Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

MIGRATION AND CITIES IN LATIN AMERICA: A PERSPECTIVE FROM VULNERABLE TERRITORIES

Overview of a Housing Laboratory held 13 May 2020

Prepared by Francesco di Villarosa

Contents

Acronyms

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EU	European Union
GNP	Gross National Product
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IMEPLAN	Instituto de Planeación y Gestión del Desarrollo del Área Metropolitana de Guadalajara (Planning and Development Management Institute of the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara)
JWP	Joint Work Programme
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MAG	Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara
MINVU	Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo de Chile (Ministry of Housing and Urbanism of Chile)
MINURVI	Ministros y Autoridades Máximas en Vivienda y Desarrollo urbano de Latinoamérica y el Caribe (Assembly of Ministers and High Authorities on Housing and Urban Development of Latin America and the Caribbean)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
REDEUS-LAC	Red de Desarrollo Urbano Sustentable en Lationamérica y el Caribe, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
RIVHA	Red de Investigadores de Vivienda y Hábitat en las Américas
SEHAB	São Paulo Municipal Department of Housing
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEHAB	Secretaria Municipal de Habitação da Prefeitura de São Paulo (Housing Department of the Municipality of São Paulo)
UNIAPRAVI	Unión Interamericana para la Vivienda (Inter-American Housing Union)
UHPH	Urban Housing Practitioners Hub
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America

Executive Summary

Migration is a growing phenomenon in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and currently at historical peaks in the region. It is most visible in the crisis-driven exodus from Venezuela to other countries in the region, and in the massive flows from Central American countries to the northern hemisphere. Most of these migrants concentrate in informal settlements, and housing ranks high among their priorities as an important entry point to local policies and services. It is also a significant challenge for cities that are already struggling to provide decent housing for their populations.

This report captures the discussions and key messages of a Housing Laboratory on Informal Settlements and Migratory Phenomenon in LAC that took place on 13 May 2020 on the Urban Housing Practitioners Hub (UHPH). Eighteen experts took part in the laboratory to discuss migration and informality trends in LAC and to explore different approaches that have been developed to address migrants' housing needs in the region. They included:

- The comprehensive legal framework and mechanisms implemented by the **Municipality of São Paulo, Brazil** to integrate migrants into the city and provide them with access to housing programmes.

- How **Chile's Ministry of Housing and Urbanism** is facilitating international migrants' access to housing programmes by lessening eligibility requirements and providing support services, including a rental fund with subsidies.

- Geographic targeting underway in **Cartagena, Colombia** to collect much-needed information on international migrants in the city to better understand how to meet their needs, with support from the World Bank.

- How two cities in **Guatemala** are seeking to reintegrate migrants returning to the country (Amatitlán) and provide formal financial services for households that receive remittances (San Marcos). Both projects are part of the Cities Alliance Cities and Migration Programme.

- **Mexico's** policies and programmes protecting refugees and asylum seekers as well as an initiative by the city of Guadalajara to collect information on migrants to support the design of specific tools and policies for vulnerable groups.

- IADB is piloting projects in **Uruguay and Colombia** designed to facilitate access to tenancy through mechanisms such as a guarantee fund for low income families and a rental fund with subsidies.

- In the **Dominican Republic**, the government is investing USD 300,000 to build 7,000 social housing units and is providing incentives to the private sector (such as free land and tax exemptions) to produce 35,000 units. Part of the housing supply will be for Dominican families who receive remittances.

The main message emerging from the discussions is that migration can be an opportunity of growth for cities, if adequately managed in urban, social, economic, and cultural areas. One critical condition for realising such opportunity is to search for policy solutions that promote win-win situations, in which benefits are shared by both migrants and recipient communities. This requires flexible regulation of new or existing policies in order to accommodate migrants,

quality information on migrants, an adequate legal framework, institutional development, and capacity-building at the local level.

Migration is a core issue for Cities Alliance, which convened a Joint Work Programme for Cities and Migration to bring members together around the issue. The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) funds the programme and is a key partner in Cities Alliance's migration work.

