Migration and Displacement in Secondary Cities

Insights from Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda

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MPI
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INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

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Executive Summary

More than half of the world's population lives in cities, and the proportion is rising, driven in part by the movement of migrants and displaced persons.[1] These newcomers are not just settling in large urban areas but increasingly also in small and mid-sized cities that host between 150,000 and 5 million people. These secondary cities are some of the fastest-growing urban areas, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (one of the world's most rapidly urbanizing regions). Many newcomers are drawn by the promise of greater job opportunities and more direct access to health, education, and social services than exist in rural areas. At the same time, many of the same cities are facing increased pressure to accommodate new populations, especially those municipalities whose infrastructure and economies are already strained. These dynamics remain understudied and are frequently overlooked in responses to migration and forced displacement and in development investments, which often focus on capitals and megacities.

Newcomers, having come to secondary cities in search of socioeconomic opportunities, can face a variety of challenges. In some contexts, cities actually have *fewer* resources than rural areas—including less land for agriculture, proportionally fewer public services considering the high demand, and also fewer services targeted to the specific needs of displaced populations compared to camps or settlements for refugees and internally displaced persons. For example, despite greater proximity to administrative structures, newcomers may still find it difficult to obtain identity documents. And while they are often entitled to access services such as education and health care, in practice these services may not be equipped to handle migration- and displacement-related challenges, nor to deliver them in a culturally sensitive way. Women and girls can face additional challenges in accessing support in response to sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking, female genital mutilation, and other vulnerabilities. Finally, economic opportunities for migrant and displaced populations, in particular women, remain largely outside the formal sector in many low- and middle-income countries, leaving them more vulnerable to sudden economic shocks and exploitation. Their prospects for entrepreneurship, meanwhile, are often limited by a lack of access to capital and difficulties navigating administrative requirements.

Secondary cities are some of the fastest-growing urban areas, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

In secondary cities, local actors such as city or municipal authorities, local representatives of the central government (sometimes called "deconcentrated services"), and their civil-society partners have increasingly mobilized to respond to these growing socioeconomic issues. To explore these dynamics and local responses, Migration Policy Institute (MPI) researchers conducted research in Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda in May and June 2022. These countries and the study sites within them are emblematic of urbanization trends in West and East Africa, respectively, and they illustrate a range of migration and displacement experiences and policy approaches that offer lessons for refugee- and migrant-receiving secondary cities. This research

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1 Throughout this study, "migrants and forcibly displaced persons" refers to internal migrants, international migrants, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, and refugees. "International migrants and refugees" specifically refers to people who have crossed international borders and who may thus face different challenges than internal migrants and internally displaced persons. "Refugees" includes people who are registered or could be registered as refugees with their host country's government or UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

highlights three overlapping challenges that constrain local actors' ability to effectively respond to migration and displacement:

► **Significant information gaps.** Government representatives at the local level, along with their civil-society partners, usually lack a full demographic picture of local migrant and displaced communities, both those just arriving and those that have settled in the area. Gathering such data is particularly difficult in cases where national policy prevents local enumeration of these communities (as is the case in Uganda) or where population movements are circular (as in Côte d'Ivoire). Yet, this information is critical to the management of these arrivals' impacts on city services and infrastructure, as well as to long-term planning around migrants' needs, skills and experience, and aspirations and to efforts to enhance gender equality. At the same time, local actors often lack knowledge of migration and displacement dynamics, including what international and national policy frameworks they need to abide by, what programs and benefits are available to newcomers, and how to promote social cohesion between migrants and receiving communities.

► **Discrepancy between mandates and on-the-ground actions.** In many secondary cities, the responsibilities of municipal authorities, deconcentrated services, civil society, and other partners for migration-related functions are not clearly delineated, leading to confusing and overlapping mandates or gaps in service provision. Central governments typically retain control over migration and refugee policy due to concerns over national sovereignty, security, international image, and political sensitivity. In Uganda, for example, refugee support and policy are the purview of the national government; however, the government only supports refugees living in designated settlements and in Kampala, not in secondary cities or other locations across the country. This means that municipalities have become de facto first responders when newcomers in need arrive, stepping in when national governments fail to provide adequate policy guidance or capacity support. In addition to this emergency response role, cities also facilitate the adaptation of services and infrastructure to meet the needs of their growing populations and can leverage the presence of new residents to boost economic growth. This mobilization only extends so far, however, given city actors' limited political and legal authority over migration matters.

► **Budget and capacity constraints.** Both cities and the central government can mobilize funding for migration and displacement responses, though secondary cities generally face much stricter budget limitations than central governments or capital and megacities. Funding questions can also be politically sensitive. Allocating funding for responses to internal displacement and migration is often more politically palatable than spending scarce resources specifically on international migrants and refugees. In addition, funding decisions and cash flow tend to come from the central government, meaning that without the good will of national authorities, cities often cannot unlock additional funding to meet local needs. Finally, many secondary cities do not have the capacity to meaningfully engage with or consult migrant and displaced communities to inform the development and implementation of relevant programs and policies—a shortcoming that limits their ability to respond effectively to migration- and displacement-related issues.

Donors, development agencies, and humanitarian organizations that are working in these migration and displacement contexts have an important role to play to help local actors overcome these obstacles, from earmarking funding specifically for projects in secondary cities to working directly with municipalities on improving service provision and local governance. Moving forward, they could prioritize four main areas:

▶ **Better data and analysis.** Local actors need a better picture of who is on the move (including characteristics such as gender and legal status), why they are moving, how long they intend to stay, and what their needs are—a critical step toward effective policymaking and programming. Filling this information gap requires resource-intensive (and sometimes politically sensitive) investments in gathering, analyzing, and disseminating data that can be used to shape future responses to migration and displacement. Improving information-sharing and dissemination is particularly important because many international donors and their implementing partners already gather data but do not systematically share it, nor do they make it accessible to the very communities that shared their time for these studies.

▶ **Improved capacity, coordination, and access to resources.** Municipalities usually lack the legal mandate to respond to the needs of migrants and displaced populations, and because of this, many have relatively limited experience with and knowledge of migration and associated gender dynamics. Therefore, many could benefit from capacity building to strengthen their knowledge in this area, while strong coordination channels with local representatives of national authorities and civil-society organizations are critical to provide sufficient services.

▶ **Enhanced consultative processes.** Stronger consultative mechanisms could help local actors improve how they engage with migrants and displaced persons. Such consultations are crucial to building trust between these communities and local actors, and they can act as a reality check for the viability and appropriateness of policies and programs. Consultations are particularly critical to identifying and addressing the challenges faced by women, children, and other categories of migrants and displaced persons whose specific needs and vulnerabilities are often not accounted for within programming. Engagement opportunities do not have to be targeted only to these groups, but local actors should proactively address the challenges migrants and displaced persons may face to joining regular consultations with host communities.

▶ **More opportunities for local–international engagement.** City-level actors would benefit from opportunities to coordinate and advocate for local interests with international humanitarian and development actors. This can involve participating in global networks of cities and ensuring municipalities are able to take part in global processes such as the Global Refugee Forum. Such opportunities would enable better informed and targeted programming as well as greater local ownership over the resulting programs. In addition, enhancing coordination and cooperation between international actors working to support secondary cities can help make that support more effective and avoid the duplication of efforts that can result when these actors operate in programmatic and strategic siloes. This is particularly crucial when navigating political sensitivities, as coordinated engagement may help effect policy change or diffuse tensions.

These four areas outline a path toward strengthening local responses to migration and forced displacement and empowering secondary cities to grow as key actors in this policy area, alongside local state representatives and civil-society organizations. These strategies promise to help cities leverage their first-hand experiences to develop and advocate for more effective policy and programming at the local, national, and global level.

1   Introduction

The world is becoming increasingly urbanized, driven both by long-standing patterns of rural-urban migration and the growth of new small and mid-sized cities. And while sprawling megacities often receive the most policy and public attention, secondary cities (those with 150,000 to 5 million residents) are some of the fastest growing.[2] Nearly half of the world's urban population now lives in cities with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants.[3] International migrants and forcibly displaced persons are also increasingly concentrated in cities of various sizes. As of December 2022, global estimates point to roughly 60 percent of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in urban areas.[4] The exact scale of international migration to smaller urban areas is difficult to pin down, but studies show how international movement has contributed to demographic growth in many cities in the Global South.[5]

A wide range of factors contribute to this movement and the many forms it takes. These can include the promise of economic opportunity and access to better services and a desire to reunite with family and social networks. Climate change is also helping accelerate this trend by inducing rural-urban migration.[6] For example, research has documented female migration from rural areas to capital cities in response to repeated droughts in Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.[7] And as this example shows, these movements are also gender diverse. Women represent half of displaced populations around the world and have increasingly migrated both internally and internationally.[8] The gender dynamics of movement to cities differ across cultural and economic contexts, and while migrant

The exact scale of international migration to smaller urban areas is difficult to pin down, but studies show how international movement has contributed to demographic growth in many cities in the Global South.

2   Cities Alliance, "Secondary Cities," accessed November 1, 2022.

3   UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision* (New York: United Nations, 2019); Andrew Zimmer et al., "Dynamics of Population Growth in Secondary Cities across Southern Africa," *Landscape Ecology* 35, no. 11 (November 1, 2020): 2501–16.

4   Anneleen Vos and Helen Dempster, "Most Refugees Live in Cities, Not Camps. Our Response Needs to Shift," Center for Global Development, October 28, 2021; UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022* (Copenhagen: UNHCR Global Data Service, Statistics, and Demographics Section, 2023).

5   Mathias Lerch, "International Migration and City Growth in the Global South: An Analysis of IPUMS Data for Seven Countries, 1992–2013," *Population and Development Review* 46, no. 3 (September 2020): 557–82.

6   Tegan Blain et al., "Climate Change, Migration and the Risk of Conflict in Growing Urban Centers," United States Institute of Peace, June 27, 2022.

7   Papa Demba Fall, Pierre Kamden, and Emanuela Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines. Quand les désirs d'émancipation transcendent les séculaires pesanteurs sociales* (Paris: French Development Agency, 2022).

8   UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022*; Sihé Néya, "Les mobilités spéciales féminines entre logiques individuelle et familiale: L'exemple des migrantes burkinabè entre le Burkina Faso et la Côte d'Ivoire," *EchoGéo* 37 (2016).

women encounter many of the same challenges as their male counterparts, they often also contend with specific or exacerbated barriers.

Even as secondary city populations increase and attract more people on the move, relatively little is known about the composition of these cities' migrant and displaced populations and how local actors are responding to changing mobility patterns. These local actors—defined in this study as municipalities, local branches of central government services (deconcentrated services), and local civil-society organizations (CSOs)—are at the forefront of responding to migration and displacement issues, and many have gained considerable experience and knowledge in this area. However, they often lack the resources and support needed to address the challenges faced by newcomers and receiving communities. For example, migration and displacement data are frequently not disaggregated by gender, which can hinder the development of policies and programs designed to address the challenges and specific needs of migrant and displaced women and children.[9]

Meanwhile, for the past 15 years, cities have sought to play a bigger role in migration and refugee policymaking and responses at the national and international levels. Municipalities have begun to organize and advocate for more attention to the relevance of local responses to migration pressures, in particular as part of international processes such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration; the Global Compact on Refugees; and the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. Humanitarian and development actors have also recognized the importance of ensuring that their programming reaches the constantly growing number of migrants and displaced persons in urban contexts. In turn, there has been an increased appetite among local and international actors alike to better understand the socioeconomic status of these populations, the effects of their presence on cities, and how they interact with host communities.

