# BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE MUNICIPAL MIGRATION NETWORK FOR THE HORN OF AFRICA

Five-year Strategy and Action Document with Respective Financial Plan and Fundraising Strategy

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF): Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility - Regional Network and Dialogue Action

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**Cities Alliance**
Cities Without Slums

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Koboko, Uganda

# Contents

Kakuma, Kenya

# Acronyms

| | |
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| ACAV | Associazione Centro Aluti Volontari |
| AU | African Union |
| CUF | Community Upgrading Forum |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| EAC | East African Community |
| EU | European Union |
| GCM | Global Compact on Migration |
| GCR | Global Compact on Refugees |
| GRF | Global Refugee Forum |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development in East Africa |
| IOM | International Organisation for Migration |
| IRC | International Rescue Committee |
| KMC | Koboko Municipal Council |
| MDF | Municipal Development Forum |
| SDC | Swiss Development Cooperation |
| SSURA | South Sundanese Refugee Association |
| UCLG Africa | United Cities and Local Government Africa |
| UNHCR | The United Nations Refugee Agency |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| UBOS | Uganda Bureau of Statistics |
| UEP | Urban Expansion Planning |
| VNG International | International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities |

Gabiley, Somalia

# CONTEXT

**The Regional Network and Dialogue Action – hereafter the dialogue or 'the Action' – responded to the needs of secondary cities in the Horn of Africa affected by the presence of refugees and involuntary migrants. Their arrival brought into sharp relief the need to improve social services, housing, livelihoods, and basic support for all urban residents. The Action was designed to explore ways of doing so that promoted social cohesion and lessened poverty, while strengthening local institutions and municipal planning capacity. Over its lifespan, it established a regional network and platform for dialogue among seven cities: Arua and Koboko in Uganda; Kakuma-Kalobeyei in Kenya; Assosa and Jigjiga in Ethiopia; and Gabiley and Borama in Somalia.**

Since 2021, Cities Alliance has supported this regional network and dialogue. Working with municipalities and other partners, it organised five peer-learning events. Each was hosted by a member city and facilitated policy discussions and trust-building among displaced and vulnerable host communities. Through an iterative and consultative process, the events featured opportunities to identify cities' challenges and specific technical gaps. Subsequent sessions included technical training to meet the identified needs.

The Action recognised that networks are not ends in themselves, but potentially powerful mechanisms for achieving collective objectives. It *substantively* aimed to benefit people displaced by conflict, war, and climate while simultaneously securing urban futures for long-term residents, transient populations, and more recent arrivals. It worked from the explicit position that beyond short-term humanitarian aid, assisting displaced populations means strengthening the cities where they live. Doing so demands improved livelihoods and security, greater access to quality basic services, and avoiding interventions that divide communities instead of promoting solidarity and collective action. Towards these ends, the network facilitated extended conversation and engagements among refugees, migrants, and host populations through collective discussion.

The network and dialogue supported its members in strengthening their voices and bringing national and international attention to the challenges they face. It also supported their participation in supra-national debates such as reviews of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact on Migration (GCM). This attracted attention and resources to non-capital cities, offered opportunities to improve technical knowledge and capacities, and enabled network participants to influence and domesticate global policy priorities and commitments.

Multiple factors distinguish the action. These include an explicit focus on secondary cities; a dedicated investment in building a locally relevant community of practice; and the degree to which its primary beneficiaries – secondary cities and their residents – developed the network parameters and meeting modalities. While multiple mayoral forums and municipal consultations include bureaucrats and politicians, their participation in this network alongside representatives from civil society and displaced populations offered a unique space to share their needs, challenges, and propose potential solutions.

Including refugee and host community representatives in the dialogue ensured local relevance and laid the foundation for ongoing collaboration at multiple scales. It built connections and good will with appropriate municipal, national, and regional actors as they collaborated in developing local planning priorities and activities. Peer learning fed these processes, offering comparative perspectives and experiences while helping to establish norms of social and political inclusion. An emphasis on gender further surfaced the perspectives of women in and out of municipal government. Even if the long-term effects are yet to manifest, network participants remain confident that their participation will improve living conditions and opportunities for displaced and host populations, reducing the risk of conflict and improving modes of delivering basic services to all vulnerable city residents.
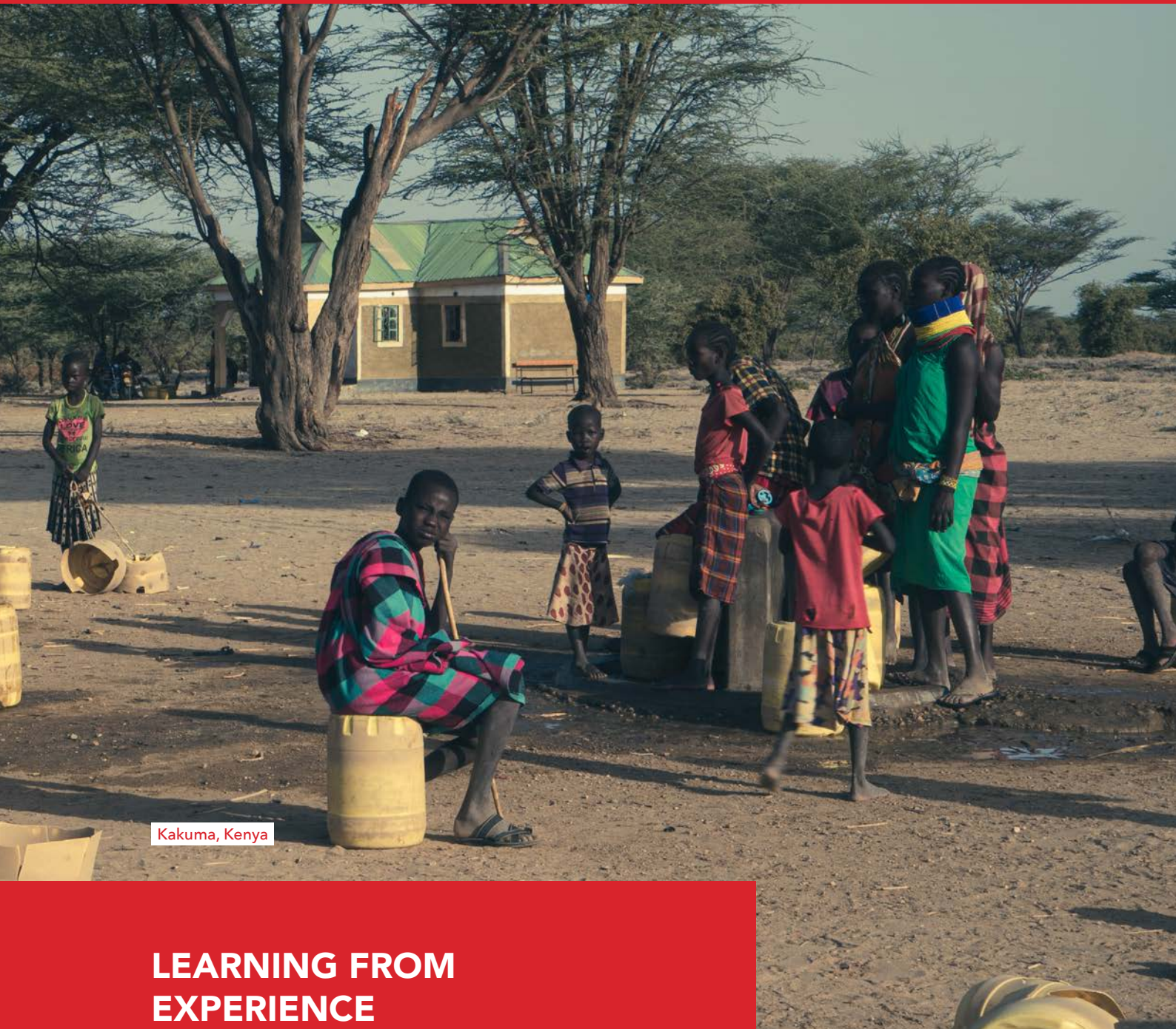
Kakuma, Kenya

# LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Over the first phase of the Action, the seven selected secondary cities forged a regional network and platform for dialogue. The platform aimed at establishing policy dialogue to help secondary cities in the Horn of Africa better address the challenges and opportunities related to displaced populations in urban settings. The initial network modality was to invite four representatives from the participating cities for each discussion: one each from the host community, a refugee-led organisation, the municipality, and the private sector. When possible, a national-level representative also joined. The European Union (EU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development in East Africa (IGAD), and United Cities and Local Government Africa were part of the Action Steering Group Committee. Cities Alliance acted as the project manager. The Associazione Centro Aiuti Volontari (ACAV), IGAD, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) were also members of the Action through their involvement with initiatives in Assosa, Ethiopia and Koboko, Uganda.

Partnership activities were broad and undertaken as a series of guided experiments. The following reflect areas of success on which to build future actions.

# Multi-level intervention valued by participants

## Local: Within each city

The network includes refugee and host community representatives, allowing them to discuss their needs, challenges, and potential solutions with the appropriate municipal, national, and regional actors to engage in local planning activities.

> *The regional dialogue drew attention to refugee residing in secondary cities and their host communities. It helped us understand that integration is key. Being a refugee does not mean that life is hopeless.*
>
> – Nyoka Mary, Refugee Representative, SSURA

## National: Relationship with national governments

The network enabled dialogue between key counterparts from municipalities and their national authorities (also, national authorities from neighbouring countries) with the potential to influence national policies.

> *The recommendations discussed with the network will be used in the midterm review (Policy Brief) for the National Urban Policy, Migration and Refugee Policy, and the preparations of the MDF in Koboko and Arua.*
>
> – Stephen Bogere, Ugandan Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development.

## City-to-city

Exchanges with neighbouring cities facing similar challenges informed cities on solutions for improving living conditions and opportunities for both refugees and host populations, reducing the risk of conflict, and providing access to basic services for all vulnerable city residents.

> *We have been exposed to the previous experiences from other cities who are managing the same issues. We can directly learn from them on what works and what does not work and act accordingly.*
>
> – Hibo Hassan Harun, Gabiley Municipality

## Regional: UCLG Africa and IGAD

Having IGAD and UCLG Africa as part of the Steering Committee of the Action enabled the network to spearhead regional cooperation on urban refugees and displaced persons in the Horn of Africa. Most IGAD member states are making national commitments to improve refugee access to education and livelihoods, while at the same time responding to new displacement. Many countries developed national action plans or roadmaps and are pursuing progressive changes from encampment systems to integrated settlements.

> *The focus of this Action is the 'localisation of migration governance' and how to achieve it.*
>
> – Charles Obila, IGAD

# Global: international organisations and international agenda implementation

The regional network aims to support the cities in strengthening their voices and bringing attention to their needs. The network worked within constraints imposed by different institutional contexts and environments. It provided cities with opportunities to advocate at global debates, including: Africities, the World Urban Forum, the Global Compact on Refugees, the African Review of the Global Compact on Migration, the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on IDPs, as well as using the Cities Alliance as a global platform.

> *Regional partnership and networking are central to answer to the needs of urban refugees. We would like to use the CRRF Action and the IGAD support platform to follow up on the global refugee pledges with a regional approach.*
>
> – Solomon Sonko, Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda

# Improved technical expertise

Each peer learning event included two technical sessions on mechanisms that have successfully helped cities introduce participatory approaches to planning and city administration that include all city residents. The Action introduced the following complementary initiatives and training activities:

**Urban Expansion Planning**

Participants were introduced to Urban Expansion Planning, a cost-effective approach that cities can use to proactively plan the next 30 years of growth to match their context and resources. Already effective in shaping municipal development in several municipalities, it was incorporated into subsequent discussions across the network.

**The Municipal Development Forum (MDF)**

The MDF is a platform established at the municipal level for all stakeholders to meet regularly to exchange views, debate priorities, and agree on common actions on matters pertaining to the town or city. Cities Alliance promoted the multistakeholder forum as a platform for participation and dialogue among urban citizens, including host communities and displaced populations, to exchange knowledge and inform local policies, plans, and budgets. All cities of the network are currently establishing MDFs.

**The Community Upgrading Fund (CUF)**

The CUF is a vehicle to improve access to basic social and infrastructural services for the urban poor living in slums and informal settlements. It is a financing mechanism that allows slum dwellers – including host communities, refugees, migrants, and settlement-based community organisations – to access grants and financing for small infrastructure initiatives that meet the community's basic needs under clearly defined criteria.

**Ecosystem mapping and strategic engagement**

Ecosystem mapping enables municipalities to better recognise interest parties, obstacles, potential allies, and consider the resources required to address obstacles and capitalise on opportunities. Encouraging cities to consider the complex web of factors influencing their capacity, the exercise spans multiple scales, from the municipal to the city region (to support urban expansion work), along with national and regional policies. It also incorporates the role of international bodies, civil society, and the private sector. While much of the work will ultimately be undertaken at the local or national level, such initiatives can enable cities to better situate their own interventions within broad policy frameworks and global priorities. This will enable them to better read their environments and 'market' their work in ways that can attract national and global support.

**Resource mobilisation**

The members of the network were trained on how to mobilise resources to overcome obstacles and support specific needs. They learned about the resource mobilisation cycles, mapped partners, established a fundraising strategy, received tailored technical expertise on local resource mobilisation, and participated in storytelling coaching.

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO KOBOKO MUNICIPALITY – AN EXAMPLE OF INNOVATION, OWNERSHIP, AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Action responded to the current need to provide direct support to municipalities hosting a substantial number of refugees. One of its three components directly supported the Koboko Municipal Council (KMC) to improve municipal urban planning and service delivery. The KMC implemented this component with technical support advice from ACAV.

According to a 2018 study initiated by the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International), self-settled refugees make up about 26 percent of Koboko's estimated population. The study also underscores that insufficient local budget allocation is impacting the municipality's ability to deliver adequate public services.

The initiative is strengthening local structures instead of creating parallel support systems. On a broader level, it directly involved urban authorities to strengthen the inclusion and participation of displaced persons in the economic and social life in urban settings across the region. It is also improving livelihoods and greater access to quality basic services for refugees and host populations in select urban settings.

Dr. Sanya Wilson, Mayor of Koboko Municipality, reflected on how refugees have brought many opportunities to his city, including new health and education facilities that are benefitting refugees and host communities. For example, Action support allowed the city to build a new trauma healing centre – a major need for refugees – so people could receive mental health treatment in Koboko instead of traveling to Arua, where the nearest facility was located. The project also supported the city to build new facilities for schools, such as toilets, desks, and a science lab in one secondary school.

