

# SUSTAINING SUCCESS TOWARD A NETWORK OF THE FUTURE

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

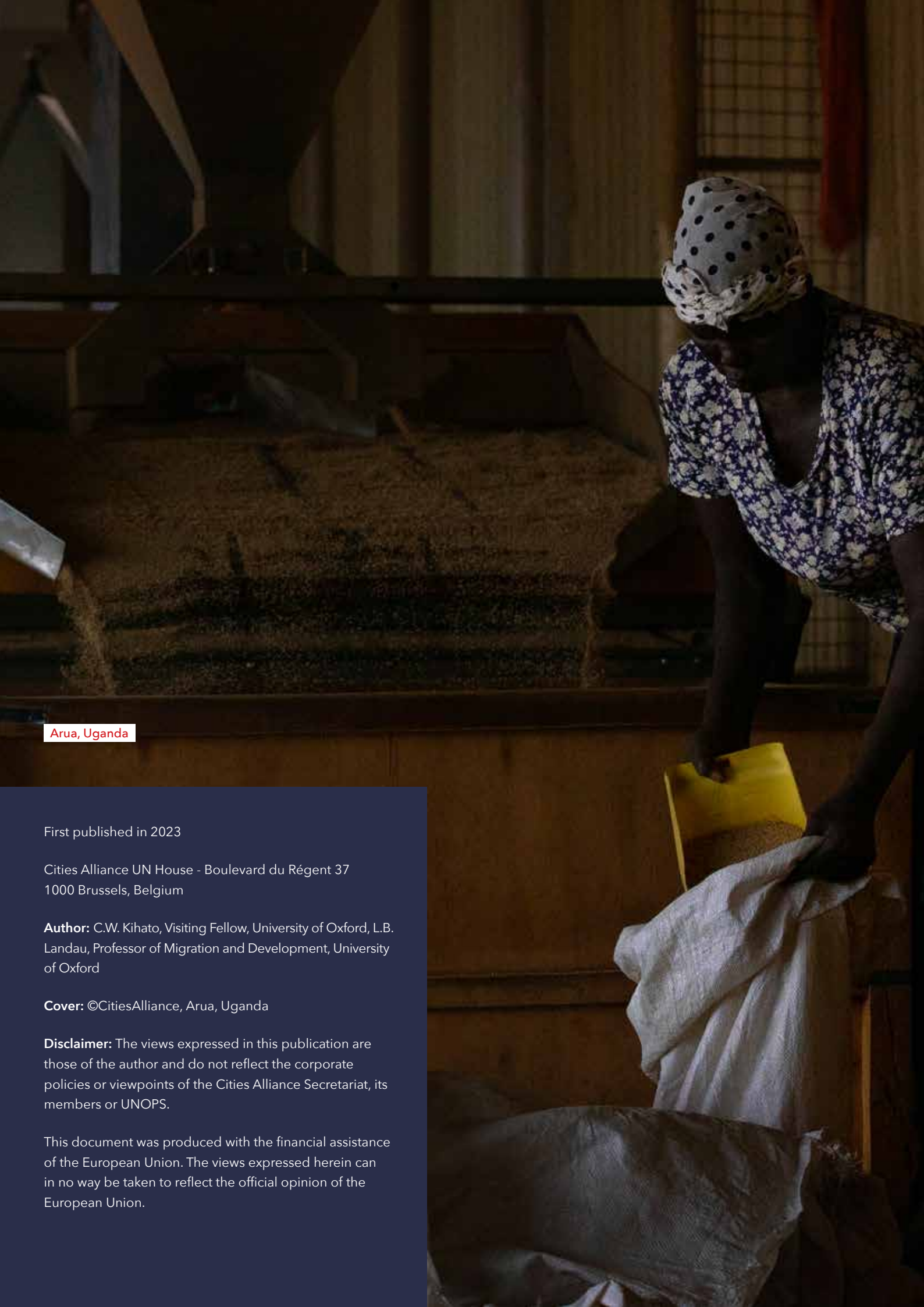
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**Cities Alliance**  
Cities Without Slums