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The COVID-19 crisis added an additional layer of complexity to policy discussions in this area. The pandemic heightened socioeconomic vulnerability across many segments of society and had a particularly large effect on migrants and displaced persons. As cities and nations began to recover, it was easy for these populations to be left out of pandemic responses intended for a country's nationals—particularly in smaller cities where local officials have less capacity to monitor arrivals and migrants are regularly undercounted. As development actors plan strategies for their next funding cycles, it is critical to account for the needs of mobile populations and of certain subgroups (such as women), some of which may be unique while others are shared with members of the communities in which they live.

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9   For additional demographic information and analysis on migration and displacement in secondary cities in Africa, see Brian H. Roberts, Luc Christiaensen, and Godfrey O. Anyumba, "Population, Demography, Migration," in *The Dynamics of Systems of Secondary Cities in Africa: Urbanisation, Migration and Development*, eds. Brian H. Roberts and Godfrey O. Anyumba (Brussels and Abidjan: Cities Alliance and the African Development Bank, 2022).

Building effective programming and improving migrants' socioeconomic inclusion in secondary cities requires understanding how needs differ across policy contexts and urban settings, the governance challenges that prevent action, and the levers available to overcome them. This report explores these issues, drawing in part on research conducted in Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda—two countries with growing secondary cities that feature a range of migration and displacement experiences and policy approaches—as well as interviews with policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working in this policy area. It begins by exploring the growing importance of secondary cities in migration and displacement responses and the policy context in the two studied countries. It then analyzes the socioeconomic challenges raised by the presence of mobile populations in these urban contexts, and the gender dynamics at play within these broader trends. The report then delves into how cities, deconcentrated services, and CSOs have sought to respond to challenges and the limitations to their action. Finally, it outlines how local, national, and international partners can help address these difficulties and advance migrants' socioeconomic inclusion within secondary cities.

2   Migrants' Socioeconomic Characteristics and Gendered Migration Dynamics in Secondary Cities

Migrants have long sought out cities for their socioeconomic benefits, including the promise of better livelihoods, public services, and infrastructure such as electricity and running water. Across West Africa, economic crises, the drop in agriculture prices, and repeated droughts have negatively affected livelihoods in less urbanized areas and led more men and women to migrate to nearby cities in the hopes of finding better opportunities.[10] In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, the central city of Bouaké attracts workers from rural areas and neighboring countries, given the city's new dynamism following post-conflict reconstruction efforts.[11] The deterioration of the security situation in Mali and Burkina Faso also helps explain why some people cross the border and move to cities in Côte d'Ivoire. The migration of women follows these overall trends, but it is also frequently motivated by marriage and family reunification.[12] For some women,

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10   Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*; Mary Boatemaa Setrana and Nauja Kleist, "Gendered Dynamics in West African Migration," in *Migration in West Africa: IMISCOE Regional Reader*, ed. Joseph Kofi Teye (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 57–76.

11   A similar dynamic has occurred in Gulu, Uganda, which was the hub of international humanitarian activity during and immediately following the Lord's Resistance Army conflict in the 1990s and 2000s and the associated internal displacement. It has since received substantial development investment, attracting a wide range of internal migrants from other regions in Uganda while still hosting some internally displaced persons who have not been able to access permanent solutions. Author interviews with civil-society, academic, and municipal stakeholders in Gulu, Uganda, June 6–10, 2022.

12   Zechlab, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), and Mafou Kouassi Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire: Profil, perceptions, préférences et degré d'integration* (Abidjan: FES, 2021). Since the end of the 1970s, a significant proportion of female migrants have returned to their origin country, as part of a strategy to maintain several households (e.g., one in Côte d'Ivoire and one in Burkina Faso) and increase resilience. This strategy is not new and has also involved sending young Burkinabe women to get married in the village of origin. It has become more common in light of instability and violence in both Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. See Néya, "Les mobilités spéciales féminines"; Florence Boyer and Sihé Néya, "Retours, circulations, installations? Les reconfigurations du système migratoire ivoiro-burkinabè," *Afrique et développement* XL, no. 1 (2015): 63–79; Geneviève Cortes, "Women and Migrations: Those Who Stay: Introduction," *EchoGéo* 37 (2016); Sylvie Bredeloup, "'Rapatriés' burkinabé de Côte d'Ivoire: Réinstallations au pays et nouveaux projets migratoires," in *Migrants des Suds*, eds. Virginie Baby-Collin, Geneviève Cortes, Laurent Faret, and Hélène Guétat-Bernard (Marseille: IRD Éditions, Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2009).

migration also means gaining access to greater livelihood opportunities[13] and, in some cases, greater autonomy.[14]

Although the underlying drivers of movement may differ for displaced persons, the draw of cities remains the same. In Uganda, for example, refugees have moved from designated settlements, usually in remote locations in rural areas, to nearby cities such as Arua to seek greater economic opportunities and pursue local integration on their own terms. Some also seek life in an urban environment, especially those who lived in cities in their country of origin,[15] or are joining Ugandan family members who already live in the country's cities. These movements spur more migration: as migrants and displaced persons forge support networks, cities become hubs that attract relatives, friends, and acquaintances who rely on their connections to find housing and employment. While the lack of data makes it difficult to disaggregate the population moving to Uganda's secondary cities by gender, it is likely that it mirrors the wider refugee population in the country, which is mostly comprised of women and children.

But life in cities comes with its own challenges. Migrants and displaced persons often face difficulties accessing housing and basic services, and some have to settle in impoverished or slum-like neighborhoods (see Box 1 in Section 3.B.).[16] In addition, cities bring newcomers and established communities into closer physical proximity, which can spark disagreements around access to services, infrastructure, and a competitive labor market. New arrivals can also exacerbate existing tensions within host communities, such as when minority groups that have long resided in an area do not see their specific needs accounted for in new city-level policies and programs that attempt to reach a larger, more diverse population.[17] Some migrant groups face discrimination. For example, previous research in West Africa has noted that migrant women are at times perceived as threatening morality, especially when they travel without family members or engage in sex work.[18] In some cases, these prejudices apply to migrants returning to their own countries of origin, as the goodwill they earn from sending remittances does not always overcome societal pressures in urban contexts.[19] Finally, in policy environments where refugees do not enjoy freedom of movement

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13   Since the 1980s, more female workers have also sought better opportunities in urban centers and abroad. This can be an individual strategy (e.g., for unmarried women) or a household strategy, with women either migrating with their husband or to another location. See Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*; Boatemaa Setrana and Kleist, "Gendered Dynamics in West African Migration"; Nauja Kleist, "Disrupted Migration Projects: The Moral Economy of Involuntary Return to Ghana from Libya," *Africa* 87, no. 2 (2017): 322–42.

14   Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*. Previous research indicates that, starting in the late 1980s, women have represented more than 60 percent of internal migrants in Côte d'Ivoire, including between rural and urban areas, and that this has been connected to an increase in education levels. See Elise Fiédin Comoé, "Femmes et migration en Côte d'Ivoire: le mythe de l'autonomie," *African Population Studies* 20, no. 1 (2005).

15   David N. Tshimba, *Asylum in Urban Spaces: The Case of Refugees in Cities in Uganda* (London: EU Trust Fund for Africa, Horn of Africa Window, Research and Evidence Facility, 2022).

16   Robert Muggah with Adriana Erthal Abdenur, "Refugees and the City: The Twenty-First-Century Front Line" (World Refugee Council research paper no. 2, Centre for International Governance Innovation, Waterloo, Canada, July 27, 2018).

17   In the Ugandan city of Gulu, a hub for internal migration, there is some resentment over access to opportunities between Ugandan communities indigenous to the area and people who have migrated from other parts of the country. While not directed at refugees, increases in this internal migrant population could heighten concerns about competition and feelings of abandonment and specific needs not being met. Author interview with a civil-society organization (CSO) representative, Gulu, Uganda, June 6, 2022; author interview with an academic, Gulu, Uganda, June 7, 2022.

18   Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*.

19   In the case of Ethiopian migrants returning from the Gulf, female returnees have experienced various types of discrimination in cities and comparatively less prejudice in rural environments, where locals were mainly grateful for the remittances they shared while abroad. See Amina Saïd Chiré and Bezunesh Tamru, "Les migrantes de retour dans la Corne de l'Afrique: Vers une transformation sociale des espaces émetteurs: le cas éthiopien," *EchoGéo* 37 (2016).

within their host country, those who move from designated settlements into cities can face harassment, be forced return to settlements, or even be deported.[20]

In major refugee- and migrant-hosting countries in Africa, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers have started to address these dynamics in capitals and megacities—a logical entry point in a relatively new field, given these cities' political, economic, and demographic weight. Much less attention has been paid, however, to the situation in secondary cities or even smaller urban communities,[21] in part due to reluctance from central governments to acknowledge the presence of migrants and displaced persons there.[22] Still, some responses to refugee crises have started to target medium-size cities, such as Arua in Uganda and Diffa in Niger.[23] Similarly, in the migration space, some political attention, international funding, and research are being dedicated to border towns and migration hubs. For example, the Moroccan city of Oujda, which sits near the Algerian border, and the Tunisian port city of Sfax have received international support to assist with the challenges they face in managing migration, including relations between newcomers and host communities.[24]

As attention to migration in secondary cities grows, understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by migrants, displaced persons, and the communities in which they live requires a close look at context-specific policy and demographic characteristics. The two subsections that follow examine such contextual factors in the report's two case-study countries—Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda—and selected secondary cities within them.

A.   *Case Study 1: Côte d'Ivoire*

Since 1960, Côte d'Ivoire has been a major destination country for migrant workers in West Africa, especially those from Burkina Faso and Mali. As of the 2021 census, the country hosted 6.4 million foreigners, and they made up 22 percent of the total population.[25] Migrants live in both rural and urban areas, and women make up roughly half of the migrant population.

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20   These difficulties have been well documented in sub-Saharan African cities such as Nairobi in 2012, following orders to relocate refugees to encampments, and Lilongwe, Malawi in 2023, as well as in refugee-hosting cities around the world. See Gerry Simpson, *"You Are All Terrorists": Kenyan Police Abuse of Refugees in Nairobi* (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 2013); Human Rights Watch, "Malawi: Refugees, Including Children, Forcibly Relocated," updated June 5, 2023. See further Duncan Wane and Craig Larkin, "Negotiating Lebanon's Urban Boundaries and Sectarian Space: Syrian Refugees in Beirut and Tripoli," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2022): 1–20; International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2018).

21   For example, development actors and researchers have devoted significant resources to cities such as Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Kampala, Abidjan, and Lagos, but less so to others. See, for example, Jacob Rasmussen, "Eastleigh and Beyond: The Somali Factor in Urban Kenya" (meeting report, Rift Valley Institute, Nairobi, 2015); Neil C. M. Carrier, *Little Mogadishu: Eastleigh, Nairobi's Global Somali Hub* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Alexander Betts, Leon Fryszer, Naohiko Omata, and Olivier Sterck, *Refugee Economies in Addis Ababa: Towards Sustainable Opportunities for Urban Communities* (Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre, 2019).

