



Mediterranean Host Municipalities Learning Network

Online Training Workshop Series

“Jobs, Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Engagement in Host Communities: adapting to the COVID-19 crisis”

May 27, June 17, July 8, 2020

CONTEXT

Today, there are more than 68 million people who have been forced from their homes worldwide, including 25 million refugees, according to UNHCR. Countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region host a high number of refugees and internally displaced populations. While Palestine and Iraq struggle with internal displacement, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq host almost 6 million Syrian refugees, as well as other nationalities. Countries in other regions, notably East Africa and South Asia, also deal with high numbers of forcibly displaced populations. With half of the world’s refugees staying for more than four years on average in host countries, and most refugees in the Eastern Mediterranean Region residing in cities rather than in camps, humanitarian efforts are giving room to broader development interventions aimed at fostering employment, welfare and economic opportunities for refugees, locals and other residents of host communities.

The current global pandemic of COVID-19 is adding new challenges in addition to that of hosting refugees. Countries over the world have imposed internal and international movement restrictions to contain the spread of the virus, while their private sector struggles with the disruption in global supply chains and lower demand for goods. Much needed government responses to the pandemic are having important spillover effects on the world economy, adding pressure on central and local authorities, employees and employers, particularly in those regions already struggling with the increase in population due to forced displacement and conflict.

Municipalities are at the forefront of implementation of policies to support displaced and vulnerable local populations and are now under an added pressure deriving from the pandemic spread. Big and small municipalities had to stop their daily activities and development projects to focus on countering the spread of COVID-19 in alignment with government measures. In this context, new unforeseen challenges are arising with regards to the economic and social inclusion of vulnerable local and displaced populations, and the recovery of their private sector. Given the central role played by local authorities, raising the awareness and knowledge of municipal staff and elected representatives about how they can facilitate financial inclusion of refugees and vulnerable locals through work and entrepreneurship opportunities, as well as private sector partnerships, is crucial to unlock the positive role local authorities can have in the aftermath of this new crisis.

Since 2016, the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) manages the [Mediterranean Host Municipalities Learning Network \(HMLN\)](#), which 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 their capacities for ensuring the common welfare of host communities and refugees through regular face-to-face workshops, trainings, online discussions, and periodic collection of experiences. After three years of exchanges and trainings, local authorities’ members of the HMLN expressed their keen interest to receive more support on how to attract and engage with the private sector for job and



investment creation as well as how to foster refugee and local entrepreneurship to boost the local economy. Considering the new challenges deriving from the global pandemic, these needs are much felt by HMLN members and development support and training is needed to prepare for a short-to-medium term response.

In preparation for the 4th Annual Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop of the HMLN, [the online training workshop series](#), in the form of 3 sessions, will provide representatives of central and local authorities and development partners an opportunity to learn from current experiences and active collaborations for stronger private sector engagement in contexts characterized by forced displacement. Transversal themes along the workshop will be the contribution of women and displaced populations (refugees, IDPs, returnees) to local business development and the new context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Training Workshop Series is organized by the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) and the World Bank Group in collaboration with Agence Française du Développement (AFD), Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Cities Local Governments – Middle East West Asia (UCLG-MEWA), World Academy for Local Government and Democracy (WALD), UN Habitat, UNHCR.

OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT

As a response to the expressed needs and interests of HMLN members, this online training event series will focus on fostering local private sector-driven solutions to recover the private sector in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, create jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities and provide a better local economic environment in localities dealing with forced displacement. It will aim to:

- Keep the momentum among HMLN members, partners and experts in light of the postponement of the 4th Annual Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop of the HMLN and setting the technical basis in preparation to the event;
- Share local response experiences and existing analysis to support local authorities in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis by recovering their private sector while strengthening a stretched local economy ;
- Deepen the knowledge of local and central government representatives on private sector engagement and refugee entrepreneurship in a forced displacement context, in light of the new global economic challenges derived by the pandemic, through technical presentations and showcasing good practices;
- Initiate peer-to-peer solution-oriented discussions through open discussions and practical exercises.

This online event series will consist of technical presentations followed by open discussions. It will be also punctuated to a certain extent by participatory moments with individual exercises involving all participants: it is expected of participants to have an active participation in the event. The outcome of discussions of these virtual events will feed into the development of the agenda of the forthcoming 4th Annual Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop of the HMLN and set the basis of a face-to-face discussion.

The series will be composed of three online workshops:



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- Fostering employment and entrepreneurship for locals and refugees: new challenges from COVID-19 crisis for host local authorities – Part 1: May 27, 2020, 13.30 CET
- Fostering employment and entrepreneurship for locals and refugees: new challenges from COVID-19 crisis for host local authorities – Part 2: June 17, 2020, 13.30 CET
- Private sector engagement in host communities: adapting to the COVID-19 crisis: July 8, 2020, 13.30 CET

Simultaneous interpretation will be available in Arabic, English and Turkish.

PARTICIPATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATION

Participants who successfully attend the three workshops of the series will be awarded with a certificate.

This Online Training Workshop Series is open to the HMLN and partners, as well as to the general public, upon prior registration. Attendance to this Training Workshop Series is a mandatory requirement for representatives from the HMLN who were competitively selected to attend the face-to-face 4th Annual Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop.

For more information, and If you wish to participate in this Training Workshop Series, [please click here](#).