FLEXIBLE
AND LOCALLY LED

AN ENHANCED APPROACH
TO MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION
INTO LOCAL POLICY PLANNING

Cooperazione Italiana
allo Sviluppo
Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

IOM
UN MIGRATION

AGENZIA ITALIANA
PER LA COOPERAZIONE
ALLO SVILUPPO

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FOREWORD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognized the positive contribution of migration to development and highlighted the need to consider migration as a cross-cutting component for the achievement of all 17 SDGs. Seven years after the adoption of the Agenda, the transversal and mutual impacts of migration on all sectoral policies are evident in our communities and societies.

Ongoing crises and global challenges, such as health threats, climate change, conflicts, have showed the multifaceted nature of migration, urging to pursue policy coherence to minimize any inconsistency that might hinder the positive relation between migration and development.

Since the early 2000s, IOM has been supporting efforts to integrate migration in policy planning, aiming at enhancing migration as a development tool. During this experience, it was possible to notice the increasing role of local actors as key stakeholders in migration policymaking. Very often, municipalities are those responsible for addressing the most urgent needs and challenges of their foreign population, but also responding to the opportunities brought by migration. Finding themselves at the frontline of migration governance, local authorities' engagement for mainstreaming migration at the local level becomes crucial.

IOM Italy's initiative "Local Authorities Network for Migration and Development" is a first attempt at overcoming siloed approaches to migration policies at the local level. The mainstreaming migration perspective put forward by the initiative

brought together different Mediterranean municipalities in the development of local policies and action plans that acknowledge the complexity of the migration and development nexus. This bottom-up and flexible approach capitalizes on the direct needs and priorities that only local stakeholders can identify, therefore allowing for a more comprehensive and context-specific development planning.

This publication raises important questions regarding the future of migration policymaking. The multilevel and multifaceted approach that is hereby presented defies the compartmentalization of migration by using it as a cross-cutting lens. In addition, the potential of local actors as development boosters opens up new opportunities for innovative policies.

Finally, my hope is that this publication may inspire new initiatives all over the Mediterranean and start a meaningful change in the way local development and migration policies are conceived.

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Coordination Office for the Mediterranean
Chief of Mission for Italy and Malta
Representative to the Holy See

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of acronyms

CDI   Cooperation and Development Institute

CeSPI   Centre for Politics and International Studies (*Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale*)

DUP   Single Programming Document (*Documento Unico di Programmazione*)

IOM   International Organization for Migration

LAs   Local Authorities Network for Migration and Development

NGO   Non-governmental organization

PAL   Local Action Plan for a non-discriminatory action towards new citizens with a human rights-based approach (*Piano di Azione Locale per un'azione amministrativa non discriminatoria e basata sui diritti umani nei confronti dei nuovi cittadini e delle nuove cittadine*)

SDG   Sustainable Development Goal

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a complex phenomenon which affects and is affected by multiple variables (social, political, economic, cultural, geographical, environmental) at several levels (individual, household, local, national, international). This conceptualization allows to recognize the reciprocal nature between migration and development and how this mutual relationship can materialize in positive or negative ways. On one side, migration can affect the outcomes of development but, at the same time, development can affect migration dynamics.

It is important to acknowledge this complexity when discussing about development policies and even more so when they concern development processes at the local level, where the impact of migration is strongly felt. Local authorities are in fact directly confronted with the challenges and opportunities posed by migration and need to address evolving social dynamics in a responsive and innovative way.

That is why it is key to integrate migration concerns and issues in policymaking, across all sectors of governance and involving all relevant stakeholders. This process, based on the recognition of the complexity of migration as a cross-cutting multidimensional issue, is called **mainstreaming migration** and endeavours to bring coherence among policy areas affected and being affected by migration.

This publication[1] aims to outline a new approach to mainstreaming migration into local development plans to harness the role of local authorities as key actors in migration and development initiatives. This publication builds on the learnings and insights gathered through the analysis of the project **Local Authorities Network For Migration And Development (LAs)**, a pilot project implemented by IOM between July 2020 and July 2021 involving three municipalities in the Mediterranean. The LAs project was built on, and fit within, IOM's long-standing institutional experience in mainstreaming migration.

The present document strives to lay the foundations for future initiatives promoting transnational collaboration among Mediterranean municipalities for the enhancement of migration as a development tool and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Acknowledging that local development initiatives are context-specific and build on pre-existing local knowledge and practices, this publication does not attempt to provide universal rules or *one-size-fits-all* guidelines to implement mainstreaming migration initiatives into local development plans. Rather, it intends to identify promising practices and lessons learned allowing policymakers and practitioners to adopt improved local mainstreaming migration mechanisms.

The learnings and insights illustrated in this publication derive from the review of project documentation as well as from internal and external evaluations of the project. The findings and recommendations were crucial to develop an improved approach to mainstreaming migration into local development plans. In particular, the key messages this publication aims to disseminate are:

> ► A **flexible bottom-up approach** to integrate migration into local development planning is a useful and promising practice. Municipalities embarking on this process may move from very

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1   This document adds to the collection of publications produced by the Migration and Development unit of IOM Italy. Previous publications include: Migration, Integration, Development: bolster inclusion to foster development (2019), Merging Competencies, Valuing Diversity: The Multicultural Enterprise as an Emerging Model (2020), Diasporas as key actors for change: a fresh perspective on development cooperation (2021).

different contexts in terms of decentralization of competences, migration history, legislative frameworks and so on. An **iterative approach**, allowing municipalities to identify their own priorities and objectives, can help them strengthen existing initiatives or develop new ones with an increased awareness and understanding of the potential of migration.

▸ **Capitalizing** on internal mainstreaming migration initiatives within each municipality and exchanging these experiences among the network provides the necessary learning background to develop **tailored, evidence-based and results-oriented** road maps allowing municipalities to integrate migration into their development plans. The capitalization process is strictly interconnected with the road map design and implementation and represents a learning continuum.

▸ Facilitating mainstreaming migration processes within municipalities may contribute to generate **positive spill-over effects**, such as increasing the collaboration dynamics within municipality departments (including those not traditionally involved in migration management) or strengthening the role and competences of local authorities vis-à-vis the national government.

The document is structured as follows: after this introductory chapter, the reader will familiarize with the main concepts addressed by the publication (migration and development, mainstreaming migration) and with IOM's institutional experience in this field. Chapter 3 illustrates the LAs project, from inception to implementation, providing detailed contextual information. Chapter 4 provides lessons learned and best practices by means of a thorough analysis of the project. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the new approach aimed at improving mainstreaming migration processes at the local level.

2. SETTING THE SCENE: EXPERIENCES OF MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION

This chapter aims to introduce the reader to the main concepts addressed by this publication and to describe the institutional context in which the project Local Authorities Network For Migration And Development took place. First, it provides an introduction on migration and development in relation to governance and then illustrates the mainstreaming migration process in development planning, how it emerged and how it evolved over the past few decades. It then focuses on local authorities, their role as key actors in migration and development and how this led to the design of mainstreaming migration initiatives into local development planning. The chapter concludes with IOM's institutional experience in the field of mainstreaming migration and a brief overview of further initiatives implemented by other actors.

2.1 MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The relationship between migration and development has a complex, non-linear and reciprocal nature. This nexus has been analysed and discussed by policymakers and practitioners for decades and, in recent years, it has emerged as an increasingly important field of policy and practice in the international arena.

As illustrated in the first publication of this series (IOM, 2019), IOM acknowledges migration as a phenomenon that both influences and is influenced

by multiple concurring dynamics at several levels (individual, household, local, national, transnational). This conceptualization allows to recognize the reciprocal nature between migration and development: not only can migration affect the outcomes of sectoral (development) policies but, at the same time, sectoral (development) policies can affect migration dynamics, and this mutual relationship materializes in positive or negative ways.

The link between migration and development has been recognized and embedded in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. In this framework, good migration governance is considered a key element to achieve development objectives and to leave no one behind. As migration both impacts and is impacted by all areas of governance, the 2030 Agenda also calls for the need of ensuring policy coherence to create an enabling environment for sustainable development (SDG 17).