Participants

José Luis Ventura	Vice President of the Asociación Cibao de Ahorros y Préstamos, Dominican Republic
Pablo Vitale	Asociación por la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ), Argentina
Vanessa Velasco Bernal	Urban Specialist, The World Bank
Francisca Rojas	Migration Programme, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)
Adriana Hurtado	Researcher at the Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios sobre Desarrollo (CIDER) – Universidad de los Andes, Colombia
Patricia Víchez Ramos	Urban Development Manager for the Distrito de Independencia, Lima, Peru
Gabriel Arrisueño Fajardo	The World Bank
Luis Enrique González	Executive Director of the FM4 Paso Libre, Dignidad y Justicia en el Camino A.C., Mexico
Cynthia Loria	Representative for the AVINA Foundation, Guatemala
Mario Silva	General Director of the Instituto Metropolitano de Planeación del Área Metropolitana de Guadalajara (IMEPLAN), Mexico
Carlos Marambio	Head of the Housing Policy Department of Chile's Ministry of Housing and Urbanism (MINVU)
Nicolás Galarza	Director of Urban and Territorial Space, Ministry of Housing, of Colombia
Patricio Morera	Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements of Costa Rica (MIVAH)
Alfredo Manrique Reyes	UN-Habitat
Jean-Roch Lebeau	Representative for the Plataforma Urbana, Guatemala
Marina Luna	Advisor to the Coordination of Policies for Migrants, the Municipality of São Paulo, Brazil
Mercedes Di Virgilio	Researcher at the Red de Investigadores de Vivienda y Hábitat de las Américas (RIVHA)
Tulio Vázquez	Vice President of Communication and Knowledge Management, Unión Interamericana para la Vivienda (UNIAPRAVI)
Anaclaudia Rossbach	Regional Manager for LAC, Cities Alliance, and facilitator of the Housing Laboratory
Brigitte Hoermann	Senior Migration Specialist, Cities Alliance

1. Introduction

This report summarises the discussions at a Housing Laboratory on Informal Settlements and Migratory Phenomenon in LAC, held 13 May 2020 as part of the UHPH platform.[1] Initiated by the Housing Ministry of Colombia and the Assembly of Housing and Urban Authorities in LAC - MINURVI, the laboratory was co-organised by the Cities Alliance, The World Bank, Universidad de los Andes, RIVHA, REDEUS-LAC, UNIAPRAVI, and IADB. Eighteen experts from nine countries in the region, two development banks, and one research network took part in the laboratory, sharing experiences and contributing to the debate.

The report begins with a brief overview of the underlying themes of the laboratory: The dynamics of migration and informality in LAC, and the relevant legal, institutional and policy issues to turn migration into an opportunity for cities. It also highlights how the Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme on Cities and Migration, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, is addressing these issues.

The second section features case studies from around LAC and an overview of the surrounding debate. The third section addresses the key issues that emerged from the discussions, while a final section offers some concluding remarks.

1.1. Migration dynamics and informality in LAC cities

Migration is a growing phenomenon in LAC and currently at historical peaks in the region. It is most visible in the crisis-driven exodus from Venezuela to other countries in the region – Colombia and Peru are the largest recipients of Venezuelan migrants – and in the massive flows from vulnerable Central American countries to the north of the hemisphere.

In Argentina, migration is also an urgent challenge. According to Pablo Vitale of the NGO Asociación por la Igualdad y la Justicia (Association for Equality and Justice), migrants make up more than half of the population of Argentina's informal settlements, where migration, poverty and informality are interlinked on a territorial basis.

There are many different types of migrants. They can migrate internally, to a single country or between countries. They can be driven by conflicts and violence or by the search for economic opportunities, land, services, and other means to improve their living conditions (Hurtado et al. 2020). They can also be returning migrants, who moved to other countries and then – voluntarily or not – moved back to their country of origin. For example, repatriation from the United States is accelerating now due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are an estimated 3.7 million Venezuelan migrants.[2] Between 2006 and 2017 in Mexico, there were almost 330,000 violence-driven internally displaced persons (IDPs).[3] Additionally, almost 12 million Mexicans live abroad, 97% in the United States. At the same time, Mexico is a

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[1] The Urban Housing Practitioners Hub is an open platform for the exchange and dissemination of best practices and knowledge where stakeholders and practitioners can convene around the housing and the urban habitat in LAC. It was established with support from Cities Alliance. For more, see https://www.uhph.org/en.

[2] Hurtado, Tarazona A., di Virgílio M., Gryciuk P. LAV Asentamientos Informales y Fenómeno Migratorio – UHPH, 2020. Available at: https://www.uhph.org/es/lavs?op=5.

[3] Mexican Commission of Defence and Promotion of Human Rights, ibid.

recipient of trans-migrants from Central America who are moving to the US. According to the UN and the Inter-American Dialogue, 16% of Guatemala's population resides abroad and 5% are IDPs (ibid.).

These migratory flows generate different pressures on land, housing, services, citizen coexistence, and the labour market, both in transit and final destination cities. Due to factors including low income, discrimination, obstacles to labour market inclusion and lack of proactive inclusion and housing policies, migrants tend to concentrate in informal settlements, where 20% of LAC's population resides, according to the World Bank (2016). This poses challenges for already scarce space, shelter, and services and contributes to overcrowding and densification. The situation is magnified in small and intermediate cities, which often suffer from low institutional capacity and budgetary restraints.

1.2. Turning migration into an opportunity: Legal, policy and institutional arrangements

Cities are the entry point for most migrants in search of economic opportunities and shelter. Without proactive management, large inflows of migrants often put additional pressure on already stretched city infrastructure, services, and resources.

