are already under pressure, new economic opportunities for host communities and the economic inclusion of refugees (which does not imply political rights and access to citizenship) can mainly be achieved by boosting local economic growth (as opposed to redistributing existing resources).

Solutions to support local economic development and the creation of job opportunities have been identified and discussed², such as: legal and fiscal frameworks for access to the labor market; the improvement of the business environment to facilitate entrepreneurship and attract private investors; channeling investments to communities hosting refugees; scaling up existing public services to boost supply and demand; achieving better matches between existing labor demand and supply. The Mashreq countries and Turkey, with the occasional support from the international community, have already begun to develop and implement mid-term solutions such as investing in

¹ 228 888 registered Syrian refugees are hosted in Iraq (UNHCR, Nov 30 2016)

² During several high level international conferences, among them the event “The Welfare of Syrian Refugees: Evidence from Jordan and Lebanon - Cross-Regional Learning Event Between the Mashreq and Europe On Hosting Refugees” co-organized by the CMI, the World Bank, and the UNHCR, and hosted by the AFD in Paris, February 2016. <http://cmimarseille.org/highlights/launch-wbunhcr-report-%E2%80%9C-welfare-syrian-refugees-evidence-jordan-and-lebanon%E2%80%9D>

local economic development, creating job opportunities and reforming labor market legislation in some host countries. Local governments can be both beneficiaries and active agents of these policies: as the local economy can benefit from central legislative and fiscal reforms or national programs, local governments also provide for the services (such as physical spaces, urban transport and amenities, social and cultural services, etc.) which enable successful business and work environments.

Background

Since early 2016, and in close collaboration with its members and partners, the Center for Mediterranean Integration has been supporting host communities of refugees through its Mediterranean Refugees and Host Communities Program, by providing a peer-to-peer (PtoP) platform for knowledge and experience sharing on priority topics for municipalities affected by the Syrian refugee crisis.³ It facilitates a Host Municipalities Learning Network: a community of practice for Mediterranean municipal staff, elected representatives of host communities and development practitioners, which aims to identify and discuss innovative experiences of hosting refugees at the community level. Over the past year, the question of local economic development and associated job opportunities for host and refugee populations emerged as a key topic for host communities.

This second annual event of the CMI Host Municipalities Learning Network, is hosted by the Government of Lebanon and is organized in partnership with the World Bank, UN-Habitat, the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ), and United Cities & Local Governments- Middle East & Easter Asia (UCLG-MEWA). It aims to build on the previous discussions and deepen exchanges on how host local governments and communities, with the support of central governments and the international community, can increase local economic growth and create job opportunities, while continuing to provide resources, infrastructure and services for the common welfare of citizen, refugees and the most vulnerable. Participants will explore key local levers of action such as: stimulating entrepreneurship and attracting private investors; improving matching of labor demand and supply; providing housing and urban amenities; strengthening social cohesion.

Objectives

This annual Peer-to-Peer workshop will strengthen and build the capacity of the Mediterranean Host municipality network. It specifically aims at:

- i) Learning and exchanging on a specific priority theme: local economic development and labor market inclusion from host local governments' point of view.

³ On May 30-Jun1st 2016, the CMI and its partners organized the "[Mediterranean Municipalities at the Forefront of the Refugee Crisis - Peer-To-Peer Learning Workshop for Communities Hosting Refugees](#)" event. Following this first event, CMI and its partners developed a series of technical workshop on Solid Waste Management and on Social Cohesion in host municipalities, managed an online bilingual (Arabic/English) discussion forum for the community, and documented good practices identified through the network.

- ii) Reviewing the achievements of the Host Municipalities Network year's activities, including through hearing back from the members of the Network and capitalizing on the challenges and success, in regard to the year's theme focus.

Participants: 90

- Host local governments in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey
- Selected national government representatives in the mentioned countries
- Syrian organizations and private sector stakeholders
- Partners: GIZ, UCLG-MEWA, UNHABITAT, World Bank
- Relevant Selected development and humanitarian partners and experts (with an active role in the event)

Location: Beirut, Lebanon, with a field visit to the city of Saida (May 11)

Workshop Sessions

Objective i) Learning on “Improving local economic opportunities for host and refugee communities”:

Participants will build on the previous discussions and deepen exchanges on how host local governments and communities, with the support of central governments and the international community, can increase local economic growth and create job opportunities, while continuing to provide resources, infrastructure and services for the common welfare of citizen, refugees and the most vulnerable.

- **Thematic Session 1 - Creating job opportunities for host and refugee communities** (Lead Organizer: World Bank)
- **Thematic Session 2 - Stimulating entrepreneurship and private investments** (Lead Organizer: World Bank)
- **Thematic Session 3 - City and Neighborhood Profiles and Strategies: a tool for providing a solid platform for joint programming, collaboration and enhanced role of local governments** (Lead Organizer: UN-Habitat)
- **Thematic Session 4- Strengthening Social Cohesion as a key component of local economic development** (Lead Organizer: GIZ)

Objective ii) Reviewing and building on the achievements of the Host Municipalities Network: challenges and innovative solutions from the Mashreq, Turkey and beyond (Lead: CMI)

The workshop will adopt an “action learning approach”, by allowing participants in each session to build action plans for the Network on the thematic discussed to move toward a solution sharing Community of Practice through the Host Municipalities Network. Participants will also be given the opportunity throughout the event to review the Networks' year's activities including launching annual event in 2016; technical workshops and webinars on solid waste management and social cohesion; online discussions; and best practice compendium.