22   One reason for this, noted by Ugandan stakeholders, is that acknowledging urban refugees could draw more refugees to secondary cities and overwhelm local infrastructure. Author interview with Refugee Desk Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Arua, Uganda, June 1, 2022. The capacity argument, however, runs counter to the signals the national government is sending by elevating these urban areas to city status (see Box 3). Still, some officials will informally acknowledge the presence of self-settled refugees in urban areas, which connotes no need for government or UNHCR support.

23   Participant comment at the workshop African Intermediary Cities: The Role of Partnerships in Migration Governance, hosted by the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility, November 10, 2022.

24   See, for example, the Mediterranean City to City Migration Project (MC2CM), described on UN Habitat, "Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project (MC2CM)," accessed November 18, 2022.

25   Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.*

Agriculture and sectors such as small trade and businesses are migrant workers' main sources of livelihoods,[26] though women and girls are also frequently hired as housekeepers.[27] Migrant communities, especially Burkinabe, have gradually settled and bought land in the southwest of the country, which has prompted tensions with Ivoirian residents in some places. These tensions have roots in long-standing debates about the conditions under which foreigners can access citizenship and land.[28] At the time of the civil war (2002–07), this situation led a significant proportion of women and children to move back to their countries of origin.

Migration dynamics have also changed since the end of the war. For instance, some Ivorian men who had been living in Burkina Faso have moved back to work in the agriculture sector in Côte d'Ivoire.[29] Spouses who have stayed in Burkina Faso have developed their own livelihood strategies, including cross-border trade and circular migration with Côte d'Ivoire.[30] Previous research notes that many refer to themselves as "transnational travelling traders."[31]

Côte d'Ivoire's (Lack of) Migration Policy

Since the end of the civil war, migration has remained a hotly debated issue in Côte d'Ivoire, even though some tensions with migrant communities have eased. This sensitivity partly explains why to this day, Côte d'Ivoire does not have a comprehensive migration policy.[32] At the time of the research, migration management was split among several ministries, whose work is coordinated by an interministerial body associated with the office of the prime minister.[33] The absence of a national migration framework has made it challenging for local actors with migration-related duties to manage local dynamics with migrant communities.

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In recent years, migration topics have again climbed higher on the political agenda, though this time with a focus on the increase in departures toward Europe (since 2016) and the challenges raised by the return and reintegration of Ivoirian migrants. Drawing on this momentum, the government is moving toward the drafting of a national migration policy, with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).[34]

26 Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.*
27 Comoé, "Femmes et migration en Côte d'Ivoire."
28 Fabrice Courtin, Florence Fournet, and Philippe Solano, "La crise ivoirienne et les migrants burkinabés: L'effet boomerang d'une migration internationale," *Contemporary Africa* 4, no. 236 (2010): 11–27; Sylvie Bredeloup, "La Côte d'Ivoire ou l'étrange destin de l'étranger," *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 19, no. 2 (2003).
29 Bredeloup, "'Rapatriés' burkinabé de Côte d'Ivoire."
30 Néya, "Les mobilités spéciales féminines."
31 Néya, "Les mobilités spéciales féminines."
32 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *La République de Côte d'Ivoire: Profil 2019, Indicateurs de gouvernance des migrations* (Geneva: IOM, 2019); International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), *Enquête sur les politiques migratoires en Afrique de l'Ouest* (Dakar: ICMPD and IOM, 2015).
33 IOM, *La République de Côte d'Ivoire: Profil 2019, Indicateurs de gouvernance des migrations*; ICMPD, *Enquête sur les politiques migratoires en Afrique de l'Ouest.*
34 Author interview with IOM representative, July 4, 2022.

Migrants in Selected Secondary Cities

This study focuses on three cities, one in the southwest of the country, San-Pédro, and two further north, Bouaké and Korhogo (see Figure 1). San-Pédro is the second largest port in Côte d'Ivoire, the tenth largest city overall, and a main point of transit for cocoa and other agricultural exports. Due to its economic activities and proximity to farms where migrants work, the city hosts a wide range of migrant communities, including sizeable populations from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea and smaller numbers of migrants from Liberia, Benin, and other African countries.[35] While many migrants in the region work in the agriculture sector, those in San-Pédro are typically involved in informal business activities (e.g., small shops, taxi services) and trade (e.g., cattle, jewelry). Migrant men often move first and then bring the rest of their family to join them. Migrants live side by side with Ivoirian residents, but the region still experiences some tension between these groups, especially around land access—a sensitive issue in an area where resources are becoming scarcer.

FIGURE 1
Côte d'Ivoire and Selected Secondary Cities

Source: Migration Policy Institute compilation.

Bouaké and Korhogo (respectively the fourth and seventh largest cities in the country in terms of population) also host large migrant populations. Compared to San-Pédro, however, these cities tend to be transit points for foreign workers, with migrants from Burkina Faso and Mali stopping in Bouaké and Korhogo on their way to the southwestern parts of the country.[36] The two cities, and especially Bouaké, were greatly affected by the civil war and subsequently benefited from efforts by the government and development actors to rebuild infrastructure, develop private-sector activities, and boost trade with neighboring countries.[37] In this context, migrants have also been attracted by new opportunities in construction and factories. Many are involved in trade with Côte d'Ivoire's northern neighbors, including women who operate small cross-border businesses and men who engage in street trade.[38]

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35   Author interviews with representatives of municipalities, deconcentrated services, CSOs, international organizations, and bilateral development agencies, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12–24, 2022.

36   Courtin, Fournet, and Solano, "La crise ivoirienne et les migrants burkinabés"; Mahamadou Zongo, "Niangoloko, un carrefour migratoire au Nord de la Côte d'Ivoire," *Hommes et migrations* 1279 (2009): 88–102; author interviews with representatives of municipalities, deconcentrated services, CSOs, international organizations, and bilateral development agencies, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12–24, 2022.

37   Ousmane Zina, "Bouaké, la re-belle," *Afrique Contemporaine* 3–4, no. 263–264 (2017).

38   Néya, "Les mobilités spéciales féminines"; Koffi Noël Kouassi, Olivier Gnan, and Jean Zirihi Yereonon, "Strategies for the Integration of Migrant Itinerant Sellers in the Urban Margins in Korhogo," *International Journal of Research – GRANTHAALAYAH* 10, no. 10 (2022): 279–286.

B.   Case Study 2: Uganda

As of the end of 2022, Uganda hosted 1.5 million refugees, the largest such population in Africa and sixth largest in the world. More than half (57 percent) are from South Sudan, 32 percent are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the rest are from Somalia, Burundi, Eritrea, Rwanda, and other countries. Women and children make up 81 percent of refugees in Uganda, a proportion that reflects the fact that women often arrive with their children, and male household members tend to follow later or not come at all.[39] In addition, men are more likely to return, sometimes permanently but more often temporarily, to their countries of origin for economic opportunities or, in the case of South Sudan, to participate in the conflict.[40]

Uganda's Policy Environment

Uganda is widely regarded as having a progressive refugee hosting policy, providing refugees with access to many of the same services as nationals. Uganda's refugee response plans have also explicitly targeted support to women, youth, and persons with disabilities. For example, in addition to having gender sensitivity as a guiding principle, the jobs and livelihoods response plan proposes support for women-led economic ventures and local organizations.[41] Refugees also have the right to free movement throughout the country, though this is caveated by the requirement that they settle in designated settlements around the country or in Kampala, the capital. This results in a policy contradiction: refugees are allowed to self-settle outside of the settlements, including in secondary cities, but those who do so are either still registered in a settlement or not registered at all. Accordingly, official statistics published by the national government and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency,[42] show no refugees living in cities such as Arua or Gulu, despite their very real presence.

This results in a policy contradiction: refugees are allowed to self-settle outside of the settlements, including in secondary cities, but those who do so are either still registered in a settlement or not registered at all.

This disconnect between government policy and reality on the ground has implications for refugees and cities alike. Refugees are only able to access UNHCR assistance if they are registered, meaning that depending on the rules for picking up in-kind assistance (whether the head of household must do this vs. if another family member in the settlement can serve as a proxy), some refugees living elsewhere may need to

39   UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022*; UNHCR Operational Data Portal, "Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal," updated December 31, 2022; UNHCR, "Uganda – Refugee Statistics December 2022" (fact sheet, January 6, 2023).

40   Research and Evidence Facility (REF) and Samuel Hall, *South Sudan's Decades of Displacement: Understanding Return and Questioning Reintegration* (London and Nairobi: EU Trust Fund for Africa, Horn of Africa Window, 2023); REF and Samuel Hall, "Gendered Experiences of Return and Displacement in South Sudan: Developing Gender-Sensitive Policies and Programming" (policy brief, EU Trust Fund for Africa, Horn of Africa Window, London and Nairobi, January 2023).

41   Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, *Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda: 2020/2021-2024/2025* (Kampala: Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, 2021); Charlotte Watson and Julia Poch Figueras, *Gender and Displacement: South Sudanese Refugees in Northern Uganda* (London: Saferworld, 2020).

42   UNHCR Operational Data Portal, "Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal."

make regular, expensive trips back to the settlement.[43] During the COVID-19 pandemic, Uganda imposed a two-year lockdown and refugees needed to get specific permission to travel between settlements and cities, while also having fewer transit options due to physical-distancing requirements. In addition, districts and cities receive budget allocations from the national government based on their official population, meaning official refugee-hosting districts receive the allocation for refugees, while the secondary cities and other localities where some refugees live do not receive additional funding despite refugees using their services and infrastructure.[44]

Refugees in Selected Secondary Cities

This study focuses on two cities in the Northern Region of Uganda: Arua, which is in the West Nile subregion, and Gulu, in the Acholi subregion (see Figure 2). More than half of all registered refugees in Uganda are registered in West Nile, and Arua is located close to some of the largest settlements as well as the borders of both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. Arua serves as an operational hub for the international organizations and implementing partners that work in nearby settlements, although few actually conduct programming in the city itself. Despite the presence of refugees within Arua, neither the city nor the surrounding Arua district are officially recognized as refugee-hosting areas. While there are few official statistics, a 2021 survey of the central division of Arua City (the area that formerly comprised Arua municipality; see Box 3) enumerated slightly more than 7,000 refugees, or 10.3 percent of the division's population. The vast majority were South Sudanese, more than half were under the age of 18, and roughly half were women or girls.[45]

FIGURE 2
Uganda and Selected Secondary Cities
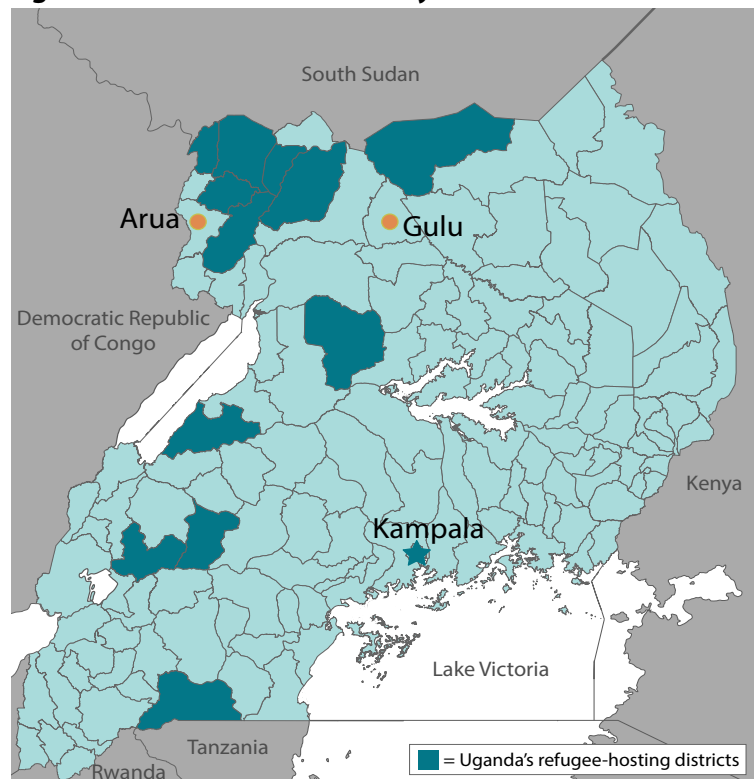
Source: Migration Policy Institute compilation.