At the same time, however, cities are where migration can be an opportunity and driver of city growth. This can occur (i) in the economic realm, where migrants can contribute as workforce, entrepreneurs, taxpayers, and consumers, and by injecting new skills and abilities in the local market; and (ii) in the cultural dimension, where they can add diversity and new perspectives to the local scene.

For cities to turn migration into an opportunity, migrants must be integrated into the local economic and social fabric – a process that requires the appropriate legal, policy and institutional arrangements in place.

Most cities are neither empowered nor prepared to manage large inflows of migrants. Policies for migration management tend to be national rather than local, if they exist at all, and cities typically have few tools to promote local integration of migrants. However, as the structure and dynamics of migration change, cities need to take a leading role in migration management. This requires a shift in policy approach.

To integrate migrants effectively, cities need to change how they address migration management and shift from a short-term, emergency/humanitarian perspective to a long-term, policy planning/developmental approach. When migration becomes a structural rather than a conjunctural phenomenon, migrants require the same access to sectorial policies as local citizens, and policies must be planned accordingly. This means creating entry points in the municipalities to access labour and financial inclusion, entrepreneurship promotion, social protection, health and education services, and housing provision, among others, with approaches specifically focused on the migrant population.

Such an approach requires structured mechanisms at the city level for (i) communication, representation, participation and dialogue channels, to let migrants express and possibly influence decision making about their demands and needs; and (ii) effective governance of multi-sectorial programmes and policies for migrants.

1.3. The Cities Alliance Cities and Migration Joint Work Programme (JWP)

The Cities Alliance Cities and Migration Programme is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It aims to generate new knowledge, promote analytical and collaborative approaches to key urban issues, and improve urban practices and policies related to cities and migration. It also aspires to become a local, national, and international coordination platform, knowledge hub and think tank for advocating new thinking on migration.

To achieve its objectives, the programme supports pilots for evidence-based approaches and policies, facilitating partnerships and dialogues to advance practice and policy, and generating policy-relevant data and knowledge. These activities are designed to help cities and countries contribute directly to global agendas, including Agenda 2030 and the Global Compact for Migration.

The Cities and Migration programme is engaging in nine pilot cities that are witnessing similar types of migration dynamics in five countries – Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, Tunisia, and Uganda – across three regions (the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean).[4] The case of Guatemala is presented in the next section.

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[4] Cities Alliance/SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), *How Secondary Cities Can Manage Migration to Promote Growth: A Discussion – Lessons from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tunisia and Uganda*, 9-10 September 2019, Bern, Switzerland.

2. Highlights from Presentations and Debate

The LAV focused on exploring how different cities and countries in LAC are addressing the issues of migration and informality, followed by a debate. This section presents highlights of the presentations and discussions.[5]

2.1. A comprehensive legal, institutional, and policy arrangement for migrants in São Paulo, Brazil

Marina Luna of the Municipality of São Paulo noted that Brazil has an advanced legal framework for migrants that guarantees access to most public policies, including for housing. Article V of the Brazilian Constitution states that foreigners residing in Brazil enjoy the same basic rights as citizens, and the 2017 National Law of Migration establishes that migrants have the same access to policies and services, including housing, as Brazilian citizens.

In São Paulo, the Municipal Law and Decree of 2016 both recognise diversity and the rights of migrants, and they establish equal access to existing municipal services and policies for international migrants and local citizens. The municipality fosters participation through a Conference of Migrants and a Municipal Council of Migrants, which brings together public authorities and civil society to elaborate, implement and follow up on municipal policy for migrants. A Centre of Reference and Attendance to Migrants has also been established and is run by the Secretary of Human Rights. Finally, Portuguese language courses are offered to international migrants.

The Municipal Department of Housing (SEHAB) is responsible for promoting the right to decent housing for temporary and permanent international migrants. These migrants have access to housing subsidies under the federal programme *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (My House, My Life), or they can be covered by any of three municipal programmes: social rent for low-income tenants, incentives for social housing construction, and financial assistance to complement income in order to make housing costs affordable. Both national and municipal housing programmes have been adapted to accommodate international migrants, such as by accepting foreign documents and requiring no specific time of residence for eligibility. SEHAB also protects international migrants from discrimination by landlords or real estate agencies (which might not accept foreign documents), fights stigmas, and provides information and assistance to mitigate migrants' lack of support networks.

Despite this inclusive approach, migrants in São Paulo tend to concentrate in the periphery and in poor dwellings downtown. Moreover, they often have limited access to formal rent contracts or housing policy due to a lack of documents, people who can act as warrantors, or information on SEHAB programmes and services.

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[5] Contributions from the debate are integrated to presentations when they deal with the same country/city or issue.