In line with this framework, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (United Nations, 2019) recognizes the multidimensionality of migration and fosters the adoption of a *whole-of-government* approach, to develop and implement coherent and effective migration policies and practices across all sectors and levels of governance, and a *whole-of-society* approach, to address migration including a broad range of stakeholders reflecting its multidimensional reality.

The above considerations call for the need to adopt appropriate mechanisms to ensure policy coherence in migration and development. "If we do not consider how other policies like housing, health or agriculture affect and are affected by migration, inconsistencies can and do limit the effectiveness of migration and development efforts" (JMDI, 2017, p. 6).

The next paragraphs will illustrate the mainstreaming migration process, a mechanism adopted by IOM and other key actors in this field to contribute to integrate migration across all sectors and policies to enhance development outcomes.

2.2 MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Mainstreaming migration refers to the process of "inserting migration as a parameter across different policy areas, through multi-stakeholder and multi-level mechanisms." (JMDI, 2015a, p.16). It aims to integrate migration concerns and issues at all policy levels, across all sectors of governance and involving a plethora of key stakeholders.

Mainstreaming migration into development planning thus entails recognizing the complexity of migration as a cross-cutting multidimensional issue and pursuing the objective of bringing policy coherence among policy areas (such as health, education, environment, housing and so on) affecting and being affected by migration.

This approach allows to take into consideration specific aspects, such as: the impact of migration on human development; a governance of the migration phenomenon that increases the results of human development; the mitigation of any challenges that migration may present; the protection of migrants' rights and those of their families and the host communities while reducing inequalities.

The first considerations on mainstreaming migration at the global level can be traced back to 2005, when the Global Commission on International Migration issued a report (GCIM, 2005) that included, among others, recommendations for increased coherence in migration policies and for the involvement of multiple stakeholders (local authorities, the private sector, NGOs, civil society institutions and migrant associations) as well-placed actors to contribute to the formulation and implementation of migration policies.

Moreover, since the establishment of the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD),[1] following the 2006 High-level Dialogue on International

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1   A global consultative forum on Migration and Development, established in 2007. More information available here.

Migration and Development, States have dedicated progressive attention to the topic of mainstreaming migration in development planning, increasingly aware of the need of greater institutional and policy coherence.

These recommendations and discussions have been operationalized in a handbook published in 2010 by the Global Migration Group (GMG)[2] aimed at providing guidance to policymakers and practitioners on facilitating strategies to integrate the migration component into development planning processes. The handbook, however, was primarily concerned with international migration and development processes at the national level, focusing mostly on countries in the Global South. In fact, since policymaking on migration governance was traditionally assigned to government authorities at the central level, greater attention has been given to mainstreaming migration processes at national level, while processes occurring at the local level have for long been under-explored (JMDI, 2015a).

2.3 LOCAL AUTHORITIES AS EMERGING ACTORS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Over the last few years, local authorities have been increasingly recognized as key stakeholders of migration governance and development planning. In fact, while legislation on international migration may still lie at the national level, local authorities are directly confronted with the challenges and opportunities posed by migration at the local level, where the impact of the phenomenon is strongly felt. In close proximity with local dynamics, local authorities need to be both innovative policymakers, responding to evolving social dynamics, and responsive service providers, catering for the ever-changing needs of their inhabitants.

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2   Established by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2006, the GMG is a high-level inter-institutional group of agencies involved in migration-related activities. At present, the GMG is comprised of 22 United Nations entities. More information available here.

The terminology related to local authorities encompasses a wide range of entities at subnational level of a country's administration, including regions, provinces, districts, municipalities and so on. They are not isolated entities, rather they belong to an integrated system of actors with which they interact in accordance with their mandates (depending on the existing level of decentralization). While acknowledging the variety of local actors and their interdependency, for the scope of this publication, which focuses on the experience of three cities (Milan and Bologna in Italy, Tirana in Albania), the term *local authorities* will be mostly used to refer to municipalities.[3]

In light of rapid urbanization processes,[4] the role of cities has grown significantly in recent years. Urbanization trends call for local authorities to take central stage in the global debate on migration governance, share best-practices implemented at the local level and strengthen their capacity to mainstream migration across sectoral policies allowing them to realize the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and build sustainable and inclusive cities for all.

The key role of local authorities, and cities in particular, has been acknowledged by the global community in several instances and international fora. Following the UN General Assembly's Second High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development (HLD) held in 2013, the Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development was established (now known as the Mayors Mechanism since 2018), an annual city-led dialogue on migration and development providing opportunities for cities to take part in GFMD discussions and engage in peer-to-peer learning and exchange on governing migration, protecting rights and promoting inclusive urban economic growth.[5] Additionally, the paramount role of cities was recognized in the New Urban Agenda adopted by UN Member States in 2016 at the Habitat III Conference in Quito (Ecuador). In the same year, cities were recognized

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3   Unless otherwise indicated in the text.

4   Projections estimate that 68 per cent of the world population will live in urban areas by 2050. *Source:* DESA, 2018, available here.

5   For more information please visit the Mayors' Mechanism website and this page.

as first receivers of migrant populations in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (United Nations, 2016). Moreover in 2018, during the 5th Mayoral Forum, mayors adopted the Marrakech Mayors Declaration "Cities Working Together for Migrants and Refugees"[6] calling for the full and formal recognition of the role played by local authorities on the frontline in managing the impact of migration as well as in promoting inclusive, safe and sustainable societies.

It is within this context that mainstreaming migration processes have been further explored and tested into local development[7] planning, contributing to ensure that "good local governance leads to improved integration of the contribution of migrants into dialogue over local development issues based on a multi-stakeholder approach" (JMDI, 2013, p.15).

The next paragraph will illustrate IOM's institutional experience in mainstreaming migration, particularly into local development planning, prior to delving into the specificities of the project Local Authorities Network For Migration And Development in the next chapter.

2.4 MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION: THE IOM EXPERIENCE

As a global leader on migration governance, IOM has been leading and supporting initiatives on mainstreaming migration since the early 2000s.

The Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI), the first global programme on mainstreaming migration, was initiated in 2008, funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with IOM and other international

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6　Available here.

7　Local development is here understood as the process driving sustainable development at the local level by creating an enabling environment to improve livelihoods taking into account economic as well as sociocultural and environmental dimensions (JMDI, 2015b, Module 1, p.13).

organizations.[8] The programme aimed at strengthening the positive linkages between Migration and Development on a global scale and involved 16 countries.[9]

The experience of this first phase allowed to better unfold the critical role played by local authorities in confronting migration issues and led to the acknowledgement that initiatives embedded into local authorities' plans and development priorities have a stronger and more sustainable development impact (JMDI, 2015a). In light of this, between July and October 2012, IOM conducted a global mapping involving over 2000 stakeholders to learn more about local authorities' Migration and Development practices. Moving from the findings of this research (JMDI, 2013), a second phase of the JMDI was developed.

This new phase, started in 2013, has consequently focused on addressing the migration and development nexus at the local level, supporting mainstreaming migration processes into local development planning in collaboration with local authorities. The new JMDI, managed by UNDP and implemented by IOM and several other agencies,[10] was funded by the European Commission and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The knowledge gained through this new initiative was consolidated into a series of reports and supporting materials such as the White Paper on Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development Planning (2015a), the JMDI toolbox on Migration and Local Development (2015b) and the Guidelines on Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development Planning (2017).

In addition to the work with local authorities, since 2017 IOM has also

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8   Namely the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN-Women.

9   Algeria, Cabo Verde, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Tunisia.

10 The International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO) with UN-Women, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNITAR.

been working with the European Commission's Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) on the project Mainstreaming Migration Into International Cooperation and Development,[11] with the objective to contribute to effective mainstreaming of migration into international cooperation and development policy.

Moreover, following the adoption of the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) (IOM, n.d.) in 2015, IOM developed the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) a tool offering insights on policy levers that countries can use to improve their migration governance.[12] The growing role of cities and municipalities over the past years as key actors in migration policymaking has led IOM to adapt the national MGI to the local level, with the objective of helping local authorities take stock of the migration initiatives they have in place, fostering dialogue on migration between national governments and local authorities; enabling local authorities to learn from one another by sharing common challenges and identifying potential solutions. Building on the national MGI methodology, the local MGI framework (Migration Data Portal, n.d.) is composed of 87 indicators grouped under six different dimensions of migration governance:

1   Migrants' rights;
2   Whole-of-government approach;
3   Partnerships;
4   Socioeconomic well-being of migrants;
5   Mobility dimension of crises;
6   Safe, orderly and regular migration.