Gulu's refugee population is smaller. The overall Acholi subregion officially hosts nearly 77,000 registered refugees within its Lamwo district.[46] It is unclear exactly how many refugees have self-settled in Gulu City,

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43   Author interviews with civil-society stakeholders and Refugee Desk Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Arua, Uganda, June 1–6, 2022.

44   Author interview with politicians and civil servants in Arua and Gulu, Uganda, June 1–10, 2022; author interview with an urban development expert in Kampala, Uganda, May 30, 2022.

45   Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *Arua City Central Division Census of Migrants and Host Communities* (N.p.: Uganda Bureau of Statistics, AVSI, and Cities Alliance, 2021).

46   UNHCR Operational Data Portal, "Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal."

though one city employee estimated in an interview that the figure was roughly 2,000.[47] Gulu nevertheless has significant experience with displacement and mobility. Situated along the road between Kampala and the South Sudanese capital of Juba, Gulu has long been a hub of movement and trade. During the Lord's Resistance Army rebellion in the 1990s and 2000s, many IDPs lived in designated settlements; however, Gulu (then a municipality) hosted the largest number, despite not being recognized as a settlement. Since the war ended in 2006, many have remained, unwilling to return to their previous villages. At the same time, Gulu became the epicenter for international assistance and development efforts, receiving a significant amount of international funding, though this has since waned. More than a decade after the conflict, IDPs remain in Gulu City, with only a few programs and policies targeting them.[48]

3   Common Challenges to Socioeconomic Inclusion in Secondary Cities

Across secondary cities, migrants and displaced groups can encounter a range of difficulties, especially when it comes to accessing documentation, social services, and livelihoods. While these challenges differ depending on the context, the experiences of these groups in Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda point to areas that deserve policy and programmatic attention.

A.   Access to Documentation

Access to documentation of identity and immigration status is often a starting point for migrants and displaced persons to access services and opportunities, from receiving health care and registering children in school to opening a bank account and finding formal employment. Yet, accessing such documents can be difficult for many mobile groups, especially refugees and international migrants.[49] The impacts of documentation barriers were particularly detrimental during the pandemic, when people who were not officially registered or did not have formal documents often ended up being excluded from social safety nets.[50]

Compared to rural areas and smaller towns, secondary cities usually have the administrative structures to meet requests for documentation—at least on paper—either at the level of the municipality, through deconcentrated state services, or via consular offices. For example, in Uganda, the National Identification and Registration Authority has offices in secondary cities where Ugandan nationals and international

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47   Author interview with civil servants in Gulu, Uganda, June 7, 2022.
48   Author interviews with civil-society stakeholders, politicians, and an academic in Gulu, Uganda, June 6–10, 2022.
49   Access to papers depends on a newcomer's legal status, and it can prove politically sensitive where governments seek to limit the number of beneficiaries of public services. For instance, internal migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) usually already have documents and simply need to register their new place of residence with national and local services to resume their access to public services and social protection. By contrast, refugees must undergo status determination and registration to gain legal status, which some host governments are reluctant to provide.
50   Ferdinand C. Mukumbang, Anthony N. Ambe, and Babatope O. Adebiyi, "Unspoken Inequality: How COVID-19 Has Exacerbated Existing Vulnerabilities of Asylum-Seekers, Refugees, and Undocumented Migrants in South Africa," *International Journal for Equity in Health* 19, no. 1 (August 20, 2020). This issue has been documented in a wide range of countries and regions. See, for instance, Henry Ridgwell, "Undocumented Afghan Refugees in Turkey Struggle to Access COVID Treatments, Vaccines," VOA News, January 17, 2022.

migrants can apply for and receive a range of documents.[51] In Côte d'Ivoire, many countries from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have an office in secondary cities where they issue documents to their nationals, or facilitate their issuance via the national consulate.[52] In these cities, both male and female migrants are more likely to have documentation, such as a birth certificate, compared to migrants in rural areas in Côte d'Ivoire.[53]

Some administrative procedures, however, can only be done in a country's capital, whether due to policy restrictions or lack of local capacity. For example, in Uganda, refugees can only register with authorities in a designated settlement or in Kampala. This means that refugees who settle in secondary cities without having first registered in one of those places forgo registration. Those who later decide to register (e.g., in order to access humanitarian assistance) or need to get a replacement identity card must travel to the capital or the nearest settlement to do so, which can be a costly journey. These challenges, as well as administrative delays and long lines, may disincentivize the registration of newcomers, including children, who reunite with family members in Uganda later.

In other cases, migrants and forcibly displaced persons face difficulties accessing documentation because local authorities are not familiar with migration and asylum laws and processes, are slow to implement them, or are unwilling to issue these groups new papers or ignore the validity of the papers they already have. For example, one refugee in Uganda noted it was easier to gain access to public offices using his organization's business card than using his refugee identification card.[54]

While not an issue specific to secondary cities, some migrants and displaced persons are also unaware of the administrative procedures they need to follow or lack the resources to abide by them. In Côte d'Ivoire, limited awareness and understanding of administrative procedures among migrant parents (and some Ivoirian parents) has resulted in some families not registering births and other life events. Another major challenge in Côte d'Ivoire is the very low level of awareness among migrants of the process for accessing Ivoirian citizenship, and the perception among those who know about the process that it is very complex.[55]

Migrant, IDP, and refugee women can face additional hurdles, given that the man in their household may hold the papers for all family members. This can make it more difficult for women to leave the house, especially in cases of sexual and gender-based violence.[56] In Uganda, women and their children often arrive in the country first and the women are registered as the head of their household, which means they are responsible for receiving humanitarian assistance and interfacing with authorities. Their spouse

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51   See Government of Uganda, "National Identification and Registration Authority," accessed February 17, 2023.

52   When the country does not have its own bureau, a representative of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) liaises with its nationals and assists them with administrative requirements. For example, in San-Pédro, the Beninese representative also represents ECOWAS broadly and answers the requests of migrants from countries that do not have a local office. Author interview with the ECOWAS representative for Benin in San-Pédro, Côte d'Ivoire, June 17, 2022.

53   The data show no significant gap between male and female migrants in terms of access to documentation in Côte d'Ivoire. See Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.*

54   Author interview with a representative of a refugee-led organization, Kampala, May 30, 2022.

55   Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.*

56   Lucia C. Hanmer and Marina Elefante, *Achieving Universal Access to ID: Gender-Based Legal Barriers against Women and Good Practice Reforms* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2019).

sometimes joins them at a later stage, at which point there may be tension within the household over such responsibilities, and this situation can in some cases expose women to domestic violence.[57]

B.   Access to Services

Migrants and displaced persons are often attracted to urban centers by the hope of better services than are available in rural areas and IDP or refugee settlements. In many rural areas, limited infrastructure and sparse populations mean people must travel relatively long distances to reach schools, health centers, and government offices. As for IDP and refugee camps, while humanitarian organizations provide basic services, these are often insufficient to meet the full range of needs of displaced populations.[58] The studied secondary cities, by comparison, have invested in services and infrastructure and, often, opened access to migrants, IDPs, and refugees, creating a draw for these populations.[59] Still, the promise of access to better services is usually unfulfilled, as municipal infrastructure and governance are often unable to meet the scale or complexity of needs (e.g., post-traumatic stress experienced as a result of displacement, administrative hurdles for noncitizens seeking formal employment).[60]

> *Migrants and displaced persons are often attracted to urban centers by the hope of better services than are available in rural areas and IDP or refugee settlements.*

Newcomers' Access to Services

In secondary cities in both Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda, migrants and forcibly displaced persons generally have the right to access services on the same basis as nationals. ECOWAS representatives interviewed in the Ivoirian city of San-Pédro said that migrants there did not experience prejudice when seeking to access education and health care.[61] Similarly, actors in the Ugandan cities of Arua and Gulu stated that local public services do not segregate or discriminate between nationals and refugees.[62] Nevertheless, some newcomers may lack access to services in practice. For example, international migrants without legal status as well as those with status but without certain forms of documentation may not benefit from municipal and deconcentrated services. They may also face logistical issues such as those observed among international and internal migrant women in Ghanaian cities, related to travel to health facilities (e.g., due to costs and time constraints) and lack of social networks (e.g., trouble finding child care during a medical visit).[63]

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57   Yotam Gidron, "Gender and Access to Justice in Uganda's Refugee Settlements: The Experiences of South Sudanese Refugees" (working paper 27, Refugee Law Project, Kampala, September 2022).

58   In 2022, only half of the UNHCR appeal for support for the refugee response in Uganda was funded. See UNHCR, "Uganda's Refugee Response Confronted by Dire Funding Gap" (briefing note, November 22, 2022).

59   For example, these cities manage a range of schools and health-care centers, including specialized health facilities that can provide care for chronic or more complex conditions. For more on these services and the challenges victims of conflict and violence in Uganda face when seeking care, see Okot Bernard Kasozi, "Elevate Regional Referral Hospitals in the Newly Created Cities in Post-Conflict Northern Uganda to Support Rehabilitation of War Victims," Refugee Law Project, September 30, 2021.

60   See, for example, the lack of sufficient educational opportunities for refugee children with learning disabilities in cities other than Kampala, as reported in Tshimba, *Asylum in Urban Spaces*.

61   Author interviews with ECOWAS representatives for Mali, Benin, and Burkina Faso, San-Pédro, Côte d'Ivoire, June 17 and 18, 2022. This is also documented in Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.*

62   Author interviews with representatives of CSOs and government stakeholders, Arua and Gulu, Uganda, June 1–10, 2022.

63   Laiba Rizwan, Michelle Malagón, and Solina Richter, "Understanding the Influence of Ghanaian Women's Migration Patterns on Access to Health Care," *Women* 2, no. 1 (2022): 30–43.

Migrant and displaced communities are also not always aware of services they are eligible for and how to access them. For instance, in Uganda, when Arua was elevated to city status (see Box 3), service points that previously existed at the sub-county level were consolidated into central offices, leading to confusion among host communities and refugees alike as to how to contact some services.[64] In other cases, information about service access is not provided in refugees' and migrants' native language (at all or in enough detail) to facilitate their access, and lower literacy rates among certain groups (often, women) further hinders effective access. Research on migrant women in Niger, for example, has documented how the lack of resources and awareness about medical tests and treatments constitute major hurdles to service access.[65]

When international migrants and refugees are charged a fee to access services, even if it is the same amount nationals pay, those in a precarious economic situation may find it difficult to afford.[66] In some cases, foreigners face additional fees to access education or health care. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, migrant children attend primary and secondary school for free, but those who wish to attend university must pay an international student fee. As a result, youth who wish to continue their studies tend to return to their country of origin or, for those born in Côte d'Ivoire, their parents' country of origin. For those who have grown up in Côte d'Ivoire and have limited links with their or their parents' origin country, this can constitute a major disruption.[67] In Uganda, where primary and secondary schools do have fees, some scholarships are available to help both refugees and members of host communities, but these are often age-restricted, meaning that refugee teenagers and young adults whose schooling was disrupted and who seek to restart it after several years may not be eligible for financial assistance.[68]

Some international migrants and refugees turn to the private schools and clinics available in secondary cities to receive education and health care that is linguistically and culturally accessible.[69] However, not only does this generally come with an additional financial burden, but it also can be perceived by host communities as self-segregation, feeding misconceptions about the relative wealth of these populations and fueling resentment against them for accessing better services.[70]

Basic Services under Pressure

As secondary cities' populations grow, local governments, deconcentrated services, and CSOs as well as municipal infrastructure may struggle to keep up. When this happens, longer-term residents may see a

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64   Author interview with the president of the Arua City Development Forum, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.