2.2. Opening migrants' access to housing supply and fair tenancy in Chile

Carlos Marambio of the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism (MINVU) presented Chile's experience with housing, which is a critical issue for migrants there. Data from MINVU indicates that almost 29% of international migrants suffer from some kind of housing deficiency, compared to approximately 18% of the non-migrant population. From 2002-2017, the quantitative housing deficit among migrants grew from 0.6% to 9.8%. International migrants concentrate in informal, precarious settlements (*campamentos*), where they head 30% of households; in the majority of cases (59%) the head of household is a woman. The main reason is high rent cost, which affects migrants (51%) more than non-migrants (22%). Migrants' cost of rent is 12% higher on average than that of non-migrants.

In response, MINVU has facilitated international migrants' access to housing programmes, such as by eliminating the requisite time of residence and providing legal, technical, and social support services. Between 2011-2019, more than 13,000 foreigners accessed housing programmes. Although they represent less than 1% of Chile's foreign residents, international migrants are between 42% and 56.3% (depending on the programme) of the beneficiaries of housing programmes in Chile, in terms of both housing supply and rent. An increasing number of international migrants have been participating in Chile's Rent Programme (*Programa de Arriendo*); in 2019, the number of migrant participants nearly equalled that of Chilean citizens. This programme fits migrants' needs because of its flexibility – it offers temporary support, follows work opportunities and the location of work, and provides subsidies in the form of rent vouchers.

MINVU intends to broaden and diversify the *Programa de Arriendo* by including subsidies to foundations in order to provide collective housing units where people who are not from the same family can reside. Additionally, as foreigners on average pay a 12% overprice on housing rent compared to a Chile citizen, new protective measures are to be issued which include, among others, improvement in the rent judgement, the legal prosecution of abusive rent and sub-rent and abusive densification, the creation of an observatory of the housing rental market, and the regulation of the guarantee procedures.

2.3. Housing for IDPs and returning migrants in Colombia

Colombia experiences a double migration flow. The first is internal from IDPs fleeing armed conflicts, who represent 10% of the country's population. The second is external from Venezuela; as of 2018, more than 1.2 million Venezuelans arrived in Colombia, half of them below the poverty line). Most migrants from both groups have established themselves in informal settlements in the outskirts of cities or as tenants in degraded city centres.

The government has prioritised support to IDPs through free government-supplied social housing or a subsidy programme for tenants. Support to foreign migrants is limited to social assistance, education, and health – no housing programmes exist except subsidies for

Colombians returning from Venezuela (approximately 300,000 people) in areas near the border between the two countries.[6]

Migrants' demands for social equipment, public space, and housing

In the debate, Nicolás Galarza of Colombia's Ministry of Housing focused on the issues of social equipment and public space. Both are already scarce in informal settlements due to high land consumption, and migrants put additional pressure on these resources because they tend to concentrate in informal settlements. There is also evidence that migrants increase demand in the housing market in informal settlements, and rental inflation is rising as a result. The Chilean government, with support from the World Bank, is designing a subsidy scheme for tenancy which is meant to also benefit migrants.

At the same time, migrants should be seen as opportunity drivers because they can induce public investment in informal settlements. For that to happen, however, appropriate national policies and legal frameworks that respect the autonomy of local governments are needed. As migration turns from a contingent into a structural phenomenon, it must be addressed by the kind of structural solutions provided by frameworks at the national level. In the absence of a policy, spontaneous settlements tend to grow, with punishingly high costs of retrofitting. Preventive urban planning is crucial in order to manage both endogenous and exogenous migration shocks, and Colombia is building an agenda in this direction.

Planning and policy need information about migrants

Fellow Colombian Alfredo Manrique Reyes of UN-Habitat raised similar points by extracting lessons from the experience of EU-funded projects in different LAC countries. He noted that the main challenges of integrating migrants within a development perspective, rather than humanitarian one, include:

- Collecting information on who the migrants are, their skills, the characteristics of the cities that receive them, and how best to take advantage of the migrants' potential;

- Reinforcing planning in land use, housing, public space provision and use, infrastructure, and access to services within a metropolitan integration perspective where an authority for urban and social control is also strengthened;

- Establishing a national policy for slum upgrading to overcome the limited local capacity and using existing housing programmes to integrate migrants (which requires participation and co-management due to cultural differences); and

- Strengthening governance at different levels.

2.4. World Bank: Geographic targeting in Colombia to overcome poor housing conditions of Venezuelan migrants

Vanessa Velasco from the World Bank remarked that Colombia and Peru receive the most migrants from Venezuela. In both countries, migrants experience critical housing conditions and limited access to services. In Colombia, 90% of migrants from Venezuela are tenants, and more

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[6] Hurtado et al.

than half of them view housing as their main concern. Additionally, different families of migrants share the same residence in 14% of cases; 13% have no access to water and sanitation; and almost half of dwellings migrants live in are overcrowded. In Peru, migrants are among the most vulnerable groups when it comes to housing, employment, and health. They tend to concentrate in informal settlements and settlements where overcrowding is high, and as tenants, often suffer abuses from landlords. Migrants are also more vulnerable to diseases such as COVID-19 because they live in overcrowded precarious settlements which have a higher risk of transmission.

