Migrant Integration at the Local Level

Dr Jean-Pierre GAUCI, British Institute of International and Comparative Law
This presentation

• Some reflections based on research published in 2020 on migrant (and refugee) integration in small and medium sized cities across Europe.

• Practical need to address the needs of migrants and refugees and to develop and implement integration programmes.
Some General Observations

- Publics acknowledge the role
- Generally positive attitude (with a few exceptions)
- Migration seen as a solution to some of the issues cities (esp. small and medium sized cities) are facing
  - Addressing de-population and ensuring the viability of basic services
  - Increasing diversity
  - Public relations opportunity
- Left to address issues that the national level has failed to adequately address
- Further movement to bigger cities (greater diaspora communities, more employment opportunities) can be a concern. Temporary nature of stays and a desire to move away hinders efficacy of integration efforts.
Some areas to think about

- Inclusion in policy making
- Education
- Employment (including access, skills etc.)
- Housing
- Healthcare
- Social Services
- Language and Culture Knowledge
- Access to institutions (in theory and practice)

- Interaction
- Practice of culture, religion
- Overcoming discrimination
- Genuine involvement
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Sustainability
Measures Undertaken

• Great range of types of integration activities undertaken
  • Soft integration skills (interaction)
  • Language acquisition
  • Cultural competency
  • Employability skills
Overcoming Barriers

• Competence

• Capacity – financial, human – are often limited

• Partnerships with civil society (formal and informal)

• Partnerships with other cities, towns and villages
Networks

- Share Experience and Expertise (Practical Function)
- Build Coalitions (Symbolic) including on points of disagreement with the national level
- Direct and indirect participation (e.g. participation through networks); only cities or cities in partnership with others (e.g. NGOs)
- Many networks are limited (formally or in effect) to larger cities that have the resources to engage
- Informal collaboration have developed between small and medium sized cities
- The proliferation of networks and initiatives makes it very difficult for smaller cities to engage – resources.

‘[A] number of respondents lamented the proliferation of networks as leading to mixed messages and to a too-heavy appeal on the often-limited resources of network participants
Multi-Level Governance

• Greater coordination needed between different levels of government.
• Decisions by national governments do not always consider the needs and constraints of the local level even when making decisions that have a direct impact on the local level.
Sustainability

• Monitoring, evaluation and sustainability remain limited
• More emphasis needed on mainstreaming these issues not as an add on but as a core component of projects and initiatives
• Project, programme, service
Advantages of Cities

- Adaptable to changing realities
- Opportunities to test new policy and programming approaches
  - Supported by reduction in institutional structured / barriers
  - Possibility to implement or test projects at a lower cost
Thank you

- J.Gauci@biicl.org