65   Caterina Torchiaro, *Rapid Assessment of the Situation of Women Migrating from, into, and through Niger* (Niamey: UN Women Niger, 2021).

66   In Uganda, for instance, refugees are charged the same fees as nationals for primary and secondary education, but they often have less ability to pay. Author interview with a representative of a refugee-led organization, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.

67   Author interviews with the ECOWAS representative for Benin, San-Pédro, Côte d'Ivoire, June 17, 2022; Néya, "Les mobilités spéciales féminines."

68   Author interview with a representative of a refugee-led organization, Arua, Uganda, June 3, 2022.

69   In some cases, this leads refugees to believe they are receiving differential treatment despite having similar access to care as host communities. One study, for instance, showed that refugee women in the Northern Region of Uganda received the same quality of maternal health care as host community members but reported being treated worse. See Siri Aas Rustad et al., "Maternal Health Care among Refugees and Host Communities in Northern Uganda: Access, Quality, and Discrimination," *Frontiers in Global Women's Health* 2 (August 20, 2021): 626002.

70   Author interview with a representative of a refugee-led organization, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022; author interview with an academic, Gulu, Uganda, June 7, 2022.

decrease in the quality of services provided, while newcomers may struggle to access them in the first place. This dynamic has been documented around the world in places experiencing sudden mass arrivals, such as Turkish and Lebanese cities receiving large numbers of refugees after the war in Syria began in 2011.[71] But gradual arrivals can, over time,

As secondary cities' populations grow, local governments, deconcentrated services, and CSOs as well as municipal infrastructure may struggle to keep up.

put similar pressure on services, and in some ways this can be more challenging because slow increases do not trigger the same emergency funding that can be mobilized in a crisis. For example, refugee arrivals in northern Ugandan cities have been relatively steady, rather than prompted by one specific crisis moment,[72] and this has led to gradual, worsening strain on local service systems, with local actors unable or unwilling to marshal the resources to address the situation. In Arua and Gulu, for instance, classrooms and health facilities are noticeably overcrowded and have insufficient staff and supplies.[73] Similarly, in Côte d'Ivoire, water and waste systems have come under pressure in several cities with growing populations.[74]

The pandemic has exacerbated pressure on both health and education systems. For instance, students in Arua and Gulu who went two years without schooling are having to restart where they left off pre-pandemic. This has meant that certain grades have to account not only for natural and migration-related growth in the student population but also for students whose education was delayed by the pandemic.[75] Health infrastructure has been similarly overwhelmed, as COVID-19 cases and associated complications have meant that some patients with noncommunicable diseases and chronic conditions have been unable to access necessary health care.[76]

Need to Address Specific Vulnerabilities

Services in secondary cities are often not as responsive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of migrants and forcibly displaced persons, including gender-based forms of protection. In San-Pédro, Bouaké, and

71   See, for example, World Bank, *Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2013).

72   Uganda's system for managing rapid increases in arrivals helps relieve the strain on its secondary cities. Most refugees are channeled through reception centers and then designated settlements, meaning that those who subsequently move to cities do not do so all at once. This also means that the number of refugees bypassing settlements and going directly to cities is relatively small. There is also substantial cross-border, circular movement between northern Uganda and neighboring countries, and border communities are used to transient populations. See Alison Ryan, *Refugee Status Determination: A Study of the Process in Uganda* (Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council, 2018).

73   Author interviews with representatives of a regional development organization, a female refugee-led organization, and other CSOs; politicians; and civil servants, Arua and Gulu, Uganda, June 2–9, 2022; Evan Easton-Calabria, Delina Abadi, Gezahegn Gebremedhin, and Jennifer Wood, *Urban Refugees and IDPs in Secondary Cities: Case Studies of Crisis Migration, Urbanisation, and Governance* (Brussels: Cities Alliance, 2022).

74   Author interview with Policy Advisor of FES Côte d'Ivoire, August 4, 2022.

75   Author interview with Refugee Desk Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Arua, Uganda, June 1, 2022; author interview with politicians, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022. The pandemic and subsequent strain on schools have compounded existing gender disparities in Uganda, with girls accounting for only 21 percent of secondary school enrollment. See Caroline Magambo, "Uganda Joins Other African Countries Committing to Increase Efforts to Adolescent Girls and Young Women Education and Empowerment," United Nations, June 13, 2022.

76   Author interview with Refugee Desk Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Arua, Uganda, June 1, 2022. In countries such as South Africa, some health resources were taken away from sexual and reproductive services to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, making it more difficult for women to access these services. See Dudziro Nhengu, "Covid-19 and Female Migrants: Policy Challenges and Multiple Vulnerabilities," *Comparative Migration Studies* 10, no. 23 (2022).

Korhogo, for instance, sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and trafficking are key concerns. Several officials noted that these cases are more common in migrant communities due to lack of awareness of Ivoirian legislation and (at least perceived) differences in practices in migrants' origin countries.[77] For instance, some communities reportedly take advantage of the open border between ECOWAS countries to conduct illegal activities such as female genital mutilation, for which traditional practitioners are said to cross from Mali to operate on young women in Côte d'Ivoire.[78] In Uganda, refugees and host community members are more likely to suffer sexual and gender-based violence when there is financial stress and substance abuse. The risks for refugee women are exacerbated by economic insecurity and trauma experienced in their country of origin.[79] And in many countries around the world, these forms of abuse became more common during the pandemic and lockdowns.[80]

In turn, migrant and displaced women may face difficulties accessing assistance from the police and the justice system. In Uganda, for instance, refugee women can be reluctant to report domestic violence due to conservative social norms or a lack of resources, and research shows that these pressures and notions of masculinity lead to even greater underreporting by male refugees who experience abuse.[81] When domestic violence is reported in refugee settlements, it is often dealt with through community mechanisms rather than formal legal processes.[82]

A second, distinctive set of needs among migrants and forcibly displaced persons relates to trauma suffered in countries of origin and during their migration journey. In Niger, for example, women on the move are four times more likely to experience sexual violence than men, and they are also more likely to face physical violence.[83] In Uganda, refugees living in secondary cities have reported facing retraumatization during the pandemic, when lockdown enforcement and surveillance reminded them of their escape.[84] Schools and smaller health centers in secondary cities are often not equipped to provide trauma-sensitive support to these populations, and mental health and psychosocial support is typically underfunded. In Gulu, for example, there is a lack of support for war survivors who are still experiencing the effects of the conflict in the 1990s and 2000s.[85] And schools, already facing an overwhelming number of students, often do not have the bandwidth to provide special care to students who need it.

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77 Author interviews with city officials in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, June 20 and 21, 2022.
78 Author interviews with city officials in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, June 20 and 21, 2022.
79 Government of Uganda and World Bank, *Gender-Based Violence and Violence against Children: Prevention and Response Services in Uganda's Refugee-Hosting Districts* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2020); Gidron, "Gender and Access to Justice in Uganda's Refugee Settlements."
80 In South Africa, for instance, not only did lockdowns make female migrants more vulnerable to domestic violence, but they also made it more challenging to report abuse to the police and access support. See Nhengu, "Covid-19 and Female Migrants."
81 Government of Uganda and World Bank, *Gender-Based Violence and Violence against Children*.
82 In a study on gendered access to justice in refugee settlements, the Refugee Law Project argues that this use of community accountability is part of the same ecosystem as formal justice mechanisms. See Gidron, "Gender and Access to Justice in Uganda's Refugee Settlements."
83 Torchiaro, *Rapid Assessment of the Situation of Women Migrating*.
84 Tshimba, *Asylum in Urban Spaces*.
85 Author interview with a representative of the Refugee Law Project, Gulu, Uganda, June 7, 2022.

BOX 1
Access to Housing and Land

While access to housing is an acute challenge for migrants and displaced persons in many urban settings, this issue is particularly relevant in secondary cities, which often lack the established housing and municipal infrastructure of capitals and megacities. Newcomers with limited economic means can struggle to find safe accommodations, often living in slums with inadequate sanitation and water infrastructure. When secondary cities rapidly expand without adequate urban planning, these slums become even more unsanitary and subject to heightened climate and environmental risks, making their residents even more vulnerable.

Foreigners in secondary cities may also face discriminatory rental and housing practices. In Arua and Gulu, Uganda, for example, local communities perceive refugees as relatively wealthy if they have been able to afford to leave the settlements (occasionally but hardly universally true), or because of misperceptions about the assistance they might receive. In response, some landlords set rental rates higher for refugees, ultimately leading to an increase in market prices for both refugees and host community members, creating resentment and increasing socioeconomic strain.

Finally, newcomers may face challenges accessing land, which is often scarce in secondary cities, and this can create tensions with host communities. In Côte d'Ivoire, access to land is a controversial issue, and international migrants have historically been accused of taking resources away from Ivoirians. On the other hand, in Arua, refugees have by and large been able to rent land from nationals, both to construct dwellings and for farming. According to local actors, this arrangement does not seem to cause tension and, in fact, has helped facilitate social cohesion through regular contact and engagement between host communities and refugees.

Sources: Author interviews with experts, civil-society stakeholders, civil servants and politicians, and representatives of international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and development actors, Kampala, Arua, and Gulu, Uganda, May 30–June 10, 2022; participant comments at the workshop African Intermediary Cities: The Role of Partnerships in Migration Governance, hosted by the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility, November 10, 2022; French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, "Côte d'Ivoire: Les conflits fonciers en zone rurale" (country brief, August 18, 2017); Fabrice Courtin, Florence Fournet, and Philippe Solano, "La crise ivoirienne et les migrants burkinabés: L'effet boomerang d'une migration internationale," *Contemporary Africa* 4, no. 236 (2010): 11–27.