Cities and countries are taking measures to address these problems, including using geographic targeting. In Cartagena, Colombia, geographic analysis is helping authorities identify and target settlements and neighbourhoods where migrants concentrate so they can assess vulnerabilities and risks, such as low service coverage vs the number of inhabitants. Then, the areas most in need can be prioritised for medium- and long-term infrastructure investment. In addition, the supply of social housing (both new housing production and existing housing upgrading) needs to be strengthened and opened to migrants from Venezuela.

Short-term recommended measures for migrants include well-targeted rent subsidies for the most vulnerable groups, assessment (and eventually improvement) of temporary shelters, and new strategies for informal business management in public spaces. Microcredit can also be a useful measure to help migrants establish and grow businesses. In addition, it is important to promote the social participation of migrants in neighbourhood upgrading and consider income-generation activities based on their identified skills.

2.5. Supporting governance for migrants' inclusion and the productive use of remittances in Guatemala

Jean-Roche Lebeau of *Plataforma Urbana* noted that Guatemala experiences both migration to – and in recent years, return migration from[7] – the United States, where almost 14% of Guatemala's population lives.[8] Approximately five percent of Guatemalans are internal migrants who moved in the last five years, mainly from the countryside to cities. Guatemala is still experiencing a rural-urban evolution with an accelerated urbanisation process, and it is generating a need for 15-20,000 housing units/year. Over the last decade, nearly two thirds of the country's urban population growth has been concentrated in secondary cities.[9] More than 90% of migration in and from Guatemala is associated with the search for economic opportunities.

Many migrants in Guatemala live in precarious informal settlements in the outskirts of the Guatemala City metropolitan area, which has 400 informal settlements with 400,000 residents, according to Lebeau. The Guatemalan government has drafted a Neighbourhood Integrated Upgrading Policy, with support from the World Bank, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and Cities Alliance, and in cooperation with the private sector, universities, and NGOs. The policy addresses issues of environmental sustainability and disaster risk management, urbanisation of informal settlements, efficiency in social programmes, capacity-

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[7] Return migration to Guatemala from the United States has intensified in 2020 as a consequence of COVID-19.
[8] https://www.citiesalliance.org/how-we-work/our-programmes/global-programmes/cities-and-migration
[9] Ibid.

building for peaceful coexistence and participation, and strengthening state governance over precarious human settlements.

Migrants who live in these settlements will benefit from the policy in the same way as other residents. However, according to Lebeau, the policy answer to rapid urbanisation is still slow and limited, with only 3,000 housing subsidies/year. New housing supply is needed badly, and a political discussion is underway on housing supply focused on financing based on savings for housing. This discussion would benefit from including other dimensions of housing financing, such as neighbourhood improvement. It would also be useful to further explore the potential contribution of remittances to finance housing at a collective level (for infrastructure, for instance) and bringing together the national government, local governments, and migrants.

In Guatemala, Cities Alliance is supporting two projects in the secondary cities of Amatitlán and San Marcos through its Cities and Migration Programme. Both cities show different labour migration dynamics, and support to municipalities is crucial because they are at the forefront of migrants' reception.

Amatitlán Includes You: Reception, Management and Integration of Labour Migrants in the City project

Cynthia Loria of the AVINA Foundation presented the project in Amatitlán. Located in the metropolitan region of Guatemala City, Amatitlán receives high numbers of migrants both from the countryside and returning from the United States (100,000/year, making the issue relevant for public policy). These factors make Amatitlán an attractive place for migrants to settle and further develop economic opportunities. The challenge is to leverage migration to boost and capitalise on growth within the city.[10]

With the Amatitlán Includes You: Reception, Management and Integration of Labour Migrants in the City project, Cities Alliance and AVINA Foundation are supporting capacity building and institutional development of municipal governance. The project also focuses on strengthening intersectoral efforts among public authorities, the private sector and civil society for the social and productive inclusion of returning migrants (for example through skills development and certification) based on participatory dialogue and social and urban diagnostics on migrants' numbers and characteristics. In addition, a sustainable development plan that includes access to housing will be drafted and technical assistance provided to the municipality.

Thriving in San Marcos project

Located along Guatemala's northern border, San Marcos is a city of both origin and transit of migrants, and thus receives a high volume of remittances. The Thriving in San Marcos project, supported by Cities Alliance and the Inter-American Dialogue, aims to build new partnerships with banks and credit cooperatives to provide formal financial services for remittance-receiving households. The idea is to help the remittances generate formal savings rather than being used informally for household consumption. The savings can then be transformed into credits for local businesses, especially in the knowledge economy, which is a promising alternative to

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[10] Ibid.

agriculture or manufacturing in San Marcos as well as other secondary cities.[11] This is expected to create attractive jobs and increase tax revenues for the municipality.

