

## Childhood Development in Cities Hosting Forcibly Displaced Examples from the Urban 95 Academy

Virtual connection

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022

10.00am GMT (London) / 11.00am CET (Paris)

12.00pm GMT+2 (Beirut, Jerusalem) / 1pm GMT+3 (Amman, Ankara, Baghdad)

### CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

**Early Childhood Development is a challenge for cities hosting forcibly displaced populations.** The arrival of forcibly displaced means an increase in the urban population with social and economic repercussions on the lives of children and caregivers. Children fleeing conflict often experience trauma and need to be given the chance to grow with more stability. The period from birth to five years old, is a time of remarkable growth with brain development at its peak, when children are highly influenced by the environment and the people that surround them. This process is particularly at risk for children displaced by conflict and in refugee communities. In the Eastern Mediterranean, most Syrian refugee children between 0 and 5 years old have no access to early childhood development services and are the most at risk of missing out on a pre-primary education, due to factors such as poverty, transportation issues and language barrier.

**Cities can have a role of supporting early child development.** Besides preparing children for school or having a quality pre-primary educational offer, public space, transportation infrastructure, and urban planning have a big influence on children's ability to thrive. If municipal leaders can see their cities from the perspective of a young child or caregiver, these groups can have a better chance of being included in meaningful ways in society. For example, if the work of childcare responsibilities is valued in society and that value is reflected in policy, caregivers could have increased access the labor market. Effective Early childhood development significantly improves the life outcomes of all children, including those affected by conflict and displacement, by reducing learning difficulties, fostering social inclusion and reduced psycho-social damage caused by a childhood trauma.

**In 2021, the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) collaborated with the World Bank in a webinar on Early Childhood Care and Education.** The event tested the interest of cities members of the CMI-managed Host Municipalities Learning Network (HMLN) in several sub-themes of this important topic. After discussing main policies for early child development and education implemented at the local and central level in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, stakeholders from cities and local organizations in the Eastern Mediterranean identified their thematic of interest for future exchanges and learning. These are: identification of the role of cities in child development, ways to improve the development of refugee or displaced children, how to improve the quality of early child education, and awareness on the role of parents and caregivers.

**To answer requests from municipalities and local organizations, the CMI is partnering with the Urban 95 Academy.** The Academy is a fully funded leadership program, delivered online over six weeks, designed to help local governments develop urban strategies and systems that improve the lives of babies, toddlers and caregivers. The course includes online learning modules and live virtual meetings with LSE Faculty, Bernard van Leer Foundation leadership and global knowledge partners.

The Academy aims to help city leaders learn how to implement child and caregiver friendly policies, gain effective strategies, and hone leadership skills to create urban environments that support healthy child development.

*This webinar is organized as part of the CMI's support to the [Mediterranean Host Municipalities Learning Network \(HMLN\)](#). The HMLN provides a platform for peer-to-peer learning, training and collaboration for local governments hosting refugees in the Middle East and Turkey and contributes to improving capacities of local authority representatives for ensuring the common welfare of host communities and refugees through regular workshops, trainings, online discussions, and periodic collection of experiences implemented in local governments hosting refugees.*

## WEBINAR OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

This webinar will continue the CMI's learning offer to local authorities who are members of the HMLN, as well as interested local stakeholders. Objectives of this webinar are:

1. To raise awareness on the importance of early child development, especially in contexts of forced displacement;
2. To present the Urban 95 Academy and encourage cities to apply to next cohorts;
3. To present experiences from cities in the East Mediterranean that implemented urban approaches to enhance early child development.

*This webinar will include simultaneous interpretation in English and Arabic. Connection links will be sent upon registration.*

## THE URBAN 95 ACADEMY

The Urban95 Academy is open to all local governments. To apply, cities must nominate three members of staff, who can be from the same or different departments. A formal letter of support on official letterhead must be submitted along with the application. One of the three members of staff will need to be a political or elected appointee in the city administration, and one must have at least 10 years of experience. The more teams reflect the diversity of applicants' city, the better. Cities may also consider one participant from outside their administration coming from other public, private or third sector organization with a long-standing partnership dedicated to urban development in the city. Cities which include the mayor as part of their team will be prioritized.

Deadlines to apply for next cohorts are March 28<sup>th</sup> (for courses starting May 2022) and July 25<sup>th</sup> (for courses starting September 2022). Please note that applications can be submitted in English only.

You can find more information on the academy's website: [www.urbang5academy.org](http://www.urbang5academy.org)

## AGENDA

*Times are in CET (GMT+1)*

**Facilitator:** Giulia Marchesini, Human Capital Senior Programme Manager, CM- UNOPS

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### 11.30 – 11.50 **Opening Remarks**

- **Blanca Moreno-Dodson**, Director, CMI - UNOPS
- **Cecilia Vaca Jones**, Director, Bernard van Leer Foundation

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### 11.50 – 11.55 **Introduction: the CMI and the HMLN experience**

- **Giulia Marchesini**, Human Capital Senior Programme Manager, CMI - UNOPS

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### 11.55 – 12.45 **The Urban 95 Academy**

- **Katie Beck**, Urban95 Academy Programme Manager, London School of Economics
- **Nuha Ghneim**, Head of Project Studies Section, Ramallah Municipality, Palestine
- **Gökçe Ahi**, Chairwoman of the ODAK R&D and Education Social Cooperative, Uskudar, Turkey

Q&A

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### 12.45 – 13.00 **Conclusions**

- **Giulia Marchesini**, Human Capital Senior Programme Manager, CMI - UNOPS
  - **Katie Beck**, Urban95 Academy Programme Manager, London School of Economics
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