C.   *Access to Livelihoods and Economic Challenges*

As hubs for trade, commerce, and industry, secondary cities in Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda present more diverse economic opportunities than rural areas, where livelihood opportunities are often limited to agriculture and pastoralism. Refugees have some livelihood opportunities in settlements, which have their own labor markets to support the aid infrastructure, but those are generally limited.[86] However, even when secondary cities appear to offer improved economic prospects, in reality, opportunities for formal

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86   For example, refugees may be hired as incentive workers by humanitarian and other international organizations, positions that pay wages lower than national minimum wage standards and market rates, and that are far lower than what these organizations' expatriate employees earn. See Helen Morris and Frances Voon, "Which Side Are You On? Discussion Paper on UNHCR's Policy and Practice of Incentive Payments to Refugees" (discussion paper, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, Geneva, December 2014); Clayton Boeyink and Jean-Benoît Falisse, "Class in Camps or the Camped Class? The Making and Reshaping of Socio-Economic Inequalities in the Refugee Camps of North-Western Tanzania," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48, no. 20 (2022): 4885–904.

employment and entrepreneurship are often limited, and many migrants and forcibly displaced persons instead work in informal occupations, which are more vulnerable to economic shocks and exploitation.[87]

Limited Access to Formal Employment and the Challenges of Informality

Secondary cities may offer some formal employment opportunities, but most newcomers end up working informally in demanding jobs with low salaries. This includes not only international migrants and refugees but also nationals moving from a country's rural areas to its urban centers.[88] Migrant women, who are often less educated than their male counterparts, frequently find work in low-paying sectors such as domestic work and small trade.[89] In West Africa, studies have documented an increase in women migrating independently from a male relative, a trend driven not only by limited opportunities in rural areas but also growing demand for care and hospitality services in urban settings.[90]

In some situations, barriers to formal and decent employment are due to policies at the national level (see Box 2). This can include laws that only permit the hiring of nationals in certain sectors, complex processes for getting credentials earned in another country recognized (or the absence of a process for doing so), and difficult-to-meet requirements for the specific work authorization that noncitizens need to be hired formally.[91] Work authorization for foreign workers is a particularly sensitive issue in cities where there is competition for jobs and high levels of unemployment. As such, governments may be wary of expanding formal employment opportunities for noncitizens if doing so risks depriving their nationals of opportunities, despite research across the globe showing that providing formal labor market access has little negative impact on host community wages and employment over time.[92]

Many cities offer livelihood support, training, and job placement programs for vulnerable job seekers, but international migrants and refugees are sometimes excluded. For example, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme and Youth Livelihood Programme target services including skills development and enterprise funding to women and youth throughout Uganda. The programs are run in conjunction with district and city governments, which select beneficiaries from among the most vulnerable groups locally. Refugees are not, however, eligible to participate.[93] In Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, a dedicated service in town halls helps young men and women find jobs, but it is only open to nationals.[94]

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87   For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, 89 percent of international migrants are reported to work in the agriculture and informal sectors. Coopération Régionale des Politiques Migratoires (CRPM), "Situation du secteur Migration en Côte d'Ivoire, 2021" (internal project document, accessed January 2022).

88   Kouassi, Gnan, and Yereonon, "Strategies for the Integration of Migrant Itinerant Sellers."

89   Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*; George F. Masanja, "The Female Face of Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Huria* 11 (2012): 80–97.

90   Boatemaa Setrana and Kleist, "Gendered Dynamics in West African Migration."

91   Thomas Ginn et al., *2022 Global Refugee Work Rights Report* (Washington, DC and Oakland, CA: Center for Global Development, Asylum Access, and Refugees International, 2022).

92   Michael Clemens, Cindy Huang, and Jimmy Graham, *The Economic and Fiscal Effects of Granting Refugees Formal Labor Market Access* (New York and Washington, DC: Tent Partnership for Refugees and Center for Global Development, 2018).

93   Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, "Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Programme," accessed November 4, 2022; Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, "Youth Livelihood Programme," accessed November 4, 2022; author interview with a civil servant, Arua, Uganda, June 3, 2022.

94   Author interview with the Sociocultural Director of Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, June 20, 2022.

BOX 2
Expanding Labor Market Access for Refugees

Since the 2015–16 European migration crisis and the 2018 adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, donors, governments in some refugee-receiving countries, and humanitarian and development actors have made efforts to expand access to formal labor markets for refugees, and especially refugee women. Many of these initiatives focus on policies to allow refugees to obtain work permits, but some also involve creating incentives for employers to hire refugees, including in sectors where women comprise a substantial part of the workforce.

The 2016 Jordan Compact and the 2018 Ethiopia Jobs Compact are the most prominent efforts, with international actors tying investments and trade liberalization to enacting and implementing policy changes. While there has been progress on the policy level (e.g., in expanding the types of sectors refugees can legally work in and making it easier for refugees to obtain work permits), policy implementation has been slow and gains have been modest. In Jordan, the expansion of opportunities has been limited to specific sectors, only applies to Syrian refugees, and has seen limited uptake from refugees due to issue such as low pay, long commutes, and trouble finding child care. And in Ethiopia, despite the 2019 Refugee Proclamation advancing significant reforms to grant refugees greater labor market access, the government has yet to dismantle the policy and practical barriers that have thus far hindered an increase in refugees obtaining work permits and gaining formal employment.

These compacts' successes to date, including labor reforms, are important steps toward improved labor market access for refugees in secondary cities, as many of the targeted industrial sites are near urban areas (particularly for Ethiopia). This will require, however, ensuring that refugees have the legal authority to both live in these urban areas (to better access the jobs) and to work formally.

Sources: Camille Le Coz et al., *A Bridge to Firmer Ground: Learning from International Experiences to Support Pathways to Solutions in the Syrian Refugee Context* (Washington, DC and Amman: Migration Policy Institute and Durable Solutions Platform, 2021); Thomas Ginn et al., *2022 Global Refugee Work Rights Report* (Washington, DC and Oakland, CA: Center for Global Development, Asylum Access, and Refugees International, 2022); Jimmy Graham and Sarah Miller, *From Displacement to Development: How Ethiopia Can Create Shared Growth by Facilitating Economic Inclusion for Refugees* (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development and Refugees International, 2021); Bethan Staton, "A Compact for Syrian Refugee Women?," The Cairo Review of Global Affairs, August 8, 2018; Veronique Barbelet et al., "How to Ensure Ethiopia's 'Jobs Compact' Works for Refugees," Overseas Development Institute, accessed August 31, 2023.

When migrants and displaced persons have the right to work formally, they may nonetheless face barriers to securing formal employment. This can include a lack of personal and professional networks to help them find work, employers being unwilling to hire them, and language barriers.[95] One study in Côte d'Ivoire found that labor market access is often contingent on an applicant's political, ethnic, religious, or national background, rather than their education, training, or Ivoirian connections.[96] While men and women did not report different perceptions of these factors' impact on their employability, the data indicate that 26 percent of surveyed female migrants did not have a job compared to 17 percent of surveyed male migrants—a

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95   In Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, for example, the jobs available to young migrants without networks or diploma are often difficult and pay poorly. Author interviews with local actors and representatives of CSOs, Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, June 21–23, 2022; Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.*

96   Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.*

disparity likely due partly to the fact that many women have other obligations (such as taking care of the household) that constrain their job search.[97]

Women face additional societal barriers to employment in cities. They may not be hired in more profitable, traditionally male-dominated sectors (such as manufacturing or mechanical work), and some may not be interested in these sectors due to societal norms and ideas about what forms of work are acceptable for women.[98] In addition to being less profitable, female-dominated jobs may be more physically demanding and carry less social prestige.[99] In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, many female migrants are engaged in cross-border trade (known as *navette*) along train and bus lines.[100]

Employment challenges may be more pronounced in secondary cities compared to larger urban areas, given private-sector actors are often less dynamic and infrastructure that would facilitate economic development is often more limited in small and mid-sized cities. In Arua, Uganda, for example, insufficient electricity limits the potential for industrial investments.[101] The infrastructure deficit also has knock-on effects for informal labor. In Arua, many women (both refugees and host-community members) move produce from rural areas to sell on the roadside or outside city market buildings, but because cold storage infrastructure is limited, food often spoils or is sold all at once during harvest season, flooding the market and lowering prices, and sellable products are often scarce during the off-season.[102]

> *Employment challenges may be more pronounced in secondary cities compared to larger urban areas, given private-sector actors are often less dynamic and infrastructure that would facilitate economic development is often more limited.*

Ultimately, in secondary cities, the concentration of migrants and forcibly displaced persons in the informal economy makes these populations vulnerable to economic shocks, as experienced during the pandemic.[103] For example, in Uganda, strict domestic lockdowns meant that many refugees who had been working

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97   Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.*

98   Raiyan Kabir and Jeni Klugman, *Unlocking Refugee Women's Potential: Closing Economic Gaps to Benefit All* (Washington, DC: International Rescue Committee and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, 2019). In Uganda, the German Agency for International Development (GIZ) is working to help women enter nontraditional fields by offering occupational training, designing trainings to account for the child-care and other domestic responsibilities many women have, efforts to sensitize male family and community members to women entering the labor market, and providing role models already working in these fields. However, many women remain interested in working in saturated, female-dominated sectors such as tailoring, hospitality, and salon work. Author interview with a representative of GIZ, Kampala, Uganda, May 30, 2022. See also Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines.*

99   Data also indicate that only 11 percent of female migrants in Côte d'Ivoire have formal employment (salarié), compared to 22 percent of male migrants. See Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire.* The same is true for female migrant populations in other parts of Africa, such as Zimbabwean women in South Africa, who are overrepresented in occupations that are dangerous, dirty, and demeaning. See Nhengu, "Covid-19 and Female Migrants."

100 This work is very draining and, because passengers and train or bus staff sometimes throw their wares away, women must regularly find ways to restock their materials. See Florence and Néya, "Retours, circulations, installations?"; Boatemaa Setrana and Kleist, "Gendered Dynamics in West African Migration"; Néya, "Les mobilités spéciales féminines."

101 For example, plants for refining grain and processing sesame seeds are unusable in part because of the lack of infrastructure to support them. Author interview with a representative of a regional development association, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.

102 Author interview with a representative of a regional development association, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.

103 Paul Bukuluki et al., "The Socio-Economic and Psychosocial Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Urban Refugees in Uganda," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 100045.

informally lost their jobs without any form of safety net. And in the ECOWAS region, border closures meant that women who engage in cross-border trade had to suspend their activities.[104] In such cases, migrants' limited access to financial institutions and savings mechanisms diminishes their ability to weather crises, and social safety nets may not cover them.

Women are particularly likely to be affected by economic shocks, both because many are involved in the informal labor market and because they face a heightened risk of exploitation.[105] In Côte d'Ivoire's secondary cities, a significant proportion of women are hired by families as domestic workers, usually informally.[106] These jobs tend to be held by younger, single women and can help them send money home or save for a bridal trousseau (possessions a woman collects in anticipation of her future marriage), but working within a household can put women at risk of abuse and some may not seek assistance for fear of losing housing.[107] Finally, in both Uganda and Côte d'Ivoire, some refugee and migrant women resort to sex work as an economic coping mechanism or for lack of better options, which carries both stigma and heightened exploitation risks.[108]

Entrepreneurship and Its Challenges

Some migrants and displaced persons are able to tap into the entrepreneurial opportunities that secondary cities offer, provided there is a conducive business environment. In some cities, such as San-Pédro and Korhogo in Côte d'Ivoire, entrepreneurs have taken advantage of thriving local trade activity to set up their primary base of operations there. Some municipalities have incentives to support these efforts, a policy strategy backed by research showing that migrant entrepreneurship has economic benefits for both mobile populations and host communities; it provides livelihoods for the former and builds more robust economic markets for the community as a whole.[109] Programs to facilitate entrepreneurship can in some cases hold particular promise for helping female displaced persons and migrants build successful livelihoods.[110]

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104 Nhengu, "Covid-19 and Female Migrants."

105 Author interviews with directors at social centers in San-Pédro and Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, June 16–21, 2022.

106 Author interviews with representatives of municipalities, deconcentrated services, CSOs, international organizations, and bilateral development agencies, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12–24, 2022; Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*; Masanja, "The Female Face of Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa."

107 Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*; Masanja, "The Female Face of Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa."

