

Small group discussions - Group 2 - Local Data Collection – Africa

As part of the GFMD process, and with a view to building partnerships among stakeholders interested in the issue of migration-related data collection, the discussion group on "data collection" held its meeting on 16 September 2020 at 10:00 CET. This discussion moderated by Brian Okengo, AUC, David Martineau, IOM and Lionel Nzamba, UCLG Africa, focused on the case of Africa and was attended by about fifteen people.

The session examined the issue of data collection, through the challenges and opportunities encountered by the different actors at both national and local levels. The challenge of data collection in the field of migration is to be able to have reliable information, that is to say concrete, accurate information for different actors involved in the governance of migration and the management of migrants.

Participants first identified the problem to be solved, at least at the local level. Given that the issue of data collection is crucial for all stakeholders:

- local authorities have difficulty accessing data on migrants and they are not engaged in migration governance at local level,
- Migrant support and assistance organizations are faced with the difficulty of collecting data from migrants,
- The data collected from member states on migrants is often underestimated since not all agencies are involved in producing data on migrants thus highlighting a problem of collaboration.
- Lack of data sharing mechanisms exacerbates the issue as issues of trust remain a major challenge.
- The data available on migrants lacks valuable information on the key indicators that can be used to develop informed policies

Participants highlighted the lack of collaboration, the lack of a clear policy on the data collection, the purposes for which it is collected (security? humanitarian? political?).

To solve problems around data collection participant:

- There is need to have better collaboration between local and national authorities to produce reliable and valuable data on migrants
- Propose a policy on data collection involving all stakeholders
- Sousse as Sfax proposes to consider the local level as the level of centralization of data collected at the level of each city.
- Organize the data collected by categorizing the migrants (regular migrants, irregular migrants)
- Adding the social dimension to data collection
- There is need to capture and produce timely and up to date data on migrants as they are always on the move more especially on irregular migrants.
- Establish/create a common methodology for data collection. All actors at the local level need capacity building in the area of data collection,
- There is need to build relationships embodied with trust with all stakeholders including national and local authorities, migrant associations, and support organizations and all other agencies involved in producing data on migrants

To move forward and address the issues on data collection there is need to:

- Strengthen networks of collaboration and partnership amongst agencies producing migration data
- Work on concepts, and methodologies for collecting migration data for easy comparability across MS
- Establish/strengthen data sharing mechanisms amongst all agencies producing migration data i.e. legal frameworks/technical frameworks with clear guiding principles and regulations.
- Engage the governments to have ownership and lead the process of coordinating all agencies involved in data collection processes and dissemination mechanisms.
- Create trust, by reinforcing cultural activities, field work, and networking between local stakeholders and national governments
- Create two simultaneous engagement processes amongst stakeholders i.e. bottom – up approach where local actors play a major role and global to local to develop national implementation plans

The participants felt that some actors are missing from the discussion for better enhanced data collection from good partnership process. These include:

- Academics (researchers),
- Trade unions,
- Government agencies (i.e. customs/tax collection, ministries, state departments...),
- The private sector
- Social security institutions
- Trade unions/employers
- Mayors,
- Civil society

Next steps

- Share a draft report to the GFMD secretariat
- Develop a proposal with clearly outlined activities on how to engage and develop good partnerships at local, national and regional levels.