Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop for Communities Hosting Refugees
on Palestinian Experience in Solid Waste Management
in Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates
October 26th-27th, 2016

Following the exchanges during the Peer to Peer learning workshop “Mediterranean Municipalities at the Forefront of the Refugee Crisis” which took place in Amman May 30-June 1st, 2016, the Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) launched a Host Municipalities Learning Network in September 2016. Within the framework of this network, and as part of its Mediterranean Refugees and Host Communities Knowledge Action Program the CMI is organizing a series of Peer to Peer Learning Workshops and Webinars focusing on priority sectors identified by refugees hosting communities aiming at supporting Mediterranean municipalities and local authorities for a better service delivery in the context of the refugee crisis.

In this framework, the Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop and Webinar on Solid Waste Management for Municipalities Hosting Refugees, has been the first of this series. The event was co-organized with the World Bank. It composed of a technical field visit at the Yatta dumpsite and Al Minya landfill on day one, and a workshop with parallel webinar on day two. It brought together more than 80 Palestinian, Turkish and Jordanian municipal representatives, giving them the chance to see first-hand a Palestinian best practice in Solid Waste Management on the day before the workshop. Moreover, the parallel webinar allowed Iraqi, Lebanese and other municipalities’ representatives unable to attend in person to take part to the exchange and to share their best practices and experiences in the field of waste management. This summary of the discussion, together with more documentation, presentations and photos of the workshop are available here.

CONTEXT

Municipalities of neighboring countries have seen their waste management capacities challenged by the massive influx of Syrian refugees. Although not specifically affected, the West Bank has had long term experience with internally displaced populations and service delivery in a fragile context. It has been affected by environmental deterioration and pollution linked to uncontrolled and unmonitored landfills, causing health, social and economic risks. Palestinian central and local authorities have taken innovative and successful measures to considerably improve solid waste management, in particular in the Southern West Bank. These measures include the creation of specialized institutions in the form of Joint Service Councils, achieving full cost recovery, creating an inclusive approach to target affected people, such as waste pickers, encouraging citizen engagement in monitoring service delivery, and partnership with the private sector in a fragile context.

LESSONS LEARNT

The workshop enabled participants to discuss multiple aspects of Solid Waste Management and its importance in contexts characterized by a high influx of refugees. Indeed, a high refugee influx results in a population growth with more waste to be managed.
Main messages and recommendations of the event were:

- **Solid Waste Management represents a challenge** in the context of a high rate of unemployment, a high refugee influx and a massive population growth rate;
- **Experience-sharing** is a good practice for municipalities to improve their service delivery systems in the field of Solid Waste: although Palestinian Territories are not affected by the refugee crisis to the extent of other Mashrek countries, showcasing their successful experience still represents an example of good practice for municipalities hosting refugees;
- **Cooperation with private sector and decentralization of services** enhances the efficiency and productivity of projects related to Solid Waste Management, as well as cooperation with international organizations and donors: many municipalities do not have adequate funds and human resources to cope with the waste crisis and to access most updated technology, especially when it comes to sorting and recycling;
- **Energy and power production from waste** should be encouraged in municipalities hosting refugees, leading to a more efficient and environmental sustainable service delivery: problems faced by municipalities in this field are mainly the availability of funding and human resources and the lack of up-to-date technologies;
- **Awareness raising campaigns and trainings** for the population and waste management workers are essential for an efficient service delivery: ensuring local participation to wasting and recycling projects will positively affect their development, and trainings or other awareness-raising activities about health, environmental issues and recycling will ensure a positive collaboration between waste management institutions and local population, including refugees.

**AREAS OF SUPPORT - identified by Workshop participants**

Through an ad-hoc questionnaire, participants identified the following areas for further support and follow-up:

- **Pertinence of the subject**: participants highlighted Solid Waste Management to be a major issue among all municipalities involved in the refugee crisis. They underlined the big value of up-to-date knowledge shared during the workshop that can support to address problems related to Solid Waste Management. More knowledge sharing on technical aspects of project management, recycling and Public-Private Partnership in Solid Waste Management will be welcomed as well as a round table for discussing regional cooperation and knowledge exchange in this field.
- **Experience sharing through field visits**: this first Peer-to-Peer Learning Workshop met the needs of participants, who recognized the field visit as an important learning experience for service delivery in the region. Participants also appreciated both the visit to a functioning landfill and sorting center in Palestine and the exchange of experience with Turkish and Jordanian participants, where both practical and theoretical information were given. In this respect, other field visits, maybe of longer length, and more frequent meetings of this kind should be organized to showcase other best and successful experiences in the Region.
- **Need for financial support**: Many municipalities are unable to implement efficient waste management and sorting projects due to financial constraints and need more investments and
financial resources funding. In this sense, an event gathering together municipalities representatives and international donors will be welcomed, so to discuss long-term financial solutions.

- **Recommendations for Follow up:**
  - knowledge-sharing on implementation of small-scale projects for economic development and job creation;
  - consultation between municipalities in form of monthly meetings and follow up;
  - more similar workshops to enable the creation of partnerships between municipalities, especially on energy production out of waste and available technology for sorting and recycling;
  - the presentation of European successful experiences;
  - need for exchanges with multiple partners, including donors and international organizations.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Organization of a follow-up webinar to deepen the exchanges on the basis of requests and feedbacks provided by participants;
- Regular updates and follow-up through our Host Municipalities Network and Facebook Group;
- Collection of a summary of best practices and successful experiences that will be collected and published in a Compendium of Best Practices for Municipalities Hosting Refugees;
- Organization of a Peer-to-Peer Learning event planned in Spring 2017 in Lebanon (tbc) in order to gather Municipalities hosting refugees together and design further work and collaboration.