Developing shared growth in areas affected by the refugee crisis: from national to local actions

PLENARY SESSION JOHN SPEAKMAN, MAY 31 2016
The Jordan example

We are supporting the Government’s plan to create and improve economic opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian refugees

Creation means a focus on markets that make the pie bigger
- EU Trade Preference – on its own could generate 60,000 jobs
- The eventual Syrian reconstruction
- Supporting diaspora networks for the benefit of all

Improvement means regularizing the irregular
- Labor permits for both permanent and seasonal work

To do this requires:
- Labor market reform
- Investment climate reform
- Investment Promotion strengthening
How we will measure success
What can municipalities do?

- Reduce red tape for firms
- Provide formal jobs in municipal services and infrastructure construction
- Promote new “win-win” investments
- Enable investments through land concessioning (Kuwait style)
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Key points

• Making this a win-win for host communities and refugees
  • Host community challenges
  • Refugee challenges

• How to do this?
  • Expand markets
  • Formalizing the informal

• Expanding markets
  • Domestic markets
  • International Markets

• Formalizing
  • Labor Permits
  • Entrepreneurship

• What does this mean for municipalities?
Questions for municipalities to think about?

Labor market
- Are refugees finding informal work?
- Can this work be formalized?
- Are there opportunities within the local labor market?
- What are the capabilities of refugees – experience, education, etc.?

Product markets
- Can existing markets be expanded?
- Are there any constraints to product markets at the municipal level?

Financial markets
- Do refugees have access to financial markets?
- Can the financial markets provide the needed finance and services?

Institutional underpinnings
- Is there a local economic development strategy?
- Is there an underlying capability?
Host community challenges

• The negatives
  • Delivery of local infrastructure and social services are stressed
  • New neighbors with different social networks and capabilities
  • Increase in demand may put prices up (winners and losers e.g. landlords vs tenants)

• The positives
  • May bring new employment opportunities (e.g. Syrian entrepreneurs)
  • May fill gaps in the labor market (e.g. municipal services, construction and agriculture)
  • May help attract “new resources and opportunities”
How to resolve the challenge

Focus on building new markets, mobilizing resources and providing predictability