108 Author interview with civil servants, Gulu, Uganda, June 8, 2022; Tobbias Jolly Owiny, "Parents Trade Refugee Girls for Sex in Lockdown - Report," Monitor, January 9, 2022; Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Uganda Chapter, *Research Findings on the Situation of, and Impact of COVID-19 on School Going Girls and Young Women in Uganda* (Kampala: FAWE Uganda, 2021); Teddy Dokotho, "Abandoned UPDF Soldiers' 'Wives' Resort to Sex Trade," Monitor, October 1, 2022; Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*.

109 Alexander Betts, Naohiko Omata, and Louise Bloom, "Thrive or Survive? Explaining Variation in Economic Outcomes for Refugees," *Journal on Migration & Human Security* 5, no. 4 (October 2017): 716–43.

110 In and around Kampala, Uganda, for instance, women who work in male dominated sectors tend to earn roughly the same amount as men in those sectors. This means that supporting female entrepreneurs entering these sectors can help close overall gendered wage gaps. See World Bank, *Breaking Barriers: Female Entrepreneurs Who Cross Over to Male-Dominated Sectors* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2022). And in fact, studies suggest that women are more likely than men to be entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa. See Amy Copley, Birce Gokalp, and Daniel Kirkwood, "Unlocking the Potential of Women Entrepreneurs in Uganda: A Brief of Policy Interventions" (policy brief, World Bank, Washington, DC, August 26, 2021).

Entrepreneurship also carries a range of challenges. Without sufficient financial and capacity support, including initiatives to promote financial literacy and business management, some enterprises are unlikely to become sustainable. It is also important for programs that support migrant entrepreneurship to be mindful of local social dynamics to avoid feeding into tensions over business opportunities. Across contexts, many of these very small companies face difficulties accessing start-up capital, with financial institutions typically reluctant to lend to foreigners.[111] Some refugees in Uganda (and East Africa more broadly) have been able to circumvent this obstacle by participating in village savings and loans associations, a method of group saving and lending that is particularly popular among women. However, these initiatives typically do not lend large enough amounts to finance new businesses.[112] Meanwhile, internationally funded livelihood projects predominantly focus on helping refugees develop skills, without providing the initial capital or long-term mentorship necessary to successfully build a business.[113] For example, civil-society stakeholders interviewed in Arua described how development agencies and their implementing partners conducted skills trainings for refugees over the course of a few months, but then did not follow up with program beneficiaries.[114] When start-up capital and mentorship are provided, the interviewees said these tend to come from local organizations, often refugee led, and often drawn from their own funds rather than the donors supporting the initial projects.[115]

Finally, refugee and migrant entrepreneurs often face serious administrative hurdles, including when it comes to getting the government permits needed to establish their businesses. Policies surrounding foreign-owned companies can make permit applications more expensive for noncitizens than for nationals. In Uganda, this challenge extends to refugee-led organizations, who often hire other refugees and were previously treated the same as local organizations. Since the pandemic, they have been required to register with the Ugandan government's nongovernmental organization (NGO) regulatory body, the NGO Bureau, as non-local entities, which carries a higher cost.[116] At the same time, a migrant entrepreneur's lack of registration is not necessarily an obstacle to economic activities in countries where informality prevails. However, it does put small businesses at risk of extortion and other forms of pressure from authorities and other actors. Thus, a regulatory environment that is conducive to entrepreneurship is important if refugees and migrants are to build and expand businesses, and in doing so, to support their socioeconomic integration and benefit the communities in which they live.

> *Refugee and migrant entrepreneurs often face serious administrative hurdles, including when it comes to getting the government permits needed to establish their businesses.*

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111 Author interview with a representative of a women-led organization, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.

112 Author interviews with representatives of women-led organizations, Arua and Gulu, Uganda, June 2, 3, and 7, 2022.

113 In Uganda, these types of activities are rare in secondary cities; international actors and their local partners largely focus their work on designated settlements. Author interviews with representatives of GIZ, Kampala and Arua, Uganda, May 30 and June 6, 2022.

114 Author interviews with representatives of civil-society and refugee-led organizations, Arua, Uganda, June 2–4, 2022.

115 Author interviews with representatives of civil-society and refugee-led organizations, Arua, Uganda, June 2–4, 2022.

116 Author interview with representatives of refugee led-organizations, Kampala and Arua, Uganda, May 31 and June 3, 2022.

4   Local Responses to Migration Challenges and Opportunities

In Ivoirian and Ugandan secondary cities, municipal officials, representatives of state institutions, and CSOs are at the forefront of responding to the challenges experienced by people on the move and the broader communities in which they live. But these actors' ability to do so is dictated to some degree by the extent of decentralization in a country, which shapes how public authorities deliver services and support local economic development.[117] In both countries, the national government has set up offices across the country through which deconcentrated services implement national policies at the local level. Some cities have taken on new responsibilities in recent years, ranging from urban planning to public safety (see Box 3 on Uganda), but policies related to international migration and refugees largely are the domain of central governments, with cities generally playing a small role in the migration policy space. Therefore, it is often up to deconcentrated services, and not the city, to implement national policies affecting mobile populations, such as issuing identification documents, granting access to schools, and registering people for social protection programs.

Some cities have taken on new responsibilities in recent years … but policies related to international migration and refugees largely are the domain of central governments.

Still, city officials play an essential role in responding to the challenges and seizing the opportunities raised by the presence of newcomers in their communities. While not all cities are keen on welcoming more migrants, local authorities are usually eager to encourage new investments and businesses and to boost trade, all of which can be enhanced by the presence of new residents and make the city more attractive. There are, however, obstacles to reaping these benefits. Specifically, local action can be hampered by tight budgets, a lack of planning, and limited institutional knowledge about migrant communities and related issues, including gender dynamics. In Uganda and Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, some local actors face major difficulties because they have inadequate data and systems to support meaningful engagement with migrants and displaced persons and to deliver services in ways that are sensitive to their needs.

A.   Formal Mandates and Political Priorities

Legal Authority over Migration and Displacement

The first factor that limits cities' engagement in the area of migration and displacement is the fact that, in many host countries, cities lack a clear mandate on these matters. Municipalities can seek to attract new

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117   The differences in mandate between national and city governments highlight two aspects of governance decentralization: deconcentration and devolution. "Deconcentration" refers to aspects of the national government occurring not in the capital and but in different cities and regions; this manifests as local branches of various ministries and departments. Deconcentrated services are responsive to the national government, not local constituencies. "Devolution," on the other hand, refers to the transfer of power, budget, or policy mandate to a lower-level governing entity, such as a region or a city. These subnational entities are directly responsive to their constituents and are typically directly elected. See Yonatan T. Fessha and Beza Dessalegn, "Origins, Relevance and Prospects of Federalism and Decentralization in the Horn of Africa," *Nationalities Papers* 50, no. 5 (2022): 871–85; Diana Conyers, "Decentralisation and Service Delivery: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa," *IDS Bulletin* 38, no. 1 (2007): 18–32.

residents and welcome displaced persons, but they generally do not have a direct role in shaping and managing international migration.[118] Across the board, central governments directly manage issues related to admitting foreigners to the country, be they migrant workers, the spouses of migrants, or refugees. In Uganda, for example, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) alone holds responsibility for managing and coordinating the refugee response, and refugee policy is set at the national level.[119] The government justifies this centralized approach, in part, by treating it as a security and disaster concern.[120] In the past two decades, the central government has also leveraged national refugee policy to attract funding from international donors and, despite the government's authoritarian nature, to project a positive image on the global stage.[121] Beyond interests related to national sovereignty, security, and international reputation, central governments may also want to maintain strong control over migration issues due to domestic political sensitivities. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, migration from neighboring countries and tensions over migrants' access to land and citizenship have repeatedly triggered political turmoil (see Section 2.A.). The country lacks a comprehensive national migration policy, but because politicians from across the political spectrum regularly stoke these tensions, the central government tries to be the main entity steering these debates.[122]

The lines between national and subnational authority over migration-related issues get blurry when it comes to managing on-the-ground situations in secondary cities.

However, the lines between national and subnational authority over migration-related issues get blurry when it comes to managing on-the-ground situations in secondary cities, including in terms of which responsibilities are delegated to municipalities and deconcentrated services. For instance, in Uganda, OPM has branch offices in the main refugee-hosting regions, and these offices coordinate all activities related to refugee settlements. Interestingly, despite the OPM branch responsible for some of the largest settlements being located in Arua, this office does not have a mandate to assist urban refugees living in this or other nearby cities, nor can it take action to manage dynamics between refugee and host communities (see Section 2.B.).[123] Arua city leaders do not have a mandate to do this either, and their previous requests for OPM to address such issues have not been met.[124] As such, urban refugee populations often fall through the cracks because no government entity is in charge of supporting them.

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118 In some countries, such as Nigeria and Sudan, this sensitivity even extends to internal mobility and displacement.

119 While Uganda's refugee policies are guided by the 2006 *Refugee Act* and additional regulations adopted in 2010, the specific policy implementing these guidelines remains a draft, creating uncertainty and impermanence for local actors trying to abide by it. Author interview with Refugee Desk Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Arua, Uganda, June 1, 2022.

120 Ronald Kalyango Sebba and Franzisca Zanker, *Political Stakes of Refugee Protection in Uganda* (Freiburg im Brisgau, Germany: Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut, 2022).

121 Sebba and Zanker, *Political Stakes of Refugee Protection in Uganda*; Alexander Betts, "Refugees and Patronage: A Political History of Uganda's 'Progressive' Refugee Policies," *African Affairs* 120, no. 479 (2021): 243–76.

122 Zechlab, FES, and Combo, *Le Migrant en Côte d'Ivoire*.

123 Author interview with Refugee Desk Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Arua, Uganda, June 1, 2022; author interview with politicians, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.

124 Author interview with politicians, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.

BOX 3
Arua and Gulu: The Transition from Municipalities to New Cities

In 2019, the Ugandan central government decided to grant city status to ten municipalities, staggered over several years. Arua and Gulu were in the first tranche of new cities, being elevated from the eponymous municipalities of Arua and Gulu districts to independent city status in 2020. The official justification for this change was that it fosters economic development, creates jobs, and gives growing urban areas the management framework needed to develop sustainably. However, some observers argue it was simply a way of creating new constituencies to support the current government.

Arua and Gulu's elevation to cities expanded their territorial jurisdiction, increased their population, and began a messy process of divorcing them from their former districts. These changes took effect before the necessary governance infrastructure was established and before new legislative and budgetary arrangements were made. As a result, these cities have been operating with the same budgets they had as municipalities, while attempting to sort out a range of issues with their previous district governments, including those related to office space, assets, budgets, and policy mandates.

This has made it difficult for the city governments to hire staff and operate services (in particular, waste management, education, and city administrative services), with implications for both refugee and host communities. Two years on, in 2022, the cities could neither invest in necessary infrastructural improvements nor collect revenue from their newly designated constituents—resources necessary to take up the cities' expanded responsibilities. In interviews, some local stakeholders also described the new city governments as still operating with the mindset of a municipality, suggesting there is a need to build both expertise and a new perspective to rise to the occasion.

Sources: Jonas Mbabazi and Phoebe Atukunda, "Creation of New Cities in Uganda: Social Economic and Political Implications" (policy brief, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment, Kampala, Uganda, 2020); Tabu Butagira, "New Cities: How MPs Placed the Cart before the Horse," Monitor, July 1, 2020; Monitor, "Govt Fails to Fund New Cities," Monitor, May 31, 2022; Tobbias Jolly Owiny, "We Planned Poorly for Parent Districts – Govt," Monitor, September 28, 2022; author interviews with local politicians, civil servants, civil-society stakeholders, and experts in Arua and Gulu, June 1–10, 2022.