*"It is the first of its kind that a lower local government has received direct funding from a donor. So Koboko Municipal Council is really the way to demonstrate that direct funding to municipalities has a correlation with improvement of service delivery because it is a faster way of delivering resources where it is most needed. What Koboko Municipality has accomplished in two years with the support of the EU, if they were to rely on other funding, would have taken them close to 40-50 years to accomplish."*

– Bongo Patrick, Programme Manager, ACAV

Kakuma, Kenya

# Limits

The network's ambitions were at once far reaching and modest. In many areas, the connections, good will, and technical capacities achieved exceeded expectations. As a symbolic activity drawing attention to secondary cities affected by migration and displacement, the network is almost peerless. Nonetheless, it faced structural, financial, and technical limitations.

- **Uncertain and potentially inhospitable policy frameworks.** National policies towards urban development, migration, and displacement present significant constraints on municipal action. Municipalities are further limited where governments remain unclear about their policies or increasingly favour approaches prioritising security over development. An open-door national policy will result in different needs for integration than a national encampment policy. Tense relations between municipalities and national governments – due to political or personal differences – may provide further challenges. Discussions within the network participants were a partial salve, allowing municipalities to recognise commonalities and constraints and to plan within this framework. Facilitating multi-level conversations helped lesson some of these frictions. One of the core lessons was the need to frame their planning as promoting social cohesion and development rather than migrants and refugees' rights and protection.

- **Domestic budgeting systems and allocations.** One of the primary limitations observed was the lack of resources allocated to the cities hosting important number of displaced persons. Although funding systems and budget allocations vary by national contexts, it will be essential for network members to raise revenue from local, national, or international sources for their activities to succeed. Koboko's ability to attract direct outside investment allowed it to better leverage the network's technical training in ways that may ultimately enable it to attract future funding.

- **Technical planning capacity.** The challenges of addressing displacement have often led to reactive planning. Limited investments and contingency funds present a further challenge for municipalities seeking to plan for future arrivals. However, where planning capacity and investments exist, municipalities are better able to address future challenges. For example, a recent study of household-level impacts of Urban Expansion Planning compared households' outcomes in new urban areas that were planned and unplanned. Households in areas where the city had implemented urban expansion plans were twice as likely to have running water, twice as likely to have formal tenure or title to their home and had incomes 58 percent higher. The benefits of an urban expansion plan are clear and substantial (Lamson-Hall and Martin 2022).

- **Logistical and financial support.** Action meetings travelled, exposing members to each other's municipalities and offering on-site opportunities for practical learning. Journeying to sites with limited connections and workshop facilitations presented multiple challenges in terms of expense, logistics, and communication. Ongoing insecurity within the region further limited ease of travel. That few municipalities have the financial or logistical capacity to support such initiatives placed responsibility for planning and support on the Cities Alliance.

Some of these limitations may be overcome through additional time, resources, and engagement. Others will require more substantive shifts in administrative structures, priorities, and capacities. Acknowledging and carefully considering these limitations is among the primary steps forward as the network considers its future.
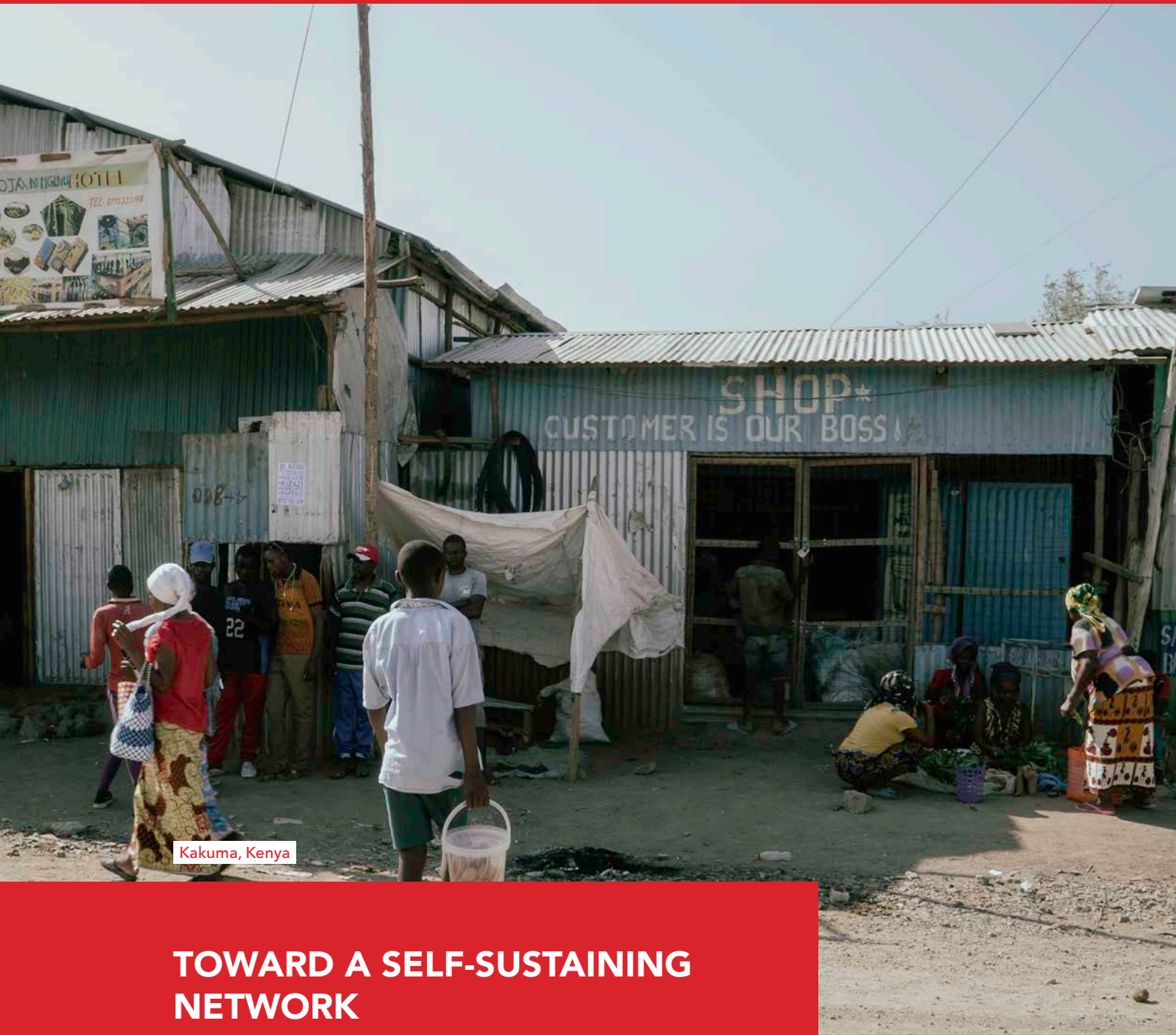


Kakuma, Kenya

Kakuma, Kenya

# TOWARD A SELF-SUSTAINING NETWORK

Through the Action, partner cities have laid the groundwork for a regional network to help them manage migration more effectively. With the benefit of internal debate, expert advice from external advisors, and the Cities Alliance, they have designed a governance structure for the network and prepared a five-year strategy for organisation, budget, and activities. The remainder of this document outlines this plan.