Finally, the project Local Authorities Network For Migration And Development (LAs) builds on the above-illustrated long-standing institutional expertise. By means of a thorough analysis of this project's experience, this publication

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11   More information on this project is available here.

12   More information on the Migration Governance Indicators can be found here.

aims to suggest a new approach to harness the role of local authorities as key actors in migration and development. This report does not attempt to provide standardized rules or guidelines to implement mainstreaming migration initiatives into local development plans, as it recognizes that such initiatives must be context specific and build on pre-existing local authorities' knowledge and practice. However, it does strive to identify functioning practices and lessons learned allowing policymakers and practitioners to adopt improved local mainstreaming migration mechanisms.

Box 1: Migration and Development initiatives in relation to local authorities led by other actors'

OTHER INITIATIVES INVOLVING LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Mediterranean city-to-city migration (MC2CM)

This project, implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, brings together cities, local actors, national and international experts to discuss about, learn from and contribute to improved migration governance at urban level, including migrants' access to basic services and human rights. The project implemented its first phase between 2015 and 2018, its second phase is currently ongoing. More information can be found here: www.icmpd.org/our-work/projects/mediterranean-city-to-city-migration-mc2cm

MedCities

A formal network of 63 local authorities in the Mediterranean established in 1991, MedCities promotes urban sustainable development and helps empower Mediterranean local governments to achieve their strategic priorities, building their capacities to meet the challenges of local governance in a sustainable way. More information can be found here: https://medcities.org/

Amitié

Funded by the European Commission and coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna, the project aimed to raise awareness among citizens on migration, development and human rights and to train key actors on these issues working in Local Authorities. The project involved public authorities and NGOs operating in 6 European Countries. More information can be found here: http://amitiecode.eu/

3. THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES INITIATIVE: A BOTTOM-UP PROCESS

This chapter aims to present the main stages of the project Local Authorities Network for Migration and Development (LAs), which has been conceived as a bottom-up initiative in which local authorities directly drive the process. By presenting the different phases, from engagement to implementation, the reader will gain a better understanding of the process and its actual implementation in the three cities involved: Milan, Bologna and Tirana.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

The LAs project, launched in 2020, aimed to raise awareness about the cross-cutting nature of migration and to integrate this dimension in public policies at all levels of local governance. By promoting this mainstreaming migration exercise, the project ultimately envisaged the creation of a network of municipalities actively engaged on this topic in the Mediterranean. The LAs project was a pilot meant to lay the foundations for future initiatives promoting transnational collaboration among Mediterranean municipalities for the enhancement of migration as a development tool and for the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) set by the 2030 Agenda.

Specifically, by focusing on local authorities as the main stakeholders, the project aimed to support municipalities in order to:

1. Integrate migration into the development policy planning processes and into development plans;
2. Identify and implement specific priorities;
3. Improve the capacity to design and manage policies taking into consideration the "migration and development" nexus.

3.2 IMPLEMENTATION

3.2.1 PREPARATORY PHASE

Engagement and selection of municipalities

The first step of the project was to identify the municipalities to involve, a crucial phase for an initiative conceived as a bottom-up process. The aim was to involve municipalities that had already integrated or had showed interest in integrating migration into their local development plans or into sectoral policies related to the SDGs. To strengthen the networking component, IOM explored the existence of former networks among municipalities with the potential of an eventual scale-up. Moreover, IOM searched for municipalities that demonstrated to share its values and interests, for example looking at those previously involved in IOM's initiatives, such as the project ADMIN4ALL.

Following this preliminary desk research, a questionnaire was administered to explore municipalities' interests and approaches to mainstreaming migration. Moreover, interviews were carried out with municipalities' officials to explore and assess both the political will and the administrative capacities of potential municipalities to engage. Finally, after the identification of the first Italian cities, Milan and Bologna, the third municipality was identified based on the priorities of these two cities. In view of consolidating pre-existing synergies, previous experiences of collaboration and the presence of a large Albanian diaspora both in Milan and Bologna was taken into account and Tirana was identified as the third target municipality.

The project's attractiveness for the three municipalities was bolstered both by existing political interest in stepping into the migration field at the local level (in a particularly sensitive period for Italian national politics) and by the possibility of expanding their international networks with other municipalities.

It is important to notice that engagement efforts were not limited to this initial phase, rather they were ensured throughout the whole project. Indeed, the voluntary and non-burdensome form of municipalities' adherence to the project required a constant dialogue and engagement with the involved stakeholders to prompt their active participation to the process.

Engagement of an implementing partner

To ensure full support to the Italian municipalities involved and to provide technical assistance in mainstreaming migration, IOM selected an implementing partner based in Italy. The selected partner organization, the Centre for Politics and International Studies (CeSPI) coordinated, facilitated and provided support in the various stages of elaboration and implementation of local development plans, as well as guaranteed monitoring and project evaluation activities. At the same time, the engagement of a second implementing partner based in Albania was foreseen to provide direct support to the Municipality of Tirana. The Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) was selected by CeSPI as the Albanian partner, and thanks to its deep knowledge of the local context and language, it was able to directly liaise with all the stakeholders involved in the process in Tirana.

The constant dialogue between IOM, CeSPI and CDI ensured coordination throughout the activities and regular exchanges between the Italian and Albanian municipalities. Technical support on mainstreaming migration and local development was granted throughout the different phases of the project.

3.2.2 FIRST PHASE

Training

Building on IOM's broad experience presented in Chapter 2, the LAs project embedded a training component specifically aimed at consolidating the thematic framework on mainstreaming migration into local development. Moreover, to lay the methodological approach of the project, the partner organization CeSPI delivered a presentation on the capitalization process.[1]

Background research

To effectively conduct a mainstreaming migration exercise and to better frame the municipalities' objectives as well as areas of intervention, it was key to gain a deeper understanding of the local contexts in relation to migration. To this end, background research on each municipality was conducted by IOM using mixed methods (literature review, interviews with some institutions' representatives and participatory observation in all the activities of the project).

The research allowed to assess the municipalities' competences in the field of migration, to identify sectors and areas in which they had previous experiences and to appreciate existing elements of mainstreaming migration (even though not explicitly labelled as such). For example, Milan and Bologna had already opted for a less distinct model of social services and reduced specialist services in the migration area. Exploring these first experiences represented an entry point for the realization of a wider mainstreaming migration exercise. The main findings of this background research were gathered in City Migration Profiles, as summarized in Box 2 of the following page.

1   Further information on the capitalization methodology in section 3.2.3 below.

Box 2: City Migration Profiles

CITY MIGRATION PROFILES

Bologna

As of 1 January 2019, more than 15 per cent of Bologna's residents were third-country nationals,[2] originating mainly from the Philippines (8,6%), Bangladesh (8,2%) and Pakistan (6,9%) (Tuttitalia, n.d.).

From the 1980s, due to the lack of a comprehensive national framework, the Municipality of Bologna played a central role in migrant integration, for example promoting access to housing, health care, and education, and increasing the number of cultural mediators and interpreters. To foster migrants' participation in decision-making, the Forum of Foreign Associations was established in 1997. Over the years, the Municipality continued to promote migrant integration, while progressively shifting towards a mainstreaming migration approach. With an increase of arrivals along the Mediterranean route since 2011, the Municipality of Bologna, in particular the newly formed New Citizenships, Cooperation and Human Rights Unit, developed several interventions in the field of intercultural education and training of civil servants on human rights, non-discrimination and multiculturalism.

Building on this experience, in 2018 the Municipality approved the "Local Action Plan for a non-discriminatory action towards new citizens with a human rights-based approach" (PAL), in the framework of the EU-funded "Amitié Code" project. PAL was based on three pillars:

1. Well-being, intended as a holistic concept that includes psychological, health and social well-being;

2. Non-discrimination, intended as an inviolable and universal human right;

3. Participation, in order to promote a more active participation of foreign and new citizens on administrative and political matters.

The Action Plan also foresaw two cross-cutting axes, dedicated to training of civil servants on human rights, multiculturalism and anti-discrimination, and the set-up of a coordination structure, which could facilitate cooperation with other administration's departments for the promotion of non-discrimination, equal opportunities and human rights.