Hosted by  
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Arua, Uganda

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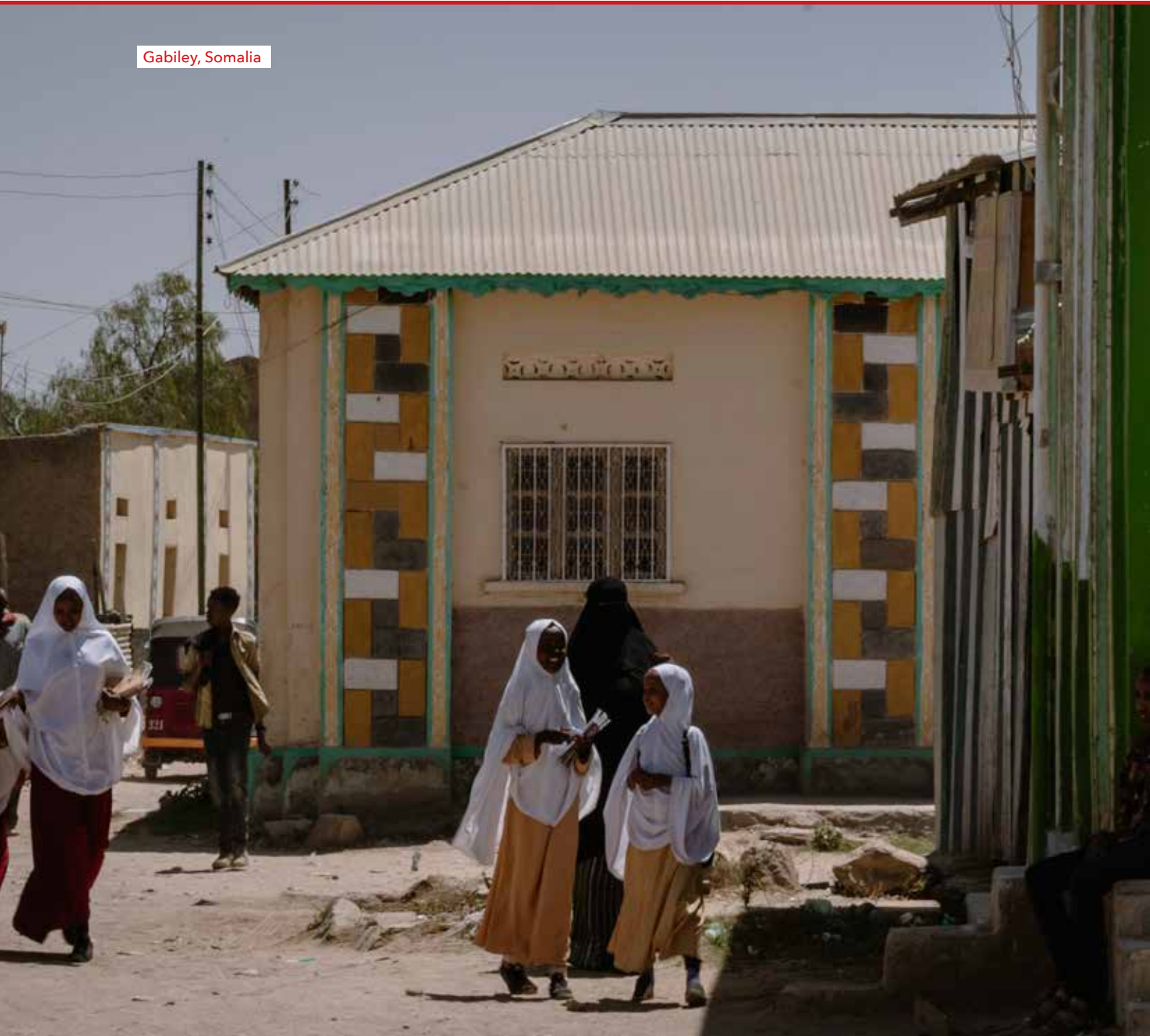




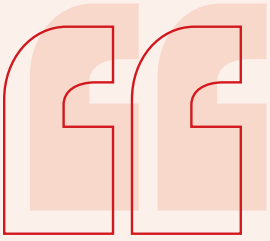
## BUILDING A MULTI-SCALAR, INCLUSIVE, AND LEGITIMATE POLICY COMMUNITY

In a region characterised by de facto centralisation and the strong influence of international agencies and donors, the Action emphasised collaboration and consultation across multiple scales. This most evidently included representation from non-governmental sectors: host communities, displaced persons, civil society, analysts, and technical experts. It also facilitated equitable conversations across the scales of government: from municipalities to regions/provinces to national ministries and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the regional intergovernmental association. In multiple cases, this brought local actors together in novel, equitable ways that would otherwise be unlikely. These engagements facilitated conversations about a given municipality. They also lent legitimacy and authority to municipalities as they exchanged with their counterparts elsewhere and officials in other spheres/levels of government.