Detailed Agenda

DAY 1 - Welcome session and dinner

Tuesday, May 09

- 18:00 – 21:00 **Welcome session and dinner**
- 18:00 Registration of Participants for the 2 days and distribution of Workshop package
- 18:30 – 20:00 **Official Opening**
Plenary room
- Welcome remarks:
H.E. Mouin Merehbi, Minister of State for Displaced Syrians, Lebanon
Kanthan Shankar, Acting Country Director for the Mashreq, World Bank
Tarek Osseiran, Country Programme Manager Lebanon, United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat)
Heidi Gutsche, Senior Adviser Global Programme Refugees, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Janette Uhlmann, Sr. Program Officer, Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI)
 - Moderated panel discussion - Summary of the country context for host local governments in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey
Nasri Osman, President, of the Union of Municipalities of Baalbeck, Lebanon
Haneen Hassouneh, Sahab Municipality, Jordan
Leyla Şen, General Coordinator, United Cities and Local Governments - Middle East and Western Asia (UCLG-MEWA)
Moderator: **Line Rifai**, Business Editor and Economist, France 24
- 20:00– 21:30 **Dinner Reception**

DAY 2

Wednesday, May 10

- 08:30 - 09:00 Registrations (for late arrivals)
- 9:00 - 9:15 **Introduction by the Moderator of the 2.5 days agenda and logistics / Security Briefing**
Plenary room
- 9:15 – 10:15 **Year in Review of the Host Municipalities Network: challenges and innovative solutions from the Mashreq, Turkey and beyond**
Plenary room
- Screening of the “Year review of the Host Municipalities Network” movie
 - Highlights and main recommendations from the year in review:
Janette Uhlmann, Sr. Program Officer, CMI
 - Presentation of the Host Municipalities Compendium of good practices and short story pitches from Network members:
Yehia Daher, President of the Union of Municipalities of Al Qaraoun, Lebanon
Mohammad Al Sharaa, Mayor, Zaatari Municipality, Jordan
Halil İbrahim Akinci, Director of Strategy Development, Sultanbeyli Municipality, Turkey
- Q&A

10:15 – 10:30 **Introduction on Local Economic Development and Job Opportunities in Host Communities**
Plenary room
- Results of CMI Survey on Local Economic Development among the Host Municipalities Network
Sara Boughedir, Urban Specialist, Center for Mediterranean Integration

10:30 – 10:45 *Coffee break (15 minutes)*

10:45 – 12:45 **Theme 1 - Creating job opportunities for host and refugee communities**

This theme will discuss how the improvement of service delivery at the local level can contribute to creating an enabling environment for SMEs to invest and create jobs for host communities and displaced people. Speakers will share their experience on how to prioritize investments in public infrastructure to benefit both host and displaced communities, while supporting the local economy for achieving longer-term development goals. Parallel working groups will serve to discuss more in detail the above questions, with a particular attention to the local contexts.

10 :45 – 11:30 - Panel discussion
Plenary room—all participants
Moderator: **Haneen Sayed**, Program Leader, World Bank
Mohamed el Bast, Head of Union of Central Bekaa, Lebanon
Mohamed Saadieh, Head of Union of Danieh Municipalities, Lebanon
Maha Katta, Crisis response Coordinator, International Labor Organization, Jordan

11 :30 – 12:45 - 3 Parallel working group sessions (1:15)
Working Group rooms
Working group 1.1: Sustainability, improvement and transferability of existing skills of refugees in the local context.
Moderator: **Maha Katta**, Crisis response Coordinator, ILO, Jordan
Working group 1.2.: Job opportunities for host and refugee communities through public infrastructure investments.
Moderator: **Phoram Shah**, Urban Specialist, World Bank

12.45 - 14.00 *Group Picture & Lunch Break*

14:00 – 16:15

Theme 2 – Stimulating entrepreneurship and private investments in Host Communities

This theme will discuss key issues in stimulating entrepreneurship and private investments. It will present perspectives of local economic opportunities (entrepreneurship, self-employment and formal employment), and what kind of actions municipalities can take at their level (investment promotion, investment climate reform and firm level support). Parallel working groups will serve to discuss more in detail the above questions, with a particular attention to the local contexts.