Concerning city networks, until December 2020 the Municipality of Bologna was part of the "Med-Villes" project, supporting local — urban, economic and inclusive development actions, focusing in particular on social and solidarity economy in Tunisia and Morocco. The initiative also aimed at strengthening the capacities of local authorities and civil society in Tunisia, Morocco and Bologna's region, Emilia-Romagna.

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2   Rapporto Città Metropolitana di Bologna (2018).

Milan

The Municipality of Milan has a long-standing tradition of inclusion, first with internal migrants, and from the 1970s towards international migration. Despite the quite recent arrival of international migrants in the city of Milan, the percentage of foreign residents now amounts to 18 per cent of the population, and it includes a broad variety of communities.

Already attentive to the migration and development nexus, between 2007 and 2014 the Municipality of Milan launched the "Milan for Co-Development Programme", three calls for proposals targeting migrant associations for the implementation of co-development projects both in countries of origin and destination, anticipating the new Italian law on international cooperation adopted in 2014.

With its candidature to host EXPO2015, the municipality of Milan tried to emphasize its international dimension, enriched by the large foreign population living in the city, accelerating dynamics at the core of Milan's identity. Between 2014 and 2015, the administration started a participatory process of consultation involving stakeholders from institutions, the third sector, social partners, migrant associations and individual citizens for the establishment of a "Centre of World Cultures" on the model of a "one-stop shop". The Centre aimed at becoming a reference point with regards to legislation on migration, access to public services and promotion of intercultural education. Despite the high ambitions linked to this initiative, the Centre was never completed. Only in 2020, a Service Centre for Migration was set up, building on the previously developed idea.

A second initiative launched by the administration in view of EXPO2015 was the Milan City World Forum, aimed at discovering the various 'cultures of the world' that inhabit Milan and connecting about 500 diaspora organizations. The Milan City World Forum was proposed as a space dedicated to intercultural dialogue and the promotion of projects and initiatives targeting the whole community. Finally, in 2015 the Museum of Cultures (MUDEC) was inaugurated, which became a symbol of plurality and expression of diversity.

Besides the initiatives developed during its organization, EXPO2015 provided the opportunity to move from a project-based approach to migration and development to a more transversal approach, which builds on an integrated and cross-sectoral involvement of the administration's departments.

As a member of the EUROCITIES network, Milan has taken part in the "Integrating Cities process", launched in Rotterdam in 2006 to promote migrant integration at the local level and further endorsed in 2010 with the launch of the "EUROCITIES Charter on Integrating Cities". In Milan, the Integrating Cities Charter has been used for promoting collaboration with non-profit organizations, NGOs and local stakeholders, both public and private, in order to facilitate the integration of migrants into the economy and society.

Tirana

The migration profile of Tirana (and Albania in general) is characterized by a constant emigration since 1990s, varying from low- to medium-skilled labour migration to family reunification, mobility of international students, and more recently, high-skilled migration. The lack of local data collection on migration does not allow to provide precise information on the foreign population in Tirana. Local policies in the area of migration were also still quite limited and the Municipality had not undertaken any significant effort in mainstreaming migration yet.

The opportunity to develop migration policies at the local level arose with the approval of the National Strategy on Migration (2019 — 2022) in 2019 and its related Action Plan. The Strategy aims at enhancing the development impact of migration to the benefit of the Albanian society and migrants themselves. The Law No. 38/2019 introduced new competences for the municipalities and outlined the setup of administrative structures for diaspora and migration at the local level, which should provide information and services to the interested parties. In June 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding between national ministries, the Albanian Association of Municipality and the Association for Local autonomy was signed.

More recently, the Government of Albania, with the support of IOM, developed a new policy to strengthen the relations with its diaspora abroad. As a result, the new Albanian National Diaspora Strategy 2021 — 2025 promotes the development of national policies for the inclusion and contribution of Albanian communities abroad in the socioeconomic and political development of their country of origin.

Despite the lack of experience of Tirana in mainstreaming migration, the new Albanian legal framework provided the opportunity to develop new local policies adopting a whole-of-government and cross-sectoral approach to migration.

3.2.3 SECOND PHASE

Capitalization process

In the second phase, the implementing partner adopted the "capitalization" methodology, intended as "a process through which, starting from an initial grouping by thematic clusters, participants exchange experiences, learning and tools, and select innovative practices of greatest interest, that is, those

that are replicable. The results of the exchanges then feed the formalization of knowledge, maintaining between both moments a reciprocal relationship."[3]

The capitalization process is at the core of the LAs experience. Structured exchanges among the municipalities were organized in two different moments: one internal, within each municipality, and the second one among the three municipalities, through peer-to-peer exchanges and discussions. This two-fold bottom-up approach allowed to identify, systematize, and disseminate experiences, methodologies, knowledge, and skills of each municipality.

Starting from September 2020, each municipality initiated a process of internal consultation and self-assessment, gaining awareness of the relations between various sectors within their administration. The ultimate objective was to identify promising practices to share with their counterparts as well as challenges for which they were looking for innovative solutions. At this stage, each municipality had to identify which sectors and departments it aimed to involve in the mainstreaming migration exercise, in order to lay the foundation for a meaningful cross-cutting and intersectoral cooperation.

Consultations in the self-assessment phase involved different municipalities' departments. For Bologna, the New Citizenships and Neighbourhoods Area took the lead of the process, and systematically met and exchanged with the Culture and City Promotion Department, the Programming, Control and Statistics Area and the Welfare and Promotion of Community Well-being Area. In Milan, consultations were held between the International Relations Area and the Rights, Inclusion and Projects Area with various departments, including those in charge of culture, education, and sport. The Municipality of Tirana involved different units in this process, such as the Economic Development Department, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Labour

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3   Myriam Lamela, Dario Conato, José Luis Rhi-Sausi, *Capitalización de buenas prácticas del Programa URB-AL III,* 2013. The same methodology has been applied by CeSPI to other migration- or local policies-related projects, such as MED Programme (2013-2014), "P.ER. La Integrazione" (2014), "CapitalizzAzione" (2015), "Progetto Ipocad" (2017-2018). For more information, please refer to CeSPI's official website: www.cespi.it/it/ricerche/search?s=capitalizzazione.

Promotion, but it also involved national representatives from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Diaspora, Ministry of Health and Social Protection and Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.

The second moment of the capitalization process consisted in a collective reflection among peers. The objective of this process was to identify practices that could be effectively replicated in different contexts, create opportunities for contamination and mutual exchange, collect and report on critical areas to be improved and possibly jointly elaborate new practices. Each peer-to-peer workshop focused on a specific practice or theme, where a representative of the municipalities' administration in charge of that specific area was invited to take part and contribute. During this pilot edition of the LAs project, more than 10 peer-to-peer workshops and exchange meetings were organized resulting in the development of a capitalization toolkit.

The capitalization process turned to be particularly effective for mainstreaming migration, as the continuous exchanges and dialogue among the municipalities enabled the creation of a trusted environment and a common language among the actors involved. The municipalities took the lead of the whole process, while the role of the implementing partner was to accompany, listen and match ambitions and challenges. Moreover, this process successfully promoted a deeper knowledge of both planned and ongoing activities in all the municipalities involved, emphasizing the need to set up more structured forms of dialogue, collaboration, and coordination, with positive windfall effects on the governance of intersectoral migration initiatives.

3.2.4 THIRD PHASE

Elaboration and implementation of road maps

The municipalities recognized the capitalization exercise as an opportunity to build and further elaborate concrete actions. Based on the outcomes of this process, the municipalities were accompanied by their project partners, respectively in Italy and Albania, in the development and subsequent implementation of three "road maps". These road maps were conceived

as action plans to address migration-related local priorities, linked to a specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). While the support of IOM and its implementing partners was limited to the duration of the project implementation, the priorities identified in the road maps stretched beyond the project itself, in order to pursue longer-term impacts.