Gabiley, Somalia

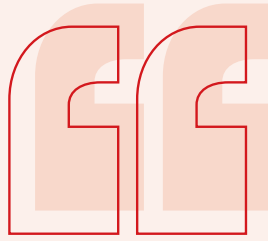






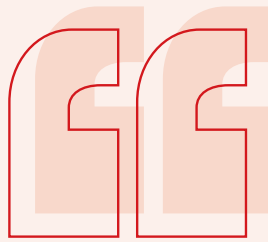
*One major thing that has shifted my thinking is about planning. When I was in Ethiopia recently the physical planning of Addis did not stop in the CBD or the immediate area, planning has gone beyond to the distant catchment area of the city. Also, from Koboko, I have realised that if you include all stakeholders on day one of the project, everyone feels that they have a role to play. It makes the project successful.*

– Wadri Sam Nyakua,  
**Mayor, Arua**



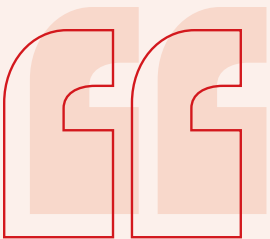
*Because of this network, I am able to exchange and talk with the Minister (Lands, Physical Planning and Urban Areas Management, Turkana County). When you are exposed to a senior person in government in this way, it is easier to pass your agenda to them, and they can even advise you on how to advocate when we are on the same platform.*

– Maimunah Melisa,  
**Host Community Representative, Kakuma Settlement**



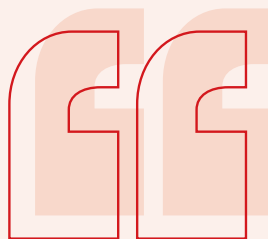
*Here the first thing is that in this network there are ministers, mayors, refugee leaders and we all sit at the same table, and we are treated the same. In other networks, refugees are used as an image, but here we stand up to speak and comment on specific issues, I'm involved in decision making.*

– Abubakar Rugamba Kabura,  
**Youth and Refugee Representative, Kakuma Settlement**



*When I came to Koboko and saw what is happening here, it changed my perspective on the inclusion of host and refugee communities. When I get back to my district, I want to see how our IDPs, refugees from Ethiopia and Yemen can be incorporated in the activities in my district.*

– Mohamed Ahmed Warsame,  
**Mayor, Borama**



*When you work in a group, you do things well. One hand cannot clap, but two hands can clap and make a difference.*

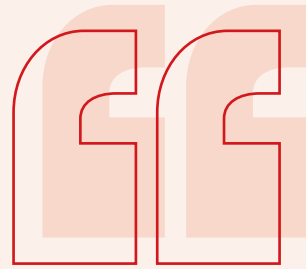
– Abdulkerim Abdurehim Hojele,  
**Mayor, Assosa Ethiopia**

## POLICY INFLUENCE AND ADVOCACY

Comparative perspectives garnered through multi-site, multi-scale engagements and eco-system mapping helped identify technical and structural obstacles to effective policy response. Even if limited in overt advocacy, this approach prepared municipalities to better articulate their needs and identify actors (in and outside of government) who they could mobilise for change. The network's visibility also better positioned members to shape domestic and regional debates: inserting their perspectives into conversations that may not have happened or might have happened with them. The collection, analysis, and mobilisation of population and financial data also proved a powerful asset in highlighting needs. This data also provide the empirical bases to demonstrate interventions' effectiveness. Additional collaboration with neighbouring municipalities can help further such momentum for change.

## CAPACITY BUILDING AND INSTITUTIONALISATION

The Action supported capacity building in multiple ways by: helping municipalities to frame financial and technical needs; providing analytical tools to assess needs and vectors for policy change; mobilising data; building productive collaboration between experts/ service providers and municipalities; and supporting administrative processes that allow for greater effectiveness while improving the possibilities of attracting resources from domestic and international sources. By encouraging the involvement of mayors and elected officials, the Action secured buy-in for the project in ways that powerfully illustrate the potential political payoffs of progressive responses to displacement. This mayoral vanguardism was complemented by substantive engagement with bureaucratic processes. This helped shift policy responses out of the political realm so they could be 'baked in' to administrative systems. The formation of key performance areas, data review and policy formulation mechanisms, or the implementation of forward-looking planning will help protect the network's initiatives from rapid policy reversals. It helps normalise responses to displacement that can insulate effective response from actors looking to profit from exclusive political rhetoric.