As the Action concludes, participants are committed to enhancing and sustaining a forward-looking regional network and dialogue platform. Reflecting the 'localisation of migration governance' in cities and regions across the world (see Lacroix 2021; Stürner 2020; Zapata et al. 2017; Oomen 2019 and

2017), the network recognises the possibilities and challenges facing non-capital cities in an era of rapid urbanisation, displacement, and multiple and intersecting forms of human mobility. The partners value comparative perspectives leading to better lives for refugees, displaced persons, migrants, and 'host' populations. They recognise the need to adapt policy and dialogue approaches to suit the region's varied political structures, priorities, social institutions, economic realities, and bureaucratic capacities. This document raises several issues, concerns, and suggestions for doing so. A set of guiding questions accompanies this report to guide future development of this network or other, cognate initiatives.

One core network priority is normalising migration and displacement within urban planning processes and deliberations affecting urban planning at multiple scales. That is, shifting from framing migration and displacement solely in crisis or emergency terms and instead investing in mechanisms to predict and plan. This is critical in a region beset by conflict, environmental challenges, and economic transformation. Moreover, it means recognising that migration and displacement cannot be addressed as stand-alone issues; they intersect transversally with most municipal planning priorities. To these ends, the network should promote partnerships, innovation, learning, and the adoption of best practices in two specific areas: (1) inclusion and participation of displaced persons in municipalities' economic and social life; and (2) improved livelihoods and greater access to quality basic services for refugees and vulnerable host populations in the secondary cities in the Horn of Africa.

The network's future success rests on seeking solutions together for common problems, including: identifying the prerequisites for proactive municipal responses to human mobility; developing locally appropriate metrics and mechanisms to promote social cohesion within their municipalities; becoming nodes for national dialogue among municipalities; and attracting national and international attention and resources. Participants envision this as a platform to develop advocacy and policy positions to better influence policy frameworks and donor agendas across multiple scales. It should also serve as a clearing house for relevant information (e.g., funding opportunities, events, political processes) and provide value added to individual members seeking resources to strengthen their respective cities' response to mobility.

> *Transnational municipal networks have no formal coercive or hierarchical authority over the practices of member cities, they do exert significant soft power, exercising a form of governance by diffusion. In making their decisions, individual cities within these networks are at least cognizant of decisions by other cities that they have knowledge of.*
>
> — Tomlinson and Harrison 2018, p.1133



Arua, Uganda

The remainder of this document offers guidelines and alternatives for developing concrete strategies to achieve the broad goals network participants have identified. The first step means delimiting the network's capacities and limits. Identifying boundaries is as critical as priorities in developing shared expectations and operational modalities. With this in mind, it considers the institutional objectives and potential structures for a network of municipalities designed to further peer learning, strengthen policy development, and promote social cohesion in cities in East Africa and the Horn.[1] It seeks to develop a sustainable and functional network that:

🏠 Supports municipalities to incorporate displacement and human mobility into planning processes;

💬 Amplifies municipal officials and residents' voices and influence in relevant national, regional, and international policy forums; and

🫱 Provides value-added services to municipalities and national and regional bodies including international organisations, donors, and humanitarian organisations.

This document situates ongoing discussion with network members – municipalities, civil society partners, and the Cities Alliance – within published accounts of municipal networks. Where appropriate, it draws on a review of previous Cities Alliance initiatives supporting municipal interventions related to migration and displacement. Its concerns are both general and specific: speaking to the challenges many networks face while realistically reflecting the difficulties of organising in a region riven with acute and active conflicts, spatial inequalities, and ongoing displacements and destabilisation.

# Priorities

Following the completion of its initial phase, the network's *institutional* goals – means of achieving the substantive goals outlined above – remain manifold and complementary. At its core, it intends to promote innovation, learning, and the identification and adoption of best practices. It will do so by, inter alia:

- Building relationships and capacity among secondary city administrations. This includes specialised intervention capacity as well as project management, fundraising, and advocacy. This builds on the ecosystem approach, which identifies interested and important actors and avenues for change. It will then strategically consider the availability of interests and work to match municipal priorities with the interests of development partners while seeking to attract additional domestic resource allocation.

- Building productive relationships among municipal administrations, civil society, the private sector, and international actors. These include the Cities Alliance, the EU, IGAD, the IRC, UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Habitat, UCLG Africa, ACAV, and others.

- Supporting research mobilisation and conceptualisation for urban planners and humanitarians. This includes disseminating

knowledge and norms at multiple scales both within the network and to relevant external actors. This demands investments in research capacity and partnerships that can deliver credible, usable information for planning, research mobilisation, and influencing policy at multiple geographic scales.

- Influencing and potentially reshaping the content and character of international debates and networks on municipal migration management and development. Such global engagement and norm-setting is not an end, but a forward-looking initiative intended to deliver long-term benefits. As Thouez (2020, p. 651) argues, "…local government must have access and the ability to exert influence over the content of global deliberations and decisions concerning global challenges." This means equitably promoting the profile of mayors, municipal authorities, and residents (including displaced populations) to diversify voices heard on national, regional, and global platforms. Such diversity should not only be geographic, but where possible reflect the composition of the region's population in terms of, inter alia, gender, language, and religion. Again, carefully curated partnerships with regional and international bodies can play an important role in amplifying network members' messages and concerns. Partners may include IGAD, UCLG Africa, the African Union (AU), and national governments.

1   Cities Alliance. Undated. Concept Note: Regional Network and Dialogue Action.

The initial selection of participants has helped address a number of these concerns (e.g., the network's internal lingua franca). Experiences from Arua, Koboko, Assosa, Jigjiga, Kakuma-Kalobeyei, Borama, and Gabiley will enable us to predict and develop pragmatic strategies for addressing others. There have already been considerable successes in gathering data and shaping policy, identifying strategic objectives, and locating funding and technical needs. The challenge is to capitalise and extend these gains.

# Maximising possibilities, avoiding pitfalls

This network offers innumerable possibilities. Given the realities of time and financial resources, these also include several trade-offs. The following paragraphs outline a series of these. They also offer suggestions for moving forward. Rather than definitive, these are intended as points for deliberation among existing network members and leadership. There are lessons to be learned from any number of other municipal networks operating in other world regions.

An appendix at the end of this paper summarises activities and membership structures of similar networks elsewhere in the world. A number of these (marked with a double asterisk) may serve as loose models for this network. However, in seeking to learn from other world regions, it is important to consider the comparability of government structures/resources, markets for labour, housing and services, and the nature of migration, displacement, and urbanisation.

# Emphasis

Social cohesion and mobility planning are at the core of this network's activities. However, working towards these goals can follow multiple paths with the network emphasising a variety of sub-priorities. Each one represents a mix of pragmatic and principled choices. They include:

- **Migration/displacement focused vs. mainstreaming.** As the appendix indicates, a series of municipal networks solely emphasise the visibility and welfare of migrants within their respective communities. Such groups often emphasise building a culture of hospitality or inclusion and/or seek to identify and address the specific obstacles refugees and migrants face in accessing core services (e.g., health, education) or markets (e.g., labour and jobs). Most of these firmly concentrate on international migrants, with a smaller sub-set (or sub-set of the networks) addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. This is a potentially appealing strategy as it provides a distinct focus, can help attract international funding, and provides a narrow concentration for learning and engagement.