Building on the results of the capitalization process, the three municipalities expanded the consultative and decisional process for the elaboration of their road maps to other stakeholders, both within and outside the administration. In the case of Bologna, the New Citizenships, Rights and Cooperation office first encouraged other offices and sectors involved in migration management to gather and contribute, then proposed a draft work programme with objectives, actions, roles and expected results. In addition to other administration's offices, the working group led by the New Citizenships, Rights and Cooperation Office also included Bologna's University, a research centre, local NGOs, and migrants' associations. In Milan, the consultative process was led by the Relations and Cities' Cooperation Unit of the International Relations area. The Unit organized a first round of meetings to improve internal coordination with the Rights, Inclusion and Projects Area, the Mayor's cabinet, and the areas in charge of culture, education, civil services, participation and sport. Unlike the municipality of Bologna, Milan decided to involve individual specialists with migrant background or with expertise in the fields of racism or postcolonial studies, rather than other institutions and associations. In Tirana, the elaboration of the road map was led and coordinated by the Urban Economic Development Directory, which is the unit dealing with the diaspora within the municipality. Tirana did not involve other external experts in this phase, but the Albanian partner CDI provided its expertise to the administration for the road map's elaboration.

Integration of migration into municipalities' policy planning and development plans

Interestingly, the three municipalities identified innovative areas of intervention, but they also saw in the LAs project the opportunity to expand preexisting initiatives or legal frameworks. For example, Bologna decided to ensure continuity to prior focus areas, such as improving governance of cross-sectoral processes, promoting migrants' involvement in participatory processes,

facilitating migrants' access to culture and local heritage. In addition, the municipality of Bologna strategically expanded and relaunched its local action plan "PAL" (see Box 2) involving other sectors of the administration and therefore enhancing its mainstreaming migration approach. Milan engaged in improving governance processes and focused on communication as a tool to promote equal opportunities, rights and non-discrimination, both within the administration and externally. Through mainstreaming migration, the municipality scaled up its long-planned one-stop shop, initially under the sole responsibility of the social services department, by involving other sectors of the administration. In Tirana, where the role of local authorities in the migration area had been previously overlooked, the project represented the opportunity to apply the legislative changes introduced with Law No. 139/2015 and No. 38/2019, fostering the role of municipalities as key actors for the promotion of migration and development. The municipality established an institutional mechanism for coordinating work and competences related to migration between the relevant ministries and institutions and committed to effectively communicate these new competences. For an in-depth description of the activities implemented by the municipalities in the framework of their respective road maps, please refer to Box 3.

The Albanian experience was significantly different compared to that of Italian municipalities. These were, in fact, already undergoing a process of mainstreaming migration, mainly focused on concrete interventions in different structures and services dealing with migration. Conversely, Tirana focused on enhancing the role and responsibilities of the municipality itself, as laid down in the Albanian legal framework. For this purpose, the work of the municipality of Tirana envisaged a greater involvement of national authorities, compared to the prevailing role of local administrations in the Italian context.

Box 3: Road maps by municipalities

BOLOGNA

ACTIVITY	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED
Governance of cross-sectoral processes The municipality of Bologna drafted a policy paper on the first edition of the Local Action Plan (known as PAL), considered a promising mainstreaming migration practice. The paper illustrated PAL's approach, its strengths, weaknesses and recommendations.	- CeSPI - Municipality of Bologna - University of Bologna
Active civic participation - Managers and officials of the municipality held four workshops on intercultural co-design with representatives of local migrant associations. During this activity, they developed recommendations on intercultural aspects of co-planning, describing the need of an intercultural approach to ensure migrant populations play an active role in co-design. - Migrants' and new Italian generations' associations were involved in four workshops focusing on advocacy strategy and practices and on how to better involve migrant associations through participatory tools. The toolkit developed is available at this link.	- Municipality of Bologna - Institute for Social Research (IRS) - University of Bologna - Local migrant associations: Cantieri Meticci and Universo Interculturale) - Municipal intercultural centre Zonarelli - Non-profit organization Agency for Peacebuilding - Associations involved: Next Generation Italy, Universo Interculturale, Sonrisas Andinas, Sopra I Ponti, Mondo Donna, CoNNGi, Unire
Migrants' access to culture and local heritage - Under the initiative "Traiettorie di Sguardi" aimed at promoting a process of decolonization of the artistic heritage of two museums in Bologna, six workshops were facilitated by artists with a multicultural background. - A series of training sessions on how to serve users respecting cultural and religious differences benefited 32 front-office operators working in libraries and museums with the active participation of migrants as trainers. The topics covered human rights and non-discrimination, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.	- "Bologna Pact for Reading", within the Libraries Sector of the administration - Local museums - Non-profit organization Hayat - Intercultural mediators - Association "Next Generation Italy"

MILAN

ACTIVITY	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

Intersectoral governance

The Welfare Area and International Relations Unit launched a consultative process aimed at stimulating a cross-sectoral dialogue to identify ways and tools to better mainstream migration in different policy and intervention areas. The process consisted in meetings convening different directorates and administrative areas within the Municipality (directorate on Culture, Education and Civic services, participation, and sports) with the aim of:

- Discussing potential improvement areas for a new Multi-Service Centre, born out of a model developed by the Municipality in previous years and called "one-stop shop", to better understand how to enhance its services (e.g. facilitating communication between the administration and end-users, making it accessible to those with a migration background).

- Collecting strategic indications for the "Documento Unico di Programmazione" (DUP), a strategic document of the Municipality, by introducing the mainstreaming migration approach.

Non-discriminatory communication

- Following a large internal consultative process, the municipality developed information leaflets on the education and school system, which were translated into French, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese. The translated leaflets targeted recently arrived foreigners and residents with limited Italian skills, with the aim of disseminating information on educational opportunities and services in an inclusive way.

- A Vademecum for non-discriminatory communication, addressed to the administrative staff of the Municipality, was developed to mainstream across all sectors of the administration the use of inclusive language with users.

Stakeholders involved:
- CeSPI
- Municipality of Milan
- Institute for Social Research (IRS)
- Communication agency Ideificio
- Experts specialized in racism and ethnic studies

TIRANA

ACTIVITY	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED
Institutional mechanism of coordination - An in-depth analysis of the legal, institutional, and strategic frameworks applicable to migration management in Albania at the central and local level was carried out with a participatory approach. The analysis aimed to identify and operationalize the competences of each actor, as defined in Law No. 38/2019. - National institutional actors dealing with migration at the national level participated in two workshops to identify practices and recommendations to mainstream migration at the local level. The activity resulted in a study including the findings of this participatory process. - The municipality developed a communication campaign to increase awareness on the new roles and competences of local authorities in migration management. The campaign addressed both civil servants and residents of the Municipality. Furthermore, the Municipality and the National Youth Progress, both preparing for the initiative "Tirana European Youth Capital 2022", committed to mainstreaming migration topics across the activities planned for next year.	- Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Diaspora - Municipality of Tirana - National Youth Progress

4. ANALYSIS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES INITIATIVE

I n this chapter, the LAs experience is analysed through a series of analytical lenses.[4] These include the analysis of local contexts and institutional backgrounds, triggering factors, objectives and results, key stakeholders involved and coordination mechanisms. The analysis also includes the identification of the challenges encountered during the implementation of the project and concludes with the illustration of lessons learned and best practices.

4.1 LOCAL CONTEXTS AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUNDS

In bottom-up processes of mainstreaming migration, it is key to consider the specificities of local contexts and their institutional backgrounds, particularly so when the authorities involved vary considerably, such as the case of Milan, Bologna and Tirana.

Although the municipalities involved were identified and selected in light of their common interest in mainstreaming migration (particularly Milan and Bologna, which then identified Tirana as the third partner in light of pre-existing synergies), each of them joined the project from a different starting point. These differences were the result of a series of variables, including the endorsement of the process by the political level, the migration history

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4　These were adapted and inspired by the analytical grid used to sort and synthetize information in the White Paper on Mainstreaming Migration by JMDI (2015a).

of the municipality, as well as the levels of decentralization and mandates of migration management from the national level. As a consequence, different starting points also entailed different priorities in relation to mainstreaming migration, which made the adoption of a flexible model, adaptable to each specific context, even more relevant.

In order to appreciate and address the specificities of each municipality, the initial background research conducted by IOM (the City Migration Profiles)[5] was a key stepping stone to prepare the ground for the next steps, equalize the different starting points and facilitate dialogue among the municipalities. In fact, the local contexts of the two Italian municipalities varied considerably comparing to Tirana.