14:00 – 14:45

Plenary room—all
participants

- Panel discussion

Moderator: **John Speakman**, Advisor, World Bank

Fuat Özharat, United Cities Local Governments Coordinator, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Turkey

Rami Sharrack, Syrian Economic Forum, Gaziantep, Turkey

Fadel Labadi, Manager of Industrial Development Department, Amman Chamber of Industry, Jordan

Mohammad Al Shaer, General Manager, Sigma Detergent, Jordan

14:45 – 16:00

Working Group
rooms

- 3 Parallel working group sessions (1:15)

Working group 2.1. Investment promotion & Direct Firm Level Support

Moderator: **Peter Mousley**, Program Leader, World Bank / **John Speakman**, Advisor, World Bank /

Working group 2.2. Investment Climate Regulatory Reform/Home based Work

Moderator: **Abeer Kamal Shalan**, Private Sector Specialist, World Bank

16:00 - 16:15

Coffee Break

16:15 – 17:15

Plenary room

Reporting on Working Group Results Theme 1 & 2

19:00

Mövenpick Hotel

Networking Dinner : Development partners, Local and Central Governments get together

- Networking around the compendium of best practice

DAY 3

Thursday, May 11

8.00 - 12.00

Technical visit to Saida – hosted by the Municipality of Saida and UN-Habitat

12.00 - 14.00

Return to Event Venue and Lunch

14:00 – 16:45 **Theme 3 - City and Neighborhood Profiles and Strategies: a tool for providing a solid platform for joint programming, collaboration and enhanced role of local governments**

This theme will focus on how to best actively engage different local, national, and international partners to collectively address refugee crisis in urban settings, and identify main gaps and constraints. The following three parallel working groups will present and discuss local strategies and area-based approach methods to inform regional and national policies, constraints and good practices on joint initiatives and collaborations undertaken between municipalities and support agencies during emergencies and recovery phases, and regional practices amongst different municipalities.

14:00 – 14:45 - Panel discussion - **City and Neighborhood Profiles: a tool for enhanced urban response and local coping strategies**
Plenary room – all participants

Synne Bergby, Programme Planning Advisor, UN-Habitat, Lebanon

Rabih Takech, Member of Nabatieh Municipality, Lebanon

Halil İbrahim Akinci, Director of Strategy Development, Sultanbeyli Municipality, Turkey

Q&A

14:45 – 16:00 - Parallel working group sessions (1:15 hour)
Working Group rooms
Working group 3.1. - Sub-thematic 1: Possible replication of the City Neighborhood Profiles approach

Moderator: Chadi Nashabe, Councilor, Municipality of Tripoli, Lebanon

Working group 3.2. – Collaboration between local authorities and humanitarian agencies; opportunities, obstacles and challenges

Moderator: Lady Habchy, Project Support Officer, UN-Habitat-Lebanon

Working group 3.3. - Role of local governments in enhancing local economic opportunities for host and refugee communities: expectations versus realities!

Moderator: Sami Attalah, Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, Lebanon

16:00 – 16:15 Coffee break

16:15 -17:00 **Reporting on Field Visit and Working Group Results Theme 3**
Plenary room – all participants

17:00 – 19:30 *Free time*

19:30 - 21:00 *Dinner in Beirut city – Departure from the Hotel*

DAY 4
Friday, May 12

8:30 – 10:45

Theme 4 - Strengthening Social Cohesion as a key component of local economic development (GIZ)

This theme will discuss social cohesion as a component of local economic development in contexts with a high influx of refugees. The panel discussion will feature speakers from the local level, the private sector, and development organizations, to focus on how further strengthening the link between local economic development and social cohesion needs could help create and expand local economic opportunities, and thereby improve the overall stability and welfare of refugee hosting countries.

8:30 – 9:15

Plenary room – all
participants

- Panel discussion

Nasri Osman, Head of Union, Baalbek Union of Municipalities, Lebanon

Ali Afan, former mayor of Sarhan, Jordan

Mamduh Albadarin, Human Resource Manager, Pickle industry, Jordan

Naim Frewat, Economic Recovery and Development Coordinator, International Rescue Committee

Moderator: **Aline Rahbani**, Urban Programming Advisor, World Vision International

9:15 - 10:30

Working Group
rooms

- Parallel working group sessions (1:15 hour)

Working group 4.1. Promoting Social Cohesion through job creation for refugees and local population

Moderator: Aline Rahbani, Urban Programming Advisor, World Vision International

Working group 4.2. Strengthening Social Cohesion to attract private business investment and enhance business opportunities

Moderator: Heidi Gutsche, Senior Adviser Global Programme Refugees, GIZ

Working group 4.3. The spatial dimension of social cohesion: The role of communal development policies

Moderator: Naim Frewat, Economic Recovery and Development Coordinator, International Rescue Committee

10:30 – 10:45

Coffee break

10:45 - 11:15

Plenary room

Reporting on Working Group Results Theme 4

11:15 - 15:20

Plenary room

Host Municipalities Network Action Planning

11:15 - 12:00

Plenary room – all
participants

Moving from priorities to action: addressing bottlenecks

- Summary of the 4 thematic objectives in addressing their challenges

- Identifying the bottlenecks and addressing them: a case study

- 12:00 - 13:00
Working Group Developing your action plan to reach your objectives: Brainstorming on identifying bottlenecks and way forward for implementation of priorities
- 13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch**
- 14:00 - 15:20
Plenary room **Moving from priorities to action: Network's Action Plan**
- Network Benchmarking Survey
- Presentation of 3 bottleneck analysis
- Moving to Network action: work program, assignments, CMI collaborative platform
- 15:20-15:30
Plenary room **Closing remarks**