  In a region where many urban refugees and displaced people are not officially recognised (or are technically violating national policies),

it may be prudent to complement the focus on displacement with a broader consideration of mobility and inclusive planning. Many of the reasons that benefit migration-centric networks also work against their potential effectiveness. Most obviously, they tend to concentrate on a legally defined group (e.g., refugees, immigrants, undocumented migrants) to the exclusion of other populations facing similar challenges. Across the Horn and East Africa, such legal definitions often correlate poorly with people's experiences. Many internally displaced people are not bureaucratically recognised as such, and there are often relatively few international migrants or refugees. As noted, those that exist may not wish to be 'seen' by national governments.

Beyond the risks overt recognition may pose to the displaced, there is little ethical or practical justification for considering one category of vulnerable migrant when there are others (migrants and long-term residents) who face similar challenges. Services oriented towards one group at the exclusion of others – especially others who consider themselves citizens or locals – can also politically backfire (see Landau, et al. 2016).[2] The primary reason for such categorical focus is to attract the financial, human, and institutional resources

of organisations and agencies oriented towards migration and displacement, per se. As such, the network will be well served by *identifying the specific and relative needs of migrant populations and working to incorporate planning for migration across sectors.* This may be done as an independent network of municipalities or, potentially, by creating sub-groups within existing organisations or engaging other regional or global initiatives (see Stürner 2020). This is already underway with IGAD and UCLG Africa agreeing to be part of the network's Steering Committee. IGAD has the mandate to manage regional and state-level dialogues, with UCLG Africa mandated to represent the interest of African cities.

- **Regional/global visibility or national action.** Humanitarianism is often a global enterprise with international organisations and agencies (UNHCR, WFP, IOM, CARE, Save the Children) actively involved in the local delivery of food, services, or support. Regional governance and initiatives from the AU, East African Community (EAC), or IGAD similarly address questions of mobility and vulnerability. But while such processes are coordinated regionally or globally and internationally funded, municipal planning is, by definition, highly localised. Its success demands sophisticated 'local literacy' of budgeting systems, institutional configurations, and political sensitivities.3 Reforming localised ecosystems to promote migrant-aware planning is potentially done most effectively through a combination of municipal and national-level interventions. This includes pressing for improved data collection, budgeting systems, housing regulation, and human resources.

Some networks have made a point of high-level international visibility, with mayors from the world's cities using global platforms to push for a greater municipal voice in international forums and planning. Such platforms can also serve to 'call out' national leaders and mobilise national support to address municipal challenges. They may also be valuable in setting global norms. The participation of African leaders (and others from the Global South) is also symbolically important and helps ensure that global proclamations and principles more effectively reflect a true diversity of perspectives and experiences.

Despite the evident potential, it is often difficult for mayors from secondary cities to participate and benefit from such engagements. This results in a limited representation from mayors from secondary cities at this stage in international events or selected to international funding calls. Most evidently, they lack the financial means to pay the fees required or secure travel. The time required is also likely to prove prohibitive. They are often saddled with technical and administrative challenges preventing them from capitalising on potential solutions and best practices proposed by colleagues. When they do participate, it is often 'tokenistic' in ways that reinforce conceptual divides between well-endowed and upcoming municipalities. This is one of the reasons motivating the creation of a network dedicated to similarly sized municipalities.



Kakuma, Kenya

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3   See Kihato and Landau 2017.

It is important that secondary and African cities are represented in global forums to promote international standard-setting and the influence of mayors and municipalities. However, ensuring presence at such venues is an expensive and time-consuming effort that risks producing generalised proclamations with little practical consequences for institutions across the Horn (see Acuto and Rayner 2016, p. 1151). Cities like New York, London, Freetown (to some extent), and Kampala have capitalised on these venues by using their own significant financial resources or visibility to shape global discussions and localise principles in concrete policy. This is less likely in smaller municipalities, where there are few local sources of revenue or where local political leadership remains otherwise dependent on national approval.

There are additional risks related to co-optation of local networks strongly embedded or aligned to regional or global initiatives. As Tomlinson and Harrison (2018) observe, the danger of 'southern' networks oriented towards regional or global visibility is that they often remain dependent on both global framing of the issues and on global funding. This can be partially avoided through more horizontal arrangements although care must be taken here too to avoid a form of co-optation where local networks remain programmatically framed by powerful donors or coordinating international organisations (see also Lacroix 2021; Bouteligier 2013).

This network must recognise both the benefits of global and regional action and the necessity for national level networks to reform inter-governmental structures and mobilise domestic resources.



*The network should operate at multiple levels. This includes highly visible international gatherings and participation in global events. However, these should be closely linked to the development or strengthening of national networks (where they exist). Building a strong regional network will provide the material and technical foundations for engaging strategically with specialised networks, those operating in other regions, or global platforms.*



To ensure that the network serves the interests of its members, funding should be sought that is flexible and allows the network agenda to evolve along the interests and priorities of its members. Ideally investments should concentrate on the Secretariat and the continuation of regular meetings and capacity building interventions. International organisations should play an important role in the network, but they must not unilaterally set the agenda, even when providing the lion's share of funding. Rather, they should be considered supportive partners incorporated into the network on terms established by the primary, municipal participants. This will enable engagement within the network to identify suitable interventions and support partners to strengthen proposals and project management. Twinning municipalities with each other or with other bodies may prove a fruitful mechanism.

- **Mayoral vanguardism complemented by horizontal inclusion** (bureaucratic, civil society, business). Highly visible mayors (such as Michael Bloomberg from New York and Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr from Freetown) have been invaluable in attracting attention and credibility to their municipalities. In so doing, they build global profiles that open opportunities for them at multiple scales. However, the positive benefits of such high-profile activities are most sustainable where they are supported by municipal bureaucracies. Municipalities must also be supported when they are unable to pitch their cities' relative success on the global stage. This is especially evident when mayors take politically unpopular positions or make commitments that stretch already under-resourced municipal bureaucracies. When mayors leave office, these commitments often wither (see Caponio and Clement 2021, p. 2).

> " *Although network participation is a relatively low-cost and highly visible act, the implementation of actual policies requires greater resources and higher costs.*
>
> - Huang and Liu (2018, p. 4)

High profile mayoral appearances tend to emphasise sector-specific commitments to refugees, undocumented migrants, women, or other categorical groups. While potentially important, this rubs uncomfortably with the recognition that mobility planning should be normalised across sectors.





Kakuma, Kenya

> *The network should work to involve, develop, and support a core group of leaders from across municipal government and to promote their involvement with civil society and the private sector.*

If possible, the network should seek to attract resources and show value added so as to encourage members to remain engaged over the long term. As in all network activities, there should be a strong emphasis on securing active and visible participation from women, displaced and host populations, and other underrepresented linguistic, cultural, or political voices.