Bologna and Milan were both characterized by a long tradition of in-migration and had developed, over the years, services, initiatives and policies to address the phenomenon, although each municipality with its specificities.[6]

In fact, while the organizational chart of the municipality of Milan was more sector-oriented (migration issues were addressed by specific departments), the municipality of Bologna had adopted a more transversal and intersectoral perspective, organized around objectives to achieve rather than sectors. This, combined with the international outlook of both cities[7] and the political willingness of strengthening the municipalities' position in the national debate on migration allowed the two municipalities to embark on the process of consolidating their mainstreaming migration efforts equipped with a certain extent of awareness and pre-existing structures.

Tirana, conversely, joined the project at a historical moment characterized by significant legislative changes. Until very recently, Albanian municipalities did

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5   See chapter 3, section 3.2.2.

6   E.g. the Forum of Foreign Associations and the PAL in Bologna or the "Milan for Co-Development Programme" and the Centre of Wolrd Cultures in Milan.

7   Bologna was part of the Med-Villes project, connecting the Municipality to local authorities and civil society in Tunisia and Morocco. Milan is partner of the EUROCITIES network, plus in 2015 it hosted the world exposition EXPO2015.

not have a mandate or decentralized competences in relation to migration, which mostly lay at national level. However, in 2019, the adoption of Law No. 38/2019 introduced new functions for local authorities in the field of diaspora and migration. The Government also adopted a National Strategy on Migration (2019 – 2022) and, more recently, a National Diaspora Strategy (2021 – 2025). In addition to this, it is important to note that Tirana has traditionally been characterized by out-migration since the 1990s, whereas in-migration affected the city to a lesser extent until very recent times. The combination of these variables meant that the municipality of Tirana embarked on the project from a very different starting point compared to the Italian municipalities. Thus, its operational structures were less equipped and aware of the potential of migration, which required additional efforts from the local implementing partner CDI in raising awareness and securing the engagement of the staff in the municipality.

Varying contexts, migration history and institutional backgrounds mean different starting points, but also different capacities, skills, operational structures, awareness within the municipalities and, consequently, varying objectives and priorities. Adopting a bottom-up and flexible approach, allowing local authorities to build on their specific contexts, existing capacities and priorities becomes a requirement to favour effective and long-term ownership and engagement to fully implement mainstreaming migration.

4.2 TRIGGERING FACTORS

Local authorities may decide to engage in a mainstreaming migration exercise as a result of several triggering factors. These can include changes in migration patterns, changes in legislation, the interest to consolidate or upscale existing initiatives, the need of increasing policy coherence in policies across departments as well as political will.

The analysis of the LAs experience proves a good point in case. The Tirana example shows how changes in migration patterns can shape the need of

a municipality to restructure itself so that it integrates migration issues. The city is moving from being a point of departure to becoming a destination/transit hub for migratory flows. Changes in migration patterns were also accompanied by policy changes, with the introduction of new legislative frameworks that assigned new competencies to local authorities in terms of migration management. The combination of these two elements triggered the municipality of Tirana to adhere to the LAs project. However, while there was political will to engage in the process this was at first not aligned with the operational level in the municipality, as this process was new to the municipal staff and complex to understand.

In addition to this, it must be noted that the inclusion of the municipality of Tirana was suggested by the two Italian municipalities, in light of existing ties (because of significant diaspora populations or previous collaborations) that Milano and Bologna wanted to consolidate. In fact, one of the aims of the LAs project was to contribute to the creation of a network of Mediterranean municipalities that exchange on mainstreaming migration. This aspect triggered the interest of Milan and Bologna, as both municipalities have an international outlook they actively seek to strengthen.

Moreover, while Tirana was new to dealing with migration issues, both Bologna and Milan possessed significant previous experience, although this may not have been streamlined across all departments and needed to be consolidated. As a result, both municipalities saw in the LAs project the chance of strengthening ongoing processes and initiatives, supported by partners with technical expertise. Thanks to its bottom-up approach, the LAs project was even more relevant for them, as it allowed them the flexibility of building on their own initiatives integrating their specific needs and priorities.

Finally, discussions on the LAs project with the Italian municipalities were initiated back in 2019, at a very particular moment in Italian politics, in which the government had adopted a strong security approach to migration and the national debate was highly polarized. This context contributed to triggering the willingness of the political level of the municipalities of Bologna and Milan,

with different views in contrast with national ones, to endorse the LAs project, so as to take a stance and strengthen their position in relation to migration.

4.3 OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

By joining the LAs project, sharing practices and experiences through a peer-learning approach, each municipality pursued its own objectives and priorities. However, all municipalities shared the common goals of promoting a more balanced discourse on migration and improving their civil servants' skills in approaching the migrant population in a more inclusive manner.

In particular, Bologna had the long-term vision of mainstreaming equality, including (but not limited to) migration, encouraging a universalistic approach to access services and to improve governance of cross-sectoral processes. Through the LAs project, the municipality aimed to strategically expand and relaunch its local action plan (PAL), involving sectors of the administration where migration concerns were less addressed, namely those related to culture, active citizenship and participatory processes. It also aimed to promote migrants' involvement in participatory processes, facilitating their access to culture and local heritage, also by strengthening the intercultural skills of staff working in such services. As a result, the municipality managed to include mainstreaming migration activities in its PAL achieving an important step in the ongoing institutionalization process of mainstreaming migration concerns into its local development plans and initiatives.

In Milan, the municipality aimed to improve inter-sectorial governance and its communication in relation to migration. Through the LAs project the municipality aimed to improve cross-sectoral collaboration across various departments so as to strengthen existing initiatives, such as the multi-service-centre "one-stop shop", and to identify ways and tools to better mainstream migration in different policy documents, such as the DUP. As a result, the municipality managed to include the first elements of mainstreaming migration in its programmatic document for the departments of International Relations

and Social Policies, which is a key step in the institutionalization of mainstreaming migration, as the document is linked to municipal budgetary instruments.

For the municipality of Tirana, which initiated its mainstreaming migration process from a very different starting point, the project represented the opportunity to operationalize new legislative changes. Through the LAs project the municipality aimed at establishing an institutional mechanism for coordinating work and competences related to migration between the relevant ministries and institutions and committed to effectively communicate these new competences. As a result, the municipality developed a working paper that analysed the current situation, devised a local strategy plan to manage migration at the municipal level and outlined the main recommendations to operationalize this plan.

The advantage of adopting a bottom-up and flexible model to mainstreaming migration is that municipalities have the opportunity of defining their own objectives and results. While the LAs project had a well-defined structure and objective (intended to promote the integration of migration concerns into local development plans and to create a network of Mediterranean municipalities active in this field), the way in which each municipality embarked on this process developed along the way, enriched by the capitalization process and the peer-to peer exchanges. In particular, the capitalization process was crucial for the elaboration of the objectives of the road maps and the achievements of the expected results: identifying existing practices and/or priorities, sharing them with partner municipalities in the network and learn from each other's experiences was key for the elaboration of the road maps. The two processes are strictly interconnected, as the road maps represented the added value emerged from the capitalization of practices and the identification of each municipality's priorities.

Finally, this iterative model also generated unexpected positive results. In fact, the cross-sectoral work undertaken by the Italian municipalities allowed them to reinforce internal dynamics across units and to improve the quality of their collaboration efforts. Also, in Albania the participation of the Tirana municipality to the project, within a new decentralization process, led to an increased government recognition of local authorities' in dealing with migration

and thus contributed to strengthen the role of municipalities vis-à-vis the national government.

4.4 KEY STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

Embedding mainstreaming migration into local municipalities' plans and actions requires the joint participation of a plethora of stakeholders, both internal and external.

Within the municipalities, it was key to secure the engagement end endorsement of the political level, not only in the inception phase but also throughout the whole implementation process. This is particularly needed when the design and implementation of the road maps include policy changes or initiatives that require the approval at a high managerial level (especially for initiatives that are planned to last beyond the timeframe of the project). In the LAs project, the endorsement of the political level was secured during the inception phase, through council resolutions or official letters and public endorsement by the authorities (e.g. the mayor of Tirana who publicly endorsed the project). Moreover, staff with managerial and political roles were also involved in the technical working groups throughout the process.

