A new perspective on cities as part of a system of cities

Looking at secondary cities as part of a system of cities allows for a better understanding of migration corridors and the benefits of cooperation between cities. It also makes it possible to visualise local development beyond boundaries and take advantage of mobility patterns by focusing on connections with neighbouring towns, villages, and more distant communities.

At its core, the programme seeks to advance global thinking on how secondary cities in developing countries can manage and seize the opportunities arising from migration and displacement. It fosters local partnerships among diverse city stakeholders and national and international actors to implement approaches that are locally relevant and work for all residents.

Supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the programme operates in North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean through the Cities and Migration programme.

It builds on an initial phase of work, also financed by SDC, that produced new evidence on climate-related urban migration and secondary cities through research and pilot programming. This new phase expands the approach from cities to corridors for greater impact.
The programme works with systems of secondary cities in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Tunisia, Somalia, and Uganda to facilitate regional collaboration on urban planning and advocacy.

In Uganda’s **West Nile region**, enumerations of urban refugees will make it easier for cities to plan and provide services to all their residents. Refurbished maternal and mental health centres and newly trained professionals will provide much-needed medical and mental health care for refugees and host communities.

In Uganda’s **Greater Jinja area**, migrant and host community saving groups will receive training in financial, enterprise, and digital skills to help run successful enterprises and access financing. An upgraded market will make it easier, safer, and healthier for women to sell and trade their products, and an innovative digital waste management pilot will provide training and financial resources to run successful recycling businesses.

After-school programmes in Guatemala’s **San Marcos-Amatitlán corridor** will provide students – especially young women – with knowledge and skills to succeed in school, helping Guatemala build human capital and transition to a knowledge-based economy.

In Ethiopia’s **economic corridors**, a new market in Jigjiga will allow migrants, the forcibly displaced, and host communities to purchase and trade at significantly lower prices. Women micro-entrepreneurs will create a new market for Jigjiga University’s 17,000 students. Expanded migration resource centres in Adama will offer voluntary registration and job-matching services to more migrants and IDPs. An upgraded market and health clinic in Adama will provide economic opportunity and health care for all residents, especially women.

In **Tunisia**, employment agencies will receive training and financial support to expand their services to reach people living outside urban centres in the Kairouan-Medenine-Tataouine corridor, where migrants tend to settle. New Citizen Spaces will make administrative municipal services, such as permits, more accessible, transparent, and efficient.
Cities Alliance sets a dedicated strategic focus on cities and migration. For many migrants and displaced persons, cities are a primary destination to seek shelter, well-being, and opportunities. However, cities in developing countries – and particularly secondary cities – require support to respond to these flows so they can leverage mobility for local development in a way that benefits both residents and newcomers.

Cities Alliance provides financial and technical assistance to city stakeholders to identify and implement approaches for improved local migration management that are relevant to the local context. As migration and displacement in developing countries are characterised by informality, Cities Alliance builds partnerships among various constituencies at the local, national, and global levels to jointly identify and negotiate a better way forward.

As a result of the programme, cities will:

- Strengthen their capacity to address urban expansion planning for improved economic and social inclusion.
- Gain access to finance and technical assistance to improve labour market integration for migrants, displaced persons, and host communities.
- Engage in migration and displacement diplomacy globally and regionally, thus ensuring that local migration issues are addressed internationally.

Secondary city stakeholders will gain access to financing and technical assistance to improve labour market integration and basic services for migrants, displaced persons, and host communities. Labour initiatives will reach over 70,000 vulnerable beneficiaries, and public service provisions will benefit over 180,000. All activities will be designed and implemented by city stakeholders.

The programme strives for gender equality and women’s empowerment to improve the well-being of girls and women, who are often excluded from economic opportunities, social and political participation, and equitable access to public services.

Cities Alliance will facilitate the participation of secondary cities in global migration and displacement diplomacy to ensure that local migration issues are being addressed internationally. Regionally, the programme will build alliances among cities to foster peer-learning and joint advocacy.
The programme will support rapidly urbanising secondary cities to provide work, housing, and municipal services such as sanitation, waste management, energy, and water to vulnerable migrants, displaced persons, and host communities.

**Targets of Secondary City and Corridor-Level Projects**

- **20 secondary cities** in the Horn of Africa, North Africa, and Latin America with over 5 million new and residing residents will be supported to leverage migration dynamics for social cohesion and development.

- **US$ 7 million +** in funding leveraged for locally-designed approaches to enhanced migration management. Cities are providing 50% of the funds.

- **60,000+ migrants**, forcibly displaced, and vulnerable members of host communities will benefit from services to access new or better work opportunities.

- **180,000** will gain access to basic municipal services.

- **Gender-transformative partnerships** will enhance the impact of urban planning, safe labour programmes, and social inclusion.

- **40+ different city stakeholders** - from all constituencies - work jointly to achieve these targets.

- **At least 50% of all programme participants are female**, representing over 30,000 empowered women.

- **Through policy initiatives and dialogues, government officials gain knowledge, exposure, and networks to respond to migration dynamics.**

- **Secondary cities and networks gain a voice on global migration and urban processes to advocate on their contribution to the SDGs and lobby for further support.**

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