# Sequencing

Advocacy, capacity building, fundraising, and promoting social cohesion are complementary priorities with mutually reinforcing potential. However, they each require technical expertise, financing, and human resources (most notably time). The necessity to attract funding to support further developments means promoting highly visible initiatives with short-term payoffs while slowly building capacity for longer-term or more politically sensitive areas of action. With the long-term goal of mainstreaming migration planning across government sectors and institutions and building inclusive, national networks, *short term emphasis should be on symbolic migration and displacement activities among 'vanguard' cities.*

Gabiley, Somalia

# BUILDING THE NETWORK OF THE FUTURE

The network's success depends on continued investments from multiple parties in multiple forms. Most fundamental among these are the interest and energies of relevant municipal authorities. As such, the *first step in developing a strategy is to ensure there is widespread agreement on the priorities, form, and sequencing outlined above.*

If there is a broad agreement on the conclusions outlined in the previous sections, there is a need to concretise a series of issues related to the governance and sustainability of the network itself. These include:

- Leadership structure and representation. This demands consideration of who is qualified to participate and who can effectively represent the network. This includes term limits, a code of conduct, membership selection criteria, and the specific obligations of office holders. Terms of reference should also include criteria for ensuring gender and geographic diversity within network leadership. As part of this discussion, the network must define roles between a professional Secretariat (potentially managed by Cities Alliance) and rotating representatives from member municipalities.

- Membership criteria and terms of membership. This must also include consideration of who should be targeted for primary or affiliated membership to build regional strength. At present, membership quotas are set at four people per city. Going forward, the network must determine membership criteria, the size of the network, and a code of conduct for networks outlining expectations for contribution, attribution, and for potentially limiting membership benefits for those falling below expectations.

- Network activities beyond the initial phase (see Figure One below). These may include focused peer learning evenings, technical trainings on finance and advocacy, and participation in events organised by others. Elements of such a plan are already in place with participation in reviews of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees and participation in Africities.

- Nature of relationship with regional and international governance bodies (IGAD, UCLG Africa, EAC).

- Nature of relationship with international organisations and agencies (EU, UNHCR, Cities Alliance, IOM, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), humanitarian actors).

- Nature of relationship with national or multi-national municipal governance networks (and which ones).

- Nature of relationship with national or sub-national municipal governance networks.

**Figure 1:** Governance structure of the regional network of secondary cities
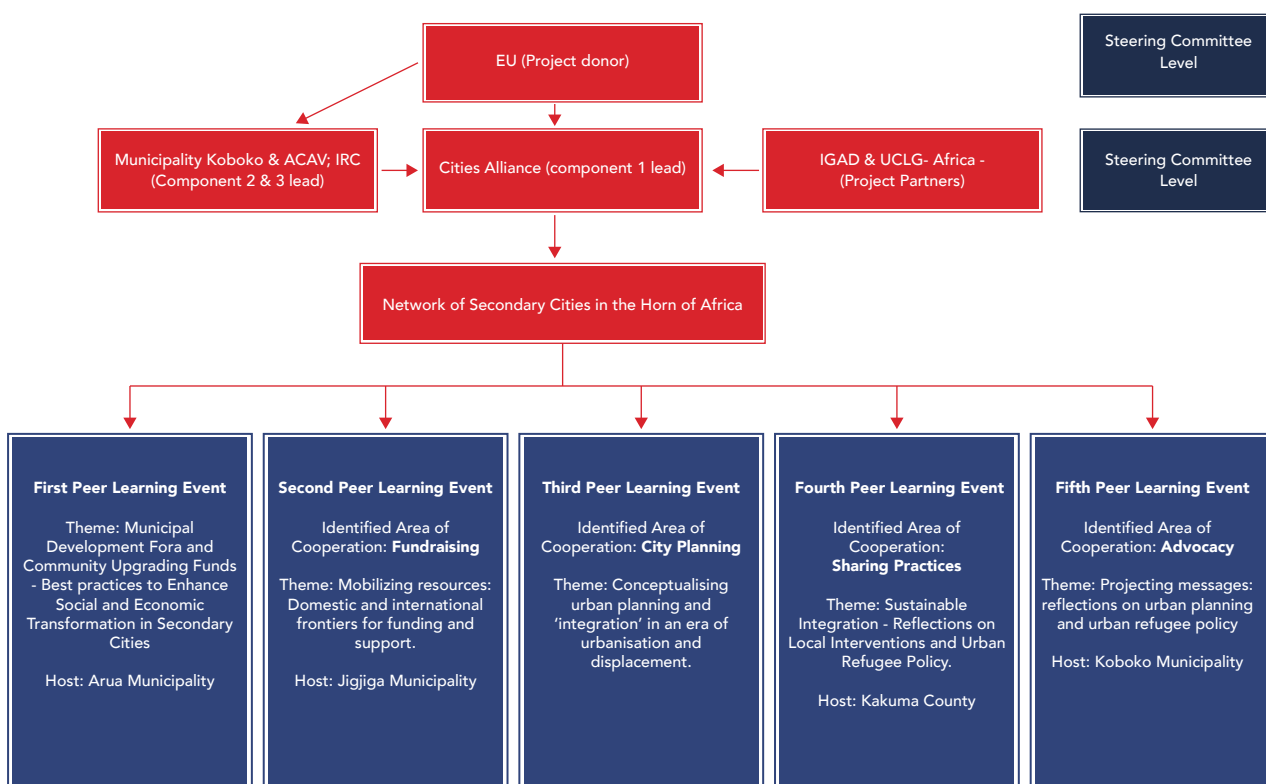


# Potential activities

## Multi-level intervention for improved social cohesion

Approaching the end of Action, network participants remain committed to enhancing and sustaining a forward-looking regional network and dialogue platform. Existing partners value critical comparative perspectives and technical learning opportunities. They embrace how the network profiles and empowers dedicated (yet unsung) civil servants. Most importantly, they recognise the network's subtle but significant power in reshaping domestic and global policy frameworks. The network has

drawn attention to secondary cities from the Horn of Africa welcoming displaced populations, amplifying the experiences, perspectives, and needs of displaced populations, long-term residents, and the municipal bureaucracies mandated to govern the spaces they occupy. It has made it all but impossible for international agencies – the UNHCR, humanitarian organisations, donors, and development partners – to ignore the challenges and opportunities migration presents to secondary cities or the required resources. As their attention has shifted, national governments and other investors have (albeit unevenly) opened space and dedicated resources to supporting local initiatives.

As Muhumad and Jaji highlight in their article "Somali Refugees, Informality, and Self-initiative at Local Integration in Ethiopia and Kenya":

The circumstances of refugees are often evaluated within the framework of official refugee policies and host governments' positions on durable solutions. This inevitably leads to assessment of whether there are any formal activities by host governments intended to provide solutions to refugees in protracted situations. In contrast to official refugee policy and the formal practices deriving from them, solutions need to be sought in informal structures and unofficial activities that occur at the initiative of the refugees themselves with the support of host communities. (…) The lack of policy solutions is not necessarily an obstacle to refugee integration. This suggests the need to consider the role of social relationships, shared culture, language, religion as well as economic and political ties in facilitating refugees' quest for solutions in the absence of host governments' support (Muhumad and Jaji, 2023).

The network has created a valuable professional field and momentum for positive and inclusive policy and practice reforms.

After two years of implementation, the overall network vision remains unchanged: Empowering local authorities and communities to promote social inclusion and equitable development for municipalities affected by displacement and migration. Looking forward, it seeks to develop a functional and *sustainable* network that provides ongoing technical and political support (e.g., visibility, legitimacy, allies) as they build effective emergency response mechanisms while incorporating displacement and human mobility into their long-term planning processes. To do that, it aims to: (a) amplify their voices and influence in relevant national, regional, and international policy forums; and (b) provide value-added services to municipalities and national and regional bodies including international organisations, donors, and humanitarian organisations.

