Context and Rationale

Producing reliable data on social cohesion often presents a challenge to municipalities hosting large numbers of refugees. This is not only due to the complexity of the topic, but also to capacity constraints and a fragile and rapidly changing environment. Social cohesion plays an important role in an urban setting: taking into account discrimination, social and economic inclusion, and other barriers that may exist with regard to creating a livable environment between different communities, social cohesion allows to mitigate potential conflicts, decreases the vulnerability of refugees, and ensures equitable and shared access to urban amenities and economic opportunities. Producing data on social cohesion at the municipal level allows to measure the degree of social cohesion in a community and to better understand the drivers and impacts of social tensions. Based on such data, municipalities can therefore better assess the needs of their inhabitants including refugees, and better develop social cohesion measures in order to create an endurable and peaceful environment. Moreover, data needs to be collected and analyzed over time in order for host municipalities to identify changing needs and adjust their social cohesion programs accordingly.

Following the Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop: Strengthening Social Cohesion in Municipalities Hosting Refugees co-organized by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) on November 11-12, 2016 in Sanliurfa and Gaziantep, Turkey, local government representatives from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey acknowledged that although there is no blueprint solution for strengthening social cohesion, collaboration and experience-sharing on how to improve it are highly valuable. Following the outcomes of the workshop, this webinar will discuss municipalities’ strategies in data collection and analysis with regard to strengthening social cohesion in contexts of high refugee influx.

Guiding Questions:

Introduction

1) Why does data production and analysis for strengthening social cohesion serve policy planning needs in contexts of high refugee influx? What are the main challenges with regard to data collection and analysis?

   This first question will focus on the importance and relevance of collecting data for enhancing social cohesion between host and refugee communities, and the challenges, especially in light of a possible long-term stay of refugees. Why is data gathering important? Which kind of data is relevant for implementing policies for social cohesion? What kind of data / information on social cohesion is currently accessible, and in which database or other instrument is it organized?

Main part

2) Are there best practices in data production for strengthening social cohesion? View on successful experiences and innovative practices.

   This part is related to best practices and successful experiences. The presentation of best practices and successful experiences will demonstrate how data on social cohesion has been collected and analyzed so far and how municipalities have access to it (through databases, crisis-mapping, geo-intelligence, innovative data collection process, visualization tools, etc.).
There are three dimensions of knowledge transfer to host municipalities through data production. When looking at good practices, it is necessary to clearly relate them to one of these three dimensions:

a) Measuring the degree of social cohesion and social tensions
   This aspect focuses on the municipalities’ use of indicators of social cohesion or social tensions. How is the security situation? Do refugees’ and host populations’ have trust in institutions? What are perceived threats? (Indicators of social cohesion) / Do violent incidents exist? What are negative perceptions? (Indicators of social tensions)

b) Identifying the drivers of social tension and social cohesion
   This aspect focuses on the municipalities’ identification of the causes and in particular of the contextual drivers of social tensions. How is access to basic services, housing, education etc. perceived? Is there competition for jobs?

c) Assessment of the impact of social tension
   This aspect focuses on the consequences of social tensions, especially on most vulnerable groups from refugees and host communities such as children, youth, women, elderly etc.

Objectives

The webinar will have three main objectives:
1. Discuss the importance and relevance of data for strengthening social cohesion;
2. Identify the main challenges for municipalities hosting large numbers of refugees related to data gathering and analysis;
3. Identify best practices in data gathering for strengthening social cohesion and explore their possible replication in other contexts.
Webinar Agenda

14.00 – 14.10 Opening Remarks and Introduction of Participants
*Feedbacks from the P2P Learning Workshop on Social Cohesion*

14.10 – 15.00 The importance of data production for strengthening social cohesion
- Farah Choucair, UNDP, Regional Bureau for Arab States, Beirut, Lebanon

Best practices in data production for strengthening social cohesion
- Theodora Manolakos, Vienna Municipality, Austria
- Imad Issa, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Jordan

15.00 – 16.15 Questions and Answers / Open Discussion
- Discussant: Representative of Turkish municipality (tbc)

16.15 – 16.30 Conclusion and Next Steps
- Janette Uhlmann, CMI
- Heidi Gutsche, GIZ

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