Besides the political level, the main stakeholders involved were the departments within the municipalities and their technical staff. Given the voluntary and non-burdensome form of municipalities' adherence to the project, the level of participation also depended on the willingness of the technical staff, thus it was crucial to continuously prompt their active participation to the process. In Bologna, the New Citizenships and Neighbourhoods Area became the focal point for the whole process and systematically met with several other units.[8] In Milan, the lead was taken by the International Relations Area and the Rights, Inclusion and Projects

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8   The Culture and City Promotion Department, the Programming, Control and Statistics Area and the Welfare and Promotion of Community Well-being Area.

Area, which then included various departments.[9]

In Tirana, where migration management was new for the municipality staff, an ad hoc small working group was created, involving other departments and colleagues[10] but also representatives of national institutions.[11] The cross-sectoral active participation of transversal municipal working groups allowed to foster broad discussions and the dissemination of mainstreaming migration concepts, with positive spillover effects on internal collaboration dynamics.

Finally, external contributions were also key to shape the mainstreaming migration process. During the implementation of the road maps, each municipality involved external stakeholders according to the specific activities they needed to contribute to: migrants and diaspora associations in Bologna, local experts with multicultural backgrounds in Milan and ministerial members and local NGOs in Tirana. Including external stakeholders, particularly migrant populations, resonate with the bottom-up approach embraced by the LAs project, as it allows to include migrants' perspectives in shaping services and policies that directly affect them at the local level.

4.5 COORDINATION MECHANISMS

In a project characterized by exchanges among several stakeholders in multiple countries, having a coordination mechanism was key to harmonize and facilitate the implementation. The mechanism set up in the LAs project included several levels of coordination: the coordination *between* municipalities, the coordination *within* municipalities, and the coordination with external stakeholders.

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9   Including those in charge of culture, education, and sport.

10   Economic Development Department, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Labour Promotion.

11   Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Diaspora (now dissolved and replaced by a State Minister for Diaspora), Ministry of Health and Social Protection and Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.

IOM oversaw the project in close coordination with the lead implementing partner CeSPI, which had applied for the role in response to a call for proposals in partnership with the CDI partner in Albania. CeSPI was selected as the most appropriate implementing partner not only because of its technical expertise but also in light of its existing relationships with municipalities, which proved very useful to create an enabling and trusted environment for the coordination of the project. Ensuring coordination across municipalities based in two different countries was a necessity, because the voluntary and non-burdensome participation of the staff involved in the process could have been easily affected by overlapping priorities occurring along the way. The role of a leading coordination institution emerged as a key element to stir constant participation and prevent disengagement.

In addition, coordination within each municipality was also very important and, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the process also produced positive spillover effects on the overall collaboration dynamics within the municipalities. In this case again, the leading role of a specific unit or department (such as in Milan – the Relations Area and the Rights, Inclusion and Projects Area – and in Bologna – New Citizenships and Neighbourhoods Area) was necessary to discuss and promote mainstreaming migration concepts within the working groups involving other areas of the municipality that are not usually involved on the topic. This enabled the development of transversal municipal working groups that fostered broad discussion and dissemination of mainstreaming migration concepts.

Finally, each municipality coordinated with external stakeholders on the basis of the initiatives designed in their road maps. For instance, Milan involved experts with migrant backgrounds, while Bologna involved migrant associations in training and workshops. However, it is interesting to note that municipalities coordinated with external stakeholders during the implementation phase of the road maps, but to a lesser extent in the design phase. Tirana provides a different example instead. Since the municipality was new to migration management, the ad hoc working group created in the municipality also included external stakeholders, namely representative of national authorities.

This differentiation was made possible thanks to tailor-made approach of the LAs project, which made possible the establishment of different coordination mechanisms within and among municipalities.

4.6 CHALLENGES

To better understand the challenges encountered during the LAs project, it is relevant to frame this experience within the historical context and the changing local political landscape in which it unfolded.

One major challenge was indeed the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic led to the reshaping of several activities, especially meetings and in-person exchanges which had to be transformed into an online format. On one side, this represented a limitation, since the experiences and practices shared by the municipalities often referred to facilities and services physically present in their territories. In this respect, field visits would have allowed for a better appreciation of such services. Also, the remote modality (adopted for the capitalization process, the training and the peer-to-peer exchanges) to some extent affected the quality of the interactions among municipalities and the creation of a relational network, as in-person interactions can often benefit this type of processes more than online exchanges. On the other side, the possibility to carry out online activities also eased logistical and budgetary concerns and provided greater flexibility and helped to facilitate the participation of municipalities' staff.

In addition to this, the local elections occurred during the implementation phase in Bologna and Milan also had a certain influence on project activities. Elections can entail changing priorities in municipalities' administrations but also stuff turnover, which can represent a challenge in ensuring continuous participation. Thanks to the coordination efforts of the implementing partner and the leading units within the municipalities this challenge was mitigated, although some power vacuums at managerial level due to turnover made it difficult to ensure constant participation.

Besides these contextual constraints, timing emerged as an additional challenge on several levels. During the implementation, it emerged clearly that adequate time was needed to institutionalize the mainstreaming migration process, especially in large and highly structured municipalities such as those involved. Also, the project timeline did not necessarily overlap with that of municipalities and they did not proceed at the same pace. Moreover, time and effort were needed at the technical level to transfer relevant knowledge and perspectives to colleagues in other units or to new staff. Plus, time constraints were also crucial and influenced the development and consolidation of a network among municipalities.

Finally, the different starting points of the municipalities (particularly Tirana, compared to the previous experiences possessed by Milan and Bologna) meant that additional time and effort in raising awareness on mainstreaming migration concepts and in securing the initial engagement of all municipalities onboard was crucial in the inception phase. This resulted in a lengthy initial engagement process which then left limited time for the implementation of activities and dissemination of results in the final phase.

4.7 LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

Through the analysis of this pilot initiative, it is possible to capture significant insights to fine-tune this approach for future editions of mainstreaming migration initiatives with Mediterranean local authorities.

The flexible and bottom-up approach of the LAs project represented a key feature with strong added value for the municipalities, because it allowed them to tailor their own processes, make mainstreaming migration concepts operational and to promote an iterative model that met their needs.

Considering the time variable, it is important to allocate adequate time to municipalities to (re)shape their local policies and initiatives integrating migration considerations. It is thus key to mindfully design the project timeline, dedicating appropriate duration to each phase of the project (from the beginning to the

end) while, at the same time, taking into account municipalities' timeline – as well as potential changes (e.g. elections) that may affect the implementation of the activities.

The contextual analysis and feasibility assessment conducted in the preparatory phase is key to determine the starting point of each municipality. As the LAs project showed, different legislative contexts, history and migration patterns influence the awareness and capacities that municipalities possess in relation to migration. In addition, it must be noted that this type of project is not politically neutral nor value-free, as it is rooted in the idea that migration represents an opportunity and, as a consequence, all policies should contribute to fostering the full and effective participation of migrants within the social, cultural and economic life of host communities. This vision is not universally shared or endorsed by all local authorities in the Mediterranean. For this reason, it is key to include concerns related to soft factors (such as the political vision of the municipality, power relations and societal values) in the initial preparatory phase to understand how municipalities interested in joining the project stand vis-à-vis migration.

Finally, the adoption of a coordination mechanisms at different levels (both among and within municipalities) emerged as a pre-condition to harmonize networking efforts, facilitating exchanges as well as keeping the project implementation on track and keeping the engagement high. On this last point, while the inclusion of a leading implementing partner has facilitated most of these aspects, a greater direct involvement of IOM in the coordination efforts could be beneficial to maintain the engagement high throughout the whole process, especially when coordination is also needed at the political level.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter illustrates the conceptualization of an improved approach to mainstreaming migration into local development plans, informed by the learnings and insights gathered through the analysis of the LAs project. It will provide a detailed explanation of the improved approach as well as an overview of how the analysis of the first edition helped in its consolidation. The chapter concludes paving the way forward for future initiatives.

5.1 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF AN IMPROVED APPROACH

5.1.1 THE APPROACH

The Approach developed through the first initiative is scalable and can involve additional municipalities in priority countries in the Mediterranean area (including those involved in the first pilot edition) which have integrated – or are interested in integrating – migration into their local development plans or into sectoral policies related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the 2030 Agenda.