Recognising its limited technical and financial resources, the network operates on the principle of 'catalytic interventions' that enable members (and the network writ large) to become champions of planning for migration and displacement. This means finding means of setting local, national, and regional agendas; transforming national policy and financial frameworks; and attracting the technical and financial resources to where they are likely to have the greatest impact (municipal, regional, national). Underlying these efforts are ongoing relationships of trust, mutual respect, and constructive critical engagement.

Over the next years, the network will undertake a range of interventions enabling it to build the empirical base for more effective planning, the policy tools and perspectives using instruments deployed in Phase One to develop effective interventions, as well as promoting frameworks that facilitate progressive planning and attracting the resources necessary for plans to realise their potential. These will take multiple forms:

## Technical expertise

- Establish a mechanism of consultation and selection for future members. The Action aims to foster inclusive, consultative municipal instruments (such as the MDF in Uganda). Gender parity should be promoted where possible.

  Data collection and mobilisation: The network has already fostered considerable exchange on policy options, best practices, and strategies for overcoming political, financial, and technical obstacles. Moving forward, it will become a depository for case studies (successes and failures) that can serve as resource for other municipalities. More concretely, it will work with municipalities and relevant national bodies to promote and normalise the collection of population, economic, and environmental data that will serve as the basis for effective policy planning. This data will also eventually serve as the baseline for monitoring and evaluation. The network will further work with officials to ensure that collected data is effectively mobilised across government departments and included in appeals for policy or financial support.

The network will also work to develop appropriate assessment and evaluation metrics and mechanisms that will allow municipalities to assess their own performance to improve policy interventions and increase the possibility of mobilising resources. It may also wish to consider a peer evaluation mechanism.

- Inter-departmental training. Effectively building strategies to address displacement and mobility requires a 'whole of government' approach. Over a potential next phase, the network will develop strategies to foster interest and engagement across the municipality. This may involve working to 'mainstream' migration and displacement within existing departments to complement standalone 'migration' interventions.

- Working with existing city network for replication. During the next phase, key counterparts in existing city networks should be invited to discussions to promote and expand the work of the Action. As the strategy flags, the network should not grow significantly in cities, rather keeping to a group of cities with good practices or interest for learning. National city networks such as those in Uganda and Ethiopia – if included and given a role/budget to replicate the knowledge among their wide national networks – can fulfil this role and transfer relevant knowledge to their members. This also increases the visibility of the Action's network. It is justified to consider a budget for this service. All city associations require funding to convene. Beyond transferring knowledge, national networks can validate and adapt knowledge to the national context and use the weight of the regional dialogue/members to influence national debates. Eventually, stronger involvement of national city associations enhances their relationship with UCLG Africa – co-chair of the Action, Cities Alliance member, and best placed to provide a platform at the regional and global levels.

- Strategies for effective resource mobilisation. Phase I of the network illustrated how additional funding to technically proficient municipalities can catalyse rapid and effective action. This realm of work will support municipalities to attract such resources by promoting financial management and planning mechanisms within municipalities or developing partnerships with civil society or professional organisations that can allow resources to flow to the local level. Building on the ecosystem mapping and policy analysis described previously, it will also support engagement and advocacy to empower municipalities to shape local and national policies to effectively galvanise their options and interventions. This may take the form of direct participation in national or regional policy forums or facilitating off-the record discussions that can result in effective policy change.

- Storytelling and communication. At its simplest, this means developing narratives around migration and displacement for local consumption (i.e., highlighting potential of mobility, broad-based resources and programmes initiated, de-stigmatisation). There are currently two reports per workshop: minutes and a technical, expert paper. One Call for Papers was finalised. One city 'contest' will be launched in Kakuma with a promotional video from the city financed by Cities Alliance. Going forward, this work will also serve to profile local and network initiatives that (sensitively) draw attention to municipal successes and mobilisation. To be used strategically within national political space to empower local authorities and further the normalisation of mobility and inclusion. This may involve strategically supporting network members to participate in global gatherings such as the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

  More broadly, it will profile the network within international displacement, urbanisation, and donor forums. Along with furthering global norm-setting around migration and displacement, such efforts will attract attention to the critical role of secondary cities, the role of the network in promoting progressive urban planning, and Cities Alliance's contribution. The network will also serve as a clearing house for relevant information such as funding opportunities, events, and political processes.

GULU and GADC, June 2023

## Membership and modality

The network's strength lies in fostering a professional social field. To be effective, this field must rest on trust, shared interest, mutual understanding, and open, constructively critical conversation. The participation of mayors and other elected leaders in these spaces is invaluable in mobilising local support. However, political participants can be mercurial and potentially oriented to short-term and visible interventions over long-term planning. As such, membership should be balanced between elected officials, two to four relevant civil servants from each municipality, and representatives of displaced and host communities. This should be complemented with relevant and engaged representatives from the national level. Municipalities should select the representatives based on relevant experience and responsibility, an ability to communicate in the network's working language (currently English), and a commitment to attend meetings over the project cycle. Wherever possible, membership should reflect the municipalities' gender and social diversity.

There are compelling reasons for enhancing the network's influence on municipalities throughout member countries and the region. However, rapidly expanding the network risks the cohesion and cost-effectiveness of the current membership structure. To that end, the network should be seen as comprised of 'vanguard' cities. Reflecting the ethos of 'catalytic interventions,' members are expected to work within (or foster) national local government and policy dialogues. Such actions will help set the agenda, provide technical expertise, and normalise planning for migration and displacement.

Recognising the value of international partners (INGOs, agencies, donors), they may be invited to attend specific meetings, provide technical expertise and training, and contribute to events. However, they attend at the pleasure of the network, where local actors must set meeting agendas and priorities.

Regular meetings and engagements will be critical in maintaining communication and fostering a professional community. These should be in-person events co-hosted by network participants, as these have proven the most successful in facilitating formal and informal exchange across the network.

An online platform of exchange should be created with contacts of participants and notes from the events to support ongoing conversations.

## Administration

- As a small network, there is value in keeping the leadership structure lean and focused. As the network becomes more autonomous and membership-based, it may be necessary to develop a committee and sub-committee structure. This is not envisioned in the early years of the following phase. Should the network wish to continue as a self-sustaining body, there will be value in developing formalised roles that include term limits, a code of conduct, membership selection criteria, and the specific obligations of office holders. A Terms of Reference should also include criteria for ensuring gender and geographic diversity within network leadership.



Kakuma, Kenya

- A Steering Committee should be comprised of a rotating sub-set of municipal representatives and others whose interests are aligned with the network's substantive priorities. These may include members of civil society organisations, international bodies (e.g., IGAD, UCLG Africa, the EU, UNHCR, IOM), and scholars or relevant experts. They should observe the network's overall activities, offer suggestions and directions, and provide entry into other policy forum and funding opportunities.

- Given current administrative and financial resources, this phase of the Action will be managed by a professional Secretariat (i.e., the Cities Alliance) with carefully delimited roles and responsibilities outlined and approved by network members. In line with the priorities outlined above, the Secretariat will provide:

  - Greater visibility (tied to impact, norm-setting, and resource mobilisation). This will include expertise in social media, marketing, and other aspects of storytelling and narrative development.