*These can't be local issues. We need to shape national and regional policies. But who are we as small towns or cities? We can't be heard. Only through networks can we leverage our power to make lasting change.*

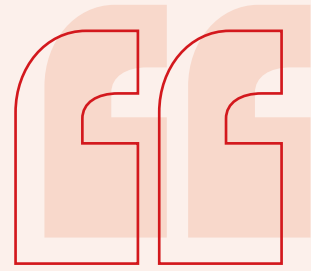
*From a point of having regional voices, let these voices have links to parliamentary caucuses in the region. Here in the West Nile, if we have a regional issue that needs the attention of the national government, we convene our regional caucus and put our facts clear to them. If they don't do it, we tell them 'Don't come back to ask for votes.'*

– Moses Akuma Odims,  
**Executive Secretary, WENDA**

## SUSTAINABILITY

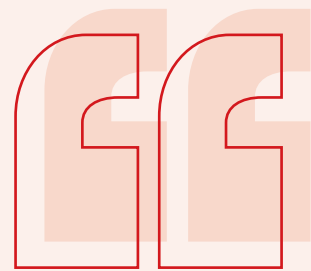
Enhanced strategic policy formation, advocacy, data mobilisation, and technical capacity (including financial management and partnerships) provide a foothold for further action by individual municipalities and the network. Already, municipalities have been able to attract funding from external bodies or shift policy frameworks that will support future initiatives. However, the network's full potential has yet to be realised.

Jinja, Uganda



*What we have learned now can help facilitate to attract some funds because we have been working on this programme for three years, we have gained experience, lessons learned, and that's one factor that facilitates to get funds from international agencies and also technical support.*

– Mohamed Omar Abdi,  
**Mayor and chair, Gabiley**



*With the Cities Alliance support, we developed a new local economic corridor along Kakuma Kalobeyei and a regeneration plan. Because we had a Local Integrated Development Plan and a regeneration strategy, we were able to access more funding from the Kenya Urban Support Programme. So, what we got from Cities Alliance will continue to benefit us in the future.*

– Victor Lekaram,  
**Director, Urban Areas  
Management, Turkana County**

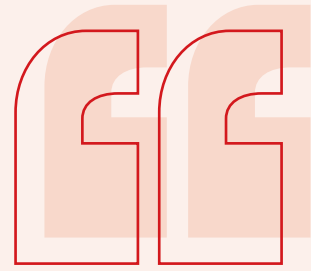
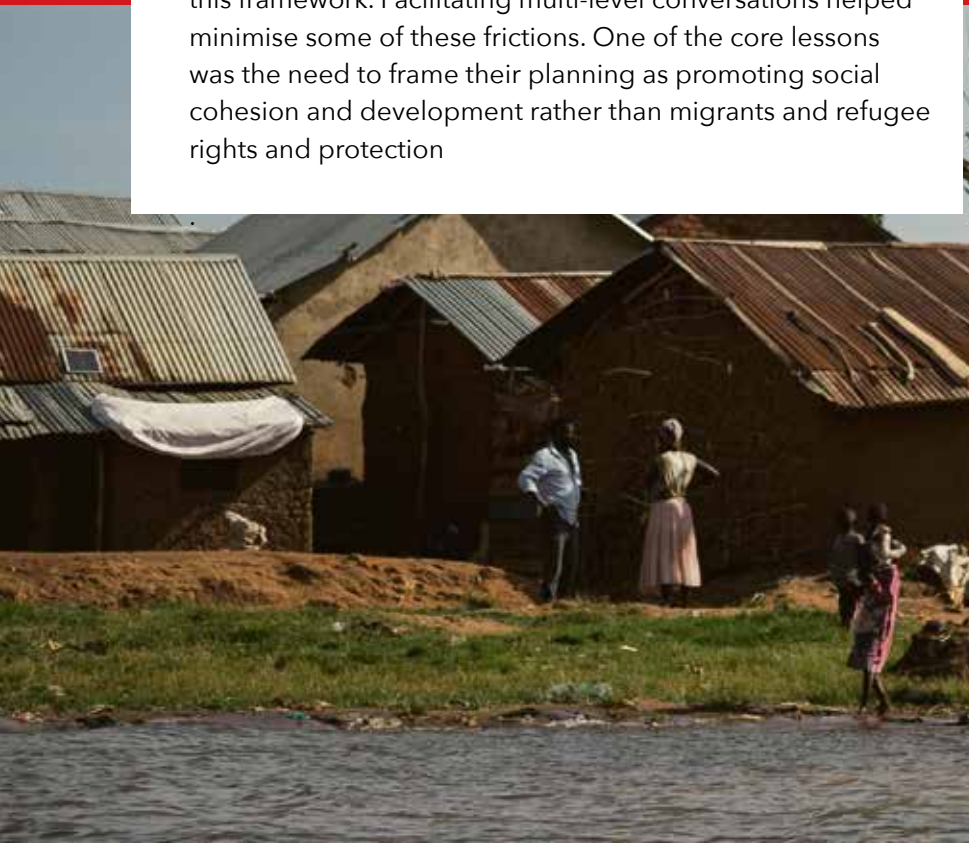
## SPACES TO BUILD