The project also supports reducing school drop-out, which is common in out-migration cities, and improving educational performance among middle-school students in San Marcos. Its activities include financial education/mentoring and inclusion, training for entrepreneurs and credit-brokering with financial institutions, strengthening human capital for the knowledge economy, and expanding access to high-quality after-school programmes. The project will also organise stakeholder engagement sessions and public events to showcase results and good practices, dialogues on migration and development, three training sessions on local migration management, and a toolkit on local migration mainstreaming and governance design to build the capacity of local governments.[12]

2.6. Housing for returning migrants and remittance recipients in Mexico

Mexico is essentially a country of out-migration and trans-migration from Central American countries, mostly to the United States in both cases. The equivalent of nearly nine percent of Mexico's population resides in the United States. Mexico has a tradition of, and a policy for, protecting refugees and asylum-seekers. It also has a National Migration Programme that guarantees rights and inclusion in public policies to those refused access to the United States and who qualify as refugees. Regarding Mexican out-migration, the main concern is with the social and economic re-integration of returning migrants (whether voluntary or not) from the United States. In addition, since 2017 the Mexican government has provided subsidies to the families of Mexican migrants who live in the United States and send remittances to self-construct homes on plots of land in Mexico.[13]

Building knowledge about migrants in Guadalajara

Guadalajara is a city of five million with mostly transitory migration. Since 2018, the city urban planning agency, IMEPLAN, and Techo, a Latin American NGO focused on poverty reduction in informal settlements, have been collecting social and urban information on informal settlements in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area. This effort has provided valuable information about the situation of migrants (who mostly reside in these settlements) and their relationship with the evolution of housing in the city periphery. Information collected so far indicates that owning their own plot of land is the main priority for migrants, although more knowledge is still needed. Additionally, IMEPLAN and UNHCR are implementing a study of migrants, IDPs, refugees and asylum-seekers in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area in order to support the design of specific tools and policies for vulnerable groups.

Institutional arrangements need to be strengthened to implement legal support for refugees and asylum-seekers in Mexico

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[11] Remittances represent 12% of Guatemala's GDP. Receiving households typically have more disposable income and potential for saving than the national average (ibid.).
[12] Ibid.
[13] Hurtado et al.

Luis Enrique González of FM4 Paso Libre, Dignidad y Justicia en el Camino addresses the legal and institutional framework for refugees and asylum seekers in Mexico. There are two laws in Mexico dealing with protection for refugees and asylum seekers. The former tries to meld human rights with a national security vision; it guarantees access to health, education, and social services in general, but not to housing. The law for asylum seekers follows international norms and establishes a commission that is supposed to be responsible for their integration, and access to housing is one of the main challenges. The commission, however, does not have a presence in all of Mexico's states (notably Jalisco), and municipalities lack the tools and capacity to implement it. In addition, people with refugee status often find that their original documents are not accepted for tenancy contracts, and the process of document regularisation takes a long time with contradictory legal frameworks. In reality, Mexico's operational focus is on returning migrants only.

In search of innovative housing solutions for temporary and forced migrants in Mexico

Tulio Vázquez of Unión Interamericana para la Vivienda addresses specific problems of, and possible solutions for, temporary and forced migrants in Mexico. Temporary migrants concentrate in mining and agriculture and are often seasonal, so they need temporary rather than permanent housing. However, there is no political will to make access to credit more flexible for migrants, although they contribute to social security. A guarantee of funds for tenancy would also be helpful for temporary migrants.

Forced migrants and IDPs escaping from land conflicts or organised crime might benefit from the recovery of properties of large state mortgage institutions. The issue is how to lend (*comodato*) empty properties or to be upgraded to NGOs for use as temporary housing for forcibly displaced migrants.

2.7. IADB: Generating win-win solutions for migrants and local communities

Francisca Rojas of IADB presented on rent and the importance of facilitating access to tenancy. In Uruguay, IADB is managing a project for migrants that, on the demand side, supports tenancy through a guarantee fund for low income families (thus lowering the risk for the landlord) and intermediation between landlord and tenant that focuses on the respective rights and duties. The fund has existed for 10 years; 90% of tenants repay it in time, and migrants have been able to access it for five years. On the supply side, the project aims to increase the number of decent and affordable housing units.

In Colombia, IADB is piloting a rental fund with subsidies (similar to Chile's programme) as well as a housing upgrading project. The lessons from these experiences are that, in order to integrate migrants successfully, it is crucial to generate shared benefits for both the local community and migrants – a win-win solution. However, the tools of local governments to address the demands of migrants are fragmented, while civil society has both more experience and capacity in the issue. A critical tool is an information system to direct health, education, and other demands of migrants to the appropriate services. Additionally, investing in social equipment creates opportunities for integrating migrants, making them catalysts for investment in slum upgrading.