- Internal and external communication of funding opportunities, meetings, resources, and activities taking place within the network and globally.

- Technical training on data collection, analysis, and mobilisation. This will include support for ecosystem mapping, Urban Expansion Planning, policy analysis, and regional situation analysis.

- Financial management and capacity building. This means the Secretariat will be the primary holder and manager of funds for the network per se. It will work with municipalities to develop the tools and mechanisms needed to attract direct investment from national, regional, or international bodies. While the Secretariat will generally not serve as a funding body, it may allocate resources where directly related to network-specified activities. The Secretariat may also consider serving as a primary grant holder for initiatives being implemented by network members.

# Financial planning

The Action's initial phase has highlighted the network's value and the significant obstacles it faces in reaching its full potential. Among these are the member municipalities' financial and logistical capacities and their limited ability to attract direct funding. Consequently, building a sustainable network necessitates reducing costs where possible and exploring means of securing the needed support.

## Attracting funding

- Increased investment in storytelling and advocacy. This is intended not only to profile the network, but to assist municipalities in framing messages that can attract domestic and international funding through direct investments or shifts in local and national budgeting systems.

- Technical training and partnerships for municipalities so they will be better able to attract and manage project funding from external actors and mobilise support at the national level.

- Building partnerships with civil society and others to enable joint funding applications to support municipal level investments and technical capacity.

- Work with municipalities to develop funding proposals that will support specific interventions and contribute to network-wide activities.

**Considering the above, there will be a need to support the following:**

- Bi-annual meetings

- Travel for network representatives to regional and global events

- Logistical and substantive support at the Cities Alliance

- Technical training and expertise on planning, ecosystem mapping, and fundraising

- Communication and narrative expertise and training

- Data gathering and mobilisation

- External monitoring and evaluation

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# **Appendix:** Selected migration and displaced focused urban networks

| Network name | Objectives | Location | Members | Supporters | Status and link |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TangerAccueil | Provide information on urban services and facilities available to migrants; offer language and occupation-related skills training to migrants; and foster social cohesion through sport. football match. Hosted international seminar for city-to-city knowledge exchange on migration governance and has assisted in creating space for the city council and local associations to discuss daily migration management and coordination needs. | Tangier, Morocco | ICMPD | EU and Swiss Cooperation Agency | Completed https://medcities.org/tangeraccueil-looking-forward/ |
| MILMA Project: Migrants Labour Integration Model based on Acculturation Project | Facilitate migrants' social inclusion and increase opportunities for employment and self-employment. Increase personal and technical skills of participants while creating meaningful migrant integration. | Municipality of Fuenlabrada, Madrid, Spain | Mix of civil society and local government. (Urban Innovative Actions, Municipality of Fuenlabrada, multiple NGOs and a public agency) | European Regional Development Fund | Ongoing https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/fuenlabrada |
| MILE: Migrant Integration in the Labour market in Europe | Enhance competences and capacity of stakeholders involved with migrants' labour market integration. Develop and implement a methodological scheme to promote migrants' integration in the labour market, through a structured and continuous involvement of employers. | Milan, Italy Viladecans, Spain Innsbruck, Austria Patras, Greece Athens, Greece | Mix of civil society and local authorities in each city. (Coordinated by the International Economic Cooperation Institute with partners such as the Hellenic Open University and Olympic Training and consulting, and local government or organisational partners in each city) | The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the EU | Ongoing https://projectmile.eu/the-project-mile/ |

| Network name | Objectives | Location | Members | Supporters | Status and link |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ** Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity | Technical support to local government to foster differentiated approaches to policies aimed at integrating migrants and refugees. Specifically focused on integrating Venezuelan migrants. Employs "Formulation of Human Mobility profiles as tools that present a baseline of the impact of migration in cities and recommendations to transform migration into a territorial asset." Also "Formulation of Urban monitoring viewer for target cities as a geographic information system that provides multisector strategic data for decision making." "Formulation of Urban inclusion market as a tool for decision-makers to plan, and monitor the impact of territorial actions aiming to promote equal access to rights and opportunities in the city." Supported by social cohesion campaigns, training for migrants and refugees, training for local officials to increase their capacities to deal with the territorial challenges towards effective integration | Nine cities in six countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (not specified) | UN (UNHCR, IOM, UN- Habitat) and the EU | | Ongoing https://unhabitat.org/project/inclusive-cities-communities-of-solidarity |
| Colombia: Resilient and Inclusive Housing Project | To improve the quality of housing and public space for vulnerable households, including migrants from Venezuela, in selected municipalities in Colombia. | Colombia | World Bank | World Bank | Ongoing https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P172535 |
| ** IncluCities | Enhancing capacities of medium-sized cities and associations of local and regional governments to better deliver policies on integration. Achieves this through knowledge exchanges between middle-sized cities and their accompanying associations of local and regional governments to improve integration practices. Aims to strengthen the role of national associations as key actors reinforcing coordination between levels of government and fostering knowledge exchange. | Jelgava, Schaerbeek, Mechelen, Brussels, Saint Jean de la Ruelle, Fuenlabrada, Capaci, Livadia | The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) with eight cities and eight national associations | The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the EU | Ongoing https://www.inclucities.eu/the-project |

| Network name | Objectives | Location | Members | Supporters | Status and link |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ** Solidarity Cities | Information and knowledge exchange on the refugee situation in cities. Advocating for better involvement and direct funding for cities on reception and integration of refugees. City-to-city technical and financial assistance and capacity building. Pledges by European cities to receive relocated asylum seekers. | EUROCITIES network | Proposed by the mayor of Athens and launched in the framework of the EUROCITIES network | EU and others | Ongoing https://solidaritycities.eu/about |
| CoRE - Centre of Refugee Empowerment | To find innovative solutions and new models of cooperation between government bodies for the integration of migrants. It acts as an 'empowerment fabric' that is jointly planned, utilised and operated by public institutions, NGOs, civil society initiatives and refugees. Largely operates as a think tank that monitors, analyses, and innovates policies and develops and tests new solutions. | Vienna, Austria | Urban Innovative Actions along with Stadt Wien and other public and private bodies | European Regional Development Fund | Ongoing https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/vienna |
| ** CITIES- GROW | Provided city-to-city support through capacity building and mentoring schemes and visits in the following areas: Matches buyers and suppliers and supports access to public and private contracts for immigrant entrepreneurs. Promotes appropriate migrant participation in local labour markets through partnerships. Services to promote and support migrant entrepreneurs. Develops anti-discrimination strategies for the local job market. | 16 cities that are part of the EUROCITIES network | EU | | https://integratingcities.eu/projects/cities-grow/ |
| AMITIE CODE | Training activities for teachers and civil servants working in local authorities; students are involved in workshops on human rights; an interactive web-app focused on development cooperation is to be created. Is also supporting a web-series on the issues of the project along with a travelling film festival. Each partner organises events/initiatives in the media to communicate and disseminate messages and results of the project and to promote the participation and involvement of citizens. | Bologna Hamburg Reggio Emilia Riga Loures Lisbon Toulouse Seville | EU | | Ongoing http://www.amitiecode.eu/project |

# Cities Alliance
## Cities Without Slums

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