The proposed approach promotes the transnational collaboration among municipalities for the enhancement of migration as a development tool and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is structured around three main components:

1   Improvement of municipalities' capacity to design and manage policies taking into consideration the migration component;

2   Integration of migration into municipalities' policy planning processes and/or development plans;

3   Creation of an alliance of municipalities active on the topic of mainstreaming migration that can promote the approach of Mainstreaming Migration also within the networks they might be part of.

IOM encourages a structured exchange among municipalities and with national key stakeholders, facilitating an exchange of experiences, the discussion of common interests and the development of action plans for the achievement of a local priorities that include the topic of migration, linked to a specific SDG.

The first pilot edition of the LAs project involved three municipalities: Milan, Bologna and Tirana. The next edition foresees to expand this network and include three other cities, one in Italy and two from other Mediterranean countries (notably Tunisia and Morocco). As in the previous edition, municipalities are asked to adhere to the project in a non-burdensome form, in particular by taking an active part in the planned meetings and identifying and implementing the road maps.

The methodology suggested by this approach, illustrated in Figure 1, is composed of different phases aimed at accompanying the municipalities towards the elaboration and implementation of road maps.
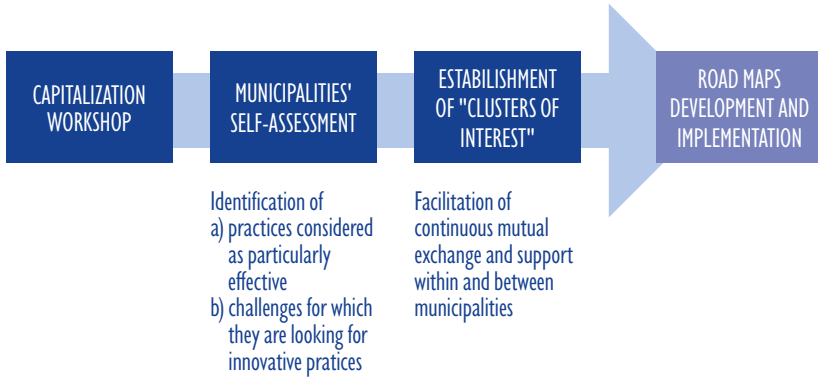
Figure 1: Conceptualization of the approach
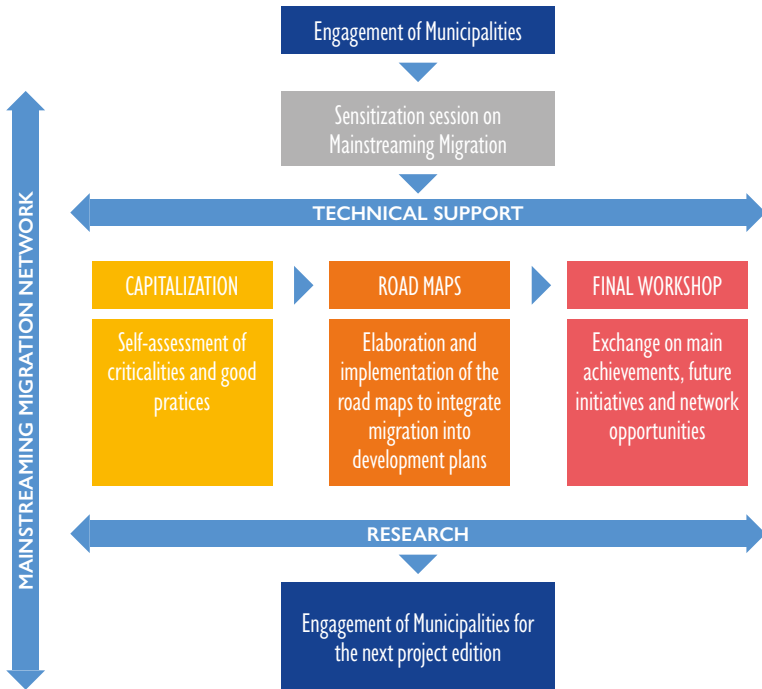
In the first phase, municipalities are involved in a training aimed at consolidating the knowledge on the subject of *Mainstreaming Migration*. This will allow to develop a better knowledge of the thematic framework and to favor the creation of synergies and collaborations among the actors involved.

Thereafter, municipalities are accompanied in a process of capitalization of practices (see Figure 2), with the aim of identifying, exchanging, validating, and possibly borrowing good practices related to a transversal approach to migration issues across the participating municipalities.

Figure 2: Representation of the capitalization process

| CAPITALIZATION WORKSHOP | MUNICIPALITIES' SELF-ASSESSMENT | ESTABILISHMENT OF "CLUSTERS OF INTEREST" | ROAD MAPS DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION |

Identification of
a) practices considered as particularly effective
b) challenges for which they are looking for innovative pratices

Facilitation of continuous mutual exchange and support within and between municipalities

Each municipality is expected to initiate a process of consultation and internal comparison with the ultimate purpose of identifying practices to be presented to, and shared with, counterparts and collect and report on critical areas which could benefit from such a comparison. On the basis of the outcomes of the capitalization process, municipalities are then accompanied in the development and subsequent implementation of their road maps.

Parallel to the capitalization process, training and information sessions are planned in accordance with municipalities' needs to ensure additional technical support for the elaboration of the road maps. Moreover, IOM supports municipalities with background research analysis on the territorial contexts and migratory movements, as well as collection and analysis of policies and practices on mainstreaming migration in the three municipalities involved.

In the final phase, it is important to create a sharing and learning occasion among municipalities. This can be done through a final event, upon completion of road maps' implementation, with the aim to present the main objectives achieved and to offer further opportunities of comparison and updating. All municipalities involved in the mainstreaming migration network, as well as all relevant institutional and technical stakeholders, should take part to such

event. The first part of the event will address the state of the art in relation to the elaboration and implementation of the road maps (genesis, development, results, criticalities) in the respective territories. The second part will focus on the comparison and exchange among the different municipalities and relevant stakeholders to propose new hypotheses of intervention and further network opportunities.

5.1.2 CONSOLIDATION OF THE APPROACH

This approach builds on the strengths of the first edition of the LAs project. Namely, the bottom-up and flexible approach, which allows municipalities to identify and pursue their own priorities, proved to be a very successful approach and thus should be the backbone of future phases. Similarly, the capitalization process and the road maps' design and implementation are still a key part of the learning *continuum*, as the two processes are strictly interconnected.

A strong coordination mechanism among municipalities and key stakeholders is central to the success of the approach. It is therefore important that such role is played by organizations that are able to support municipalities in different countries thanks to a presence on the ground in different countries. The presence in target countries is critical to ensure the necessary support for the implementation of the road maps, through proper activities coordination, facilitation, and provision of general support at the various stages, including monitoring and project evaluation activities. This also allows to dedicate more time to the work with each municipality enhancing the capitalization of their experiences and the identification of their specific needs.

Additionally, adequate time must be ensured throughout each phase of the project (from the beginning to the closure phase) and implementation should be mindful of municipalities' timelines, with the aim of maximizing all stakeholders' time and efforts. Moreover, a greater involvement of external stakeholders (particularly diaspora associations or experts with multicultural

backgrounds) is encouraged not only during the implementation of the road maps, but also during their design. This allows to make the mainstreaming migration process more inclusive of, and enriched by, migrants' perspectives.

Finally, it is important to ensure that the experience and learnings from previous editions are consolidated and municipalities are periodically in contact so that the emerging network of municipalities keeps growing.

5.2 THE WAY FORWARD

The scope of this document was to capitalize on the pilot experience of mainstreaming migration into local development plans involving different municipalities in the Mediterranean. It did so by tracing IOM's institutional experience in this field, illustrating the project and its main components and analysing the project's experience through a series of analytical lenses (inspired by IOM's White Paper on Mainstreaming Migration). Finally, in this concluding chapter it tried to illustrate the way forward, that is the new improved approach to mainstreaming migration into local development based on the insights and learnings contained in this document that IOM seeks to pursue in the next edition of the initiative.

While recognizing that such approach may be context specific to Mediterranean realities, the insights and promising practices shared in this document represent an important contribution to the ongoing debate on mainstreaming migration and can provide useful knowledge to policymakers and practitioners interested in designing and implementing mainstreaming migration mechanisms at the local level.

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