The Action'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, the network faced structural, financial, and technical limitations.

### UNCERTAIN AND POTENTIALLY INHOSPITABLE POLICY FRAMEWORKS

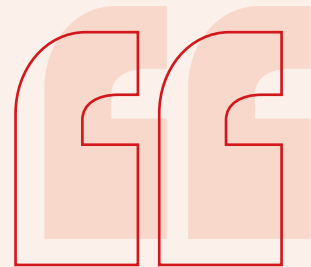
National policies towards urban development, migration, and displacement present significant constraints on municipal action. Municipalities are further limited where governments remain unclear about their policies or increasingly favour approaches prioritising security over development. An open-door 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 minimise 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 refugee rights and protection



*This process needs to move beyond the mayors. We need to build a culture, capacity, systems and procedures that live beyond the current leadership and project.*

– Tsigireda Tafesse,  
**Cities Alliance Adviser**



*Our challenge has been that the central government of Uganda does not consider refugees who live in urban centres outside of Kampala. So even if we make noise that government should increase our resources, they do not hear us. We have umbrella associations of local government that bring mayors and town clerks together, where we can articulate these issues, for rural areas we have, we also trying to engage our members of parliament. But our voice is not heard so much. Where there is rigidity like this, we cannot get milk out of a stone. In the process we suffocate.*

– Wadri Sam Nyakua,  
**Mayor, Arua**

## 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). A number of the municipalities have begun moving in this direction, but they require further support.

## DOMESTIC BUDGETING SYSTEMS AND ALLOCATIONS

One of the primary limitations observed at the end of phase one was the lack of resources allocated to the cities hosting sizeable populations 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. Continued investment in data collection and analysis, technical capacity, financial oversight, and strategic planning will further enable municipalities to articulate their financial needs, identify potential areas for financial support, and trusted partners in national and international initiatives.

*Logistical and financial support.* The regional dialogue includes travelling, 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.

Kakuma, Kenya



# TOWARD A SELF-SUSTAINING NETWORK

**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 do so recognising 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 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. It instead invests 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, as they intersect transversally with most municipal planning priorities.

To these ends, the network should promote innovation, learning, and the adoption of best practices. It should also promote partnerships 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 these common forms of problems. These include 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.

The remainder of this document offers guidelines and alternatives for developing concrete strategies to achieve the broad goals network participants 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.

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.

**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, 1133

Koboko, Uganda



## 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 not only specialised intervention capacity, but project management, fundraising, and advocacy. This builds on the eco-system 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 European Union (EU), IGAD, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Habitat, the United Cities and Local Government Association for Africa (UCLGA 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, useable 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 (2020:651) argues, "...local governments 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 gender, language, and religion, among others. 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.

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. 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 of these represents a mix of pragmatic and principled choices. They include:

### **Migration/displacement focused v. mainstreaming**

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 (labour and jobs). Most of these firmly concentrate on international migrants, with a smaller subset (or subset 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 focus for learning and engagement.

In a region where many urban refugees and displaced people are not officially recognised, it may be prudent to complement the focus on displacement with a broader consideration of mobility and inclusive planning. Some reasons that benefit migration-centric networks may also work against their potential effectiveness. Most obviously, they may 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 do not correlate with people's experiences. Many internally displaced people are not 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 practical justification for considering one category of vulnerable migrant when there are others (migrants and long-term residents) who face similar challenges. 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 steering committee. IGAD has the mandate to manage regional, 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 (e.g., 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, the 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. 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 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 global norm-setting. 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, and the time required is likely to prove prohibitive. They are also 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.

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 in 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, 1151). Cities such as New York, London, Freetown, 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.



Koboko, Uganda





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