2.8. Addressing the housing deficit for the Dominican Diaspora and Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic

José Luis Ventura of *Asociación Cibao de Ahorros y Préstamos* presented the Dominican Republic's approach to migration and housing. The Dominican Republic is a country of mostly out-migration; 1.4 million Dominicans have migrated, representing over 10% of its total population. Some 80% have migrated to North America, and remittances make up 8% of the country's GNP. The Dominican Republic has some in-migration from Haiti, but it is much less than the outmigration.

The country has a qualitative housing deficit of 1.4 million units and a quantitative deficit of 600,000 units, which contributes to the growth of informal settlements. In order to reduce these figures, the public and the private sectors are entering into a partnership. The government is investing USD 300 million to build 7,000 social housing units, while at the same time providing incentives such as free land and tax exemption to the private sector with the target of producing 35,000 housing units. Part of this housing supply will be provided to returning members of the Dominican diaspora, while subsidised financing will be offered to families who receive remittances. Haitian in-migrants face the same obstacles in access to housing as Dominicans, so they also contributing to the expansion of informal settlements.

2.9. Information on and regulation of migrants in Peru

Gabriel Arrisueño Fajardo of The World Bank addressed the interlinked issues of lack of information about, and too rigid regulation of, migrants in Peru. Information on migrants has little granularity and is barely accessible to local governments, which, in general, have no tools to integrate migrants. Partly because of such poor knowledge of migrants, Peru tends to be excessively rigid in regulating migrants. For instance, only Peruvian citizens are eligible for subsidies to tenants, even though most tenancy growth has been in the informal sector, where migrants (especially from Venezuela) tend to concentrate. In 2019, formal tenancy grew only 23%, compared with 97.6% growth in the informal sector. This means a missed opportunity to make the housing rental market more dynamic and has generated prejudice for the high number of Peruvians who are informal tenants.

2.10. Synthesis and reflections of the debate

Mercedes Virgilio from the academic network Red de Investigadores de Vivienda y Hábitat de las Américas suggested thinking about the city and not just the informal settlements, which implies the need to integrate tools and legal frameworks for finance, land use, and planning, among others. This in turn generates a coordination challenge in the relations between different levels of government for the integrated management of cities. In this context, the experience of Uruguay offers interesting insights. In that country, interventions are moving beyond informal settlements to focus on the existing urban fabric and housing stock (for instance, empty housing units outside informal settlements) in order to identify opportunities for rent, which could benefit migrants as well as citizens.

Ms. Virgilio synthesised the main issues from the housing laboratory as follows:

- Migration should be conceived as a complex and multidimensional issue ("different" migrations rather than "one" migration), to which COVID-19 is adding further complexity and vulnerability;

- Migrants must be recognised as subjects of different rights, so that intersectorality needs to be conceived as the horizon of public policy – in particular, housing provision should be integrated with access to social policy for migrants;

- As a corollary, the issue of work to generate capacity as one of the main interventions for migrants is central;

- The need for better information on migrants is urgent;

- Planning of interventions for migrants needs to be integrated, both horizontally at the city level and vertically between levels of government; and

- Different types of tenancy policy are in place, such as guarantees and subsidies, and generating shared benefits for local communities and migrants is key to their success.

According to Anaclaudia Rossbach of Cities Alliance, the issue of governance of interventions in favour of migrants within city and policy governance at large is central to the debate, as indicated by the cases of São Paulo and Guatemala. Participation of migrants in governance arrangements and a legal framework establishing migrants' rights are equally critical.

Finally, Patricio Morera of the Costa Rican Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements concluded the laboratory by linking the main issues of the presentations and debate to broader development issues – "old problems with a new face" – such as poverty, inequality, violence, risk management, and climate change, with COVID-19 as a new entry. Within this perspective, the first step is incorporating a human rights approach into public policy, whereby the first and enabling step must be the recognition of migrants' rights into the legal framework, as it is the case in São Paulo. Then, the approach has to integrate a rule of law perspective focused on human rights with a welfare state perspective focused on programmes and services. This, in turn, implies institutional strengthening and adequate tools (including accessible technology, subsidies, guarantee funds, and urban planning) together with a different way to communicate with migrants: an empathetic approach that melds human rights and vulnerability expectations with efficient institutions and a programmatic vision.

3. Emerging Key Issues

The presentations and debate held during the laboratory highlighted the following key messages:

A) Migration is at its peak in LAC and has turned into a structural rather than conjunctural phenomenon. As such, it needs to be addressed through structural approaches and solutions.

B) Migration is increasingly putting pressure on land, housing, services, the labour market, and socio-cultural relations in recipient cities. A vicious circle is created between migration and informality. Migrants live in informal settlements or informal tenancy arrangements for different reasons – low income and lack of documents, protection, or connections, among others – and they tend to concentrate in informal working activities. This situation further reinforces their vulnerability to risks such as eviction or exposure to COVID-19. It is clear that migration, vulnerability, and informality are interlinked on a territorial basis.

C) A key to addressing migration successfully is to turn it into an opportunity – by taking advantage of migrants' skills, capacity, and cultural diversity, or by leveraging their demand and additional pressure on land, housing, and services to promote urban investment. This approach generates way, win-win solutions for local residents and migrants based on local integration and shared benefits.

D) Turning migration into an opportunity implies a shift in the approach to migration from a humanitarian to a development perspective. Broadening migrants' access to national and local policies is one of the prerequisites for their successful integration. In this context, housing policy is a priority and possibly the main entry point for migrants' inclusion in the urban, social, and economic fabric of cities.

3.1. Measures that benefit migrants

The laboratory addressed different measures in the housing sector that benefit migrants, either directly or indirectly. They are synthesised in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Types of measures supporting migrants' demand for housing

Type of Housing	Demand-side Measures	Supply-side Measures
Rent	- Rent subsidies, vouchers - Financial assistance to complement income in order to make housing costs affordable - Guarantee fund for low-income tenants	Provision of social rental in general

	• Intermediation with landlords, sensitisation on tenant and landlord rights and duties, legal protection from abuses	
Self-construction, affordable housing provision	• Access to credit in general • Subsidies to migrants' families in the country of origin / to returning migrants	• Subsidies or incentives in general for housing construction • Subsidies to institutions to provide collective housing units • Recovery and provision for temporary housing of empty/degraded properties of state mortgage institutions

Source: Housing Laboratory on Informal Settlements and Migratory Phenomenon in LAC.

Each of these measures is more or less appropriate according to the type of migrant and their specific needs. For instance, rental vouchers are a good fit for temporary labour migrants, as they can flexibly follow displacements following job opportunities. Guarantee funds, possibly associated with intermediation and legal protection measures, can be effective in supporting migrants who are more vulnerable to abusive rental situations. Finally, measures that link remittances and subsidies are extremely helpful for migrants' families remaining in the country of origin.

3.2. Creating an enabling environment for migration measures

Most of the measures above need an enabling environment in order to be effective. Here are three elements that are a starting point for creating such an enabling environment:

- **Flexibility.** It is important to relax regulation of sectorial policies and rules specific to migrants, such as excluding the requirement of a given time of residence or of certain ID documentation for eligibility to housing programmes. This would facilitate migrants' access to the formal housing market, thereby making it more dynamic and mitigating rising prices – a win-win solution for both migrants and locals.

- **Information and policy implementation tools.** Available information on migrants is often scarce, which presents an obstacle to designing appropriate policies for migrants or adapting existing policies to attend them. For instance, migrants' skills need to be known in order to promote their productive inclusion in cities. In addition, cities – the typical entry points for migrants – often lack the tools or the capacity to implement intersectoral policies (such as integrating service provision or access to housing and

income generation) that are key for the successful inclusion of migrants in the local urban, economic and social fabric.

- **Adequate legal and governance frameworks.** It is important to have an adequate legal framework that recognises migrants as subjects of rights, as well as effective institutional and governance arrangements to make the city capable of coordinating and executing intersectoral policies. In some cases, such as slum upgrading and social housing, national policies are necessary to support and complement local efforts.

Achieving these three elements requires actions to support advocacy of migrants' rights and institutional strengthening and capacity-building at both the national and local level, including from international agencies through technical assistance. One of the most critical components of any migration-related approach is ensuring that when extra resources are leveraged to support migrants, local residents benefit too (a win-win arrangement).

4. Concluding Remarks

This housing laboratory provided an important opportunity for collective reflection on migration and housing in Latin America and the Caribbean. The informative presentations and case studies on migration, housing, and informal settlements from across the region fostered a well-grounded debate with valuable inputs.

The variety of experiences shared during the laboratory show that countries find themselves at different stages of awareness, openness, and capacity of response to the challenges that migration is presenting in the region. The same is true for social housing and upgrading policies for informal settlements. One of the laboratory's expected contributions is to promote an increasing confluence and reciprocal adaption of migration management, social housing and upgrading policies.

The main message emerging from the discussions is that migration can be an opportunity of growth for cities, if adequately managed in urban, social, economic, and cultural areas. One critical condition for realising such opportunity is to search for policy solutions that promote win-win situations, in which benefits are shared by both migrants and recipient communities. This requires flexible regulation of new or existing policies in order to accommodate migrants, quality information on migrants, an adequate legal framework, institutional development, and capacity-building at the local level.