Addressing issues related to internal migration and displacement is often more straightforward for these cities, given that local actors have the legal authority to handle many matters relevant to residents who are nationals. Despite this, national governments may still want to have a hand in managing internal movement to avoid conflicts over resources. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, the national government remains concerned about periodic tensions between internal migrants and host communities in the southwest and has taken steps to manage these dynamics.[125] In other cases, political sensitivities lead to a gap in services for IDPs, similar to the one that often affects refugees. In Uganda, despite the civil war having ended more than 15 years ago, IDPs in cities such as Gulu remain in need of targeted support, especially for mental health and psychosocial services.[126] However, because the central government is keen to show that the Northern Region has moved beyond the conflict, it has advocated for a broader approach to regional development. As a result, CSOs are often the only entities responding to the specific challenges IDPs face in these urban areas.[127]

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125 In Côte d'Ivoire, movement from northern regions to the west have historically fed tensions around land ownership and national identity.

126 Author interview with a representative of the Refugee Law Project, Gulu, Uganda, June 7, 2022.

127 Author interviews with representatives of civil-society and nongovernmental organizations, Gulu, Uganda, June 6–10, 2022.

Local Actors' Political Priorities

Even without a specific mandate, local actors may have incentives to engage on migration and displacement issues. These decisions are shaped by the local context and migration patterns, residents' perceptions of newcomers, and political dynamics between cities and with other subnational and national actors.

In cities where service capacity is limited overall and the local economy is struggling, municipalities may prioritize interventions that target long-time residents instead of newcomers, especially foreigners. Tensions surrounding international migration and refugees can also limit the willingness of municipalities to take a strong position on these topics. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, unresolved grievances around land ownership and access to citizenship have meant that the presence of foreigners, especially Burkinabe migrants, remains a sensitive matter, and one that some political leaders prefer to steer clear of.[128] On the other hand, some cities have no choice but to respond to the presence of migrants or refugees, as Arua and Koboko in Uganda have done. Similarly, when the city of Adama, Ethiopia, received a large influx of IDPs from the Somali region in 2018, the absence of substantial international assistance meant Adama had to mobilize its own response and resources, coordinating housing and providing education and health care to new arrivals.[129]

> *In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, unresolved grievances around land ownership and access to citizenship have meant that the presence of foreigners, especially Burkinabe migrants, remains a sensitive matter.*

City leaders also align their priorities with local attitudes toward newcomers and their relationship with other residents. Secondary cities with a history of migration, such as those along major trading routes and those close to borders that experience regular cross-border movement, may be more open to responding to the socioeconomic needs of newcomers. For instance, in Korhogo, residents are used to people on the move and frequently assist vulnerable migrants with food, shelter, or by referring them to local services.[130] These same communities have, however, become concerned about jihadist groups active in neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali and the risk that they might cross into Côte d'Ivoire. This situation has fed prejudices against some migrant groups, and particularly men, who can be perceived as associated with these armed groups. In turn, some municipalities and deconcentrated services have become more reluctant to assist migrants.[131] Still, when newcomers have ethnic, cultural, and linguistic ties to a local community, attitudes tend to be positive (which can be a draw for newcomers). For example, the South Sudanese who settle in Arua come from the same tribes as many members of their host communities, making the public and government more

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128 Author interviews with representatives of CSOs, international organizations, municipalities, and deconcentrated services, San-Pédro, Bouaké, and Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12–24, 2022.

129 Easton-Calabria, Abadi, Gebremedhin, and Wood, *Urban Refugees and IDPs in Secondary Cities*.

130 Author interviews with representatives of nongovernment organizations, CSOs, and social centers, Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, June 21–24, 2022.

131 Author interviews with representatives of nongovernment organizations, CSOs, and social centers, Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, June 21–24, 2022.

receptive to providing assistance and supporting their integration.[132] A similarly warm welcome may occur when a host community has itself experienced mobility or displacement, as is the case in Arua, where many residents previously migrated to South Sudan during the war in Uganda.[133]

Finally, by engaging on refugee and migration issues, cities can benefit at the international level, just as the national government does. Municipalities that are seen as proactive in developing targeted responses for issues facing these populations and piloting new practices are more likely to attract international attention and funding. In Uganda, for example, Arua and Koboko have successfully advocated for greater international support for urban refugees and the communities in which they live. Seeing this, Gulu's political leadership is attempting to similarly prioritize refugee issues to stimulate international support.[134]

B.   *Key Roles of Local Actors*

Despite gaps and overlaps in their mandates when it comes to migration and displacement, municipalities, deconcentrated services, and CSOs all play key roles in planning for and responding to the needs of migrants and displaced persons. This includes managing essential and emergency services for newcomers, seeking to adapt infrastructure to the needs of growing and more diverse populations, and leveraging the skills of the whole local population to support a city's economic growth.

Emergency Response and Referrals to Essential Services

City authorities are often the first point of contact for migrants seeking support. In Bouaké, for instance, city staff report that when international migrants visit the townhall, they guide them toward the social center—a nationally funded community center where social workers can provide immediate assistance and refer people to other services—and to other deconcentrated services.[135] In various Ivoirian cities, municipal authorities, deconcentrated services, and community leaders also report good results in their efforts to register migrant children in local schools.[136] CSOs play a support role in service referrals in some places, such as Ugandan cities where the Refugee Law Project (run by Makerere University's Center for Forced Migrants) helps coordinate services for refugees in need, alongside navigating legal issues and providing legal aid to those in law enforcement custody.[137]

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132 Author interviews with representatives of civil-society and refugee-led organizations, civil servants, and politicians, Arua, Uganda, June 1–6, 2022; Sebba and Zanker, *Political Stakes of Refugee Protection in Uganda*. In addition, the movement of internal migrants from different ethnic groups into an area may generate more tension than the arrival of foreigners who share the same cultural background as the host community.

133 This welcome is not always guaranteed. In 2013, for instance, Arua District voted to expel refugees, only to have the Ministry of Interior intervene to allow them to stay. Author interview with Refugee Desk Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Arua, Uganda, June 1, 2022.

134 Author interview with politicians, Gulu, Uganda, June 9, 2022; author interview with a representative of Cities Alliance, April 6, 2022. These investments also help promote social cohesion, as at the national level, Uganda mandates that at least 30 percent of beneficiaries of international projects be host-community members.

135 Author interview with representatives of the sociocultural office in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, June 20, 2022.

136 Author interviews with representatives of municipalities, deconcentrated services, CSOs, international organizations, and bilateral development agencies, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12–24, 2022.

137 Author interview with a representative of the Refugee Law Project, Gulu, Uganda, June 7, 2022. See also Refugee Law Project, "Home," accessed August 12, 2023. The Refugee Law Project also provides support for refugee and host-community victims of sexual and gender-based violence; see Refugee Law Project, "Gender and Sexuality Programme (G&S)," accessed February 7, 2023.

Local actors' work is particularly important in the face of emergencies. For instance, in northern Ivorian cities, the local police often come across Malian and Burkinabe migrants who have been assaulted while crossing the border and refer them to local services such as social centers, hospitals, CSOs working with children or women, or their consulate for assistance.[138] In fact, social centers are an important resource for vulnerable groups seeking support in many Ivorian cities, and these centers often have staff with the training and expertise to handle the sensitivities of girls and women who have been the victims of abuse when crossing the border. Nevertheless, many centers lack sufficient resources, and even the institutions they refer migrants to do not always have the capacity to assist them.

These same actors often utilize referral mechanisms to respond to gender-related protection issues in more established migrant and displaced communities. In San-Pédro, Bouaké, and Korhogo, for examples, community members may alert local service providers to cases of sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and trafficking.[139] While deconcentrated services and CSOs across these cities have a high level of awareness of these issues, the limited budgets of social centers and their partners hinder their ability to assist survivors and manage complex cases in coordination with authorities in neighboring countries.[140] As a result, they often resort to informal solutions involving local country representatives, volunteers, and CSOs, which cannot always guarantee an adequate level of care and do not always follow standard operating procedures.

Adapting Infrastructure to Meet New Needs

Local actors help shape the development and maintenance of city infrastructure, from water and waste management to road and transportation networks. As secondary cities' populations grow, they need to expand urban infrastructure to account for increased usage, spur economic activity, and make the city a healthier and more attractive place to live. The scope of local actors' involvement in these infrastructure projects often depends on the extent of decentralization within a country. In Uganda, which is fairly centralized, many infrastructure-related decisions are made at the national level, but cities play an important role in conveying their needs to the central government. Cities and districts participate in formal planning processes, most recently having integrated challenges raised by the presence of a large refugee population into their local development plans for 2020/21–2024/25; this involved outlining the infrastructure investments needed for both refugees and host communities and asking that the central government make investments accordingly.[141] Another way local actors engage with infrastructure development processes is by participating in subnational development forums, which bring together district and city governments to map out refugee and host-community infrastructure needs and advocate for specific investments at the city or national levels.[142]

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138 Author interviews with local actors and representatives of CSOs, Korhogo and Ferkessédougou, Côte d'Ivoire, June 21–24, 2022.

139 Author interview with a representative of Save the Children, Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, June 20, 2022; author interview with a representative of a CSO, San-Pédro, Côte d'Ivoire, June 17, 2022.

140 Author interview with a representative of the social center in San-Pédro, Côte d'Ivoire, June 16, 2022.

141 Author interview with a representative of GIZ, Kampala, Uganda, May 30, 2022. While these plans account for refugees, they are limited, as with all policy documents in Uganda, to refugees registered in designated settlements. This reduces their efficacy in that they cannot help cities direct investment to refugee-specific needs, but they nevertheless are a step in the right direction for recognizing the implications of hosting refugees at the local level and could serve as a mechanism for responding to urban refugees in the future.

142 Author interview with a representative of a regional development association, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022; author interview with a representative of a regional development association, Gulu, Uganda, June 7, 2022.

Leveraging Mobility for Economic Growth

In parallel, local actors often seek to manage the arrival of newcomers in ways that will boost the local economy. Municipalities have an interest in supporting local businesses; attracting new companies, trade, and workers; and enhancing overall prosperity (not to mention the city budget). Policies and programs designed with these goals in mind may not target migrants specifically, but setting up an open business environment and facilitating international trade are deeply connected to mobility. In Arua, for instance, investments in a new city market that were facilitated by the municipality have provided additional space for refugees and host-community members, primarily women, to engage in formal economic activity. And despite being relatively new, demand for market stalls has already begun to outstrip supply, highlighting the ongoing need for this type of investment.[143]

Local actors also play an important role in addressing the economic pressures that accompany the arrival of new residents.[144] In order to prevent tensions, local actors may decide to target programming to both native- and foreign-born populations, as in the Urban Cash for Work initiative in Arua. Under this pilot of the Dutch-funded PROSPECT program, the International Labor Organization and the Ugandan

In order to prevent tensions, local actors may decide to target programming to both native- and foreign-born populations, as in the Urban Cash for Work initiative in Arua.

Ministry of Labor provided short-term work opportunities on municipal infrastructure projects selected by the municipality for both Ugandans and refugees, with women making up a majority of those targeted.[145] But more often, economic support activities are small in scale and involve less input from municipal actors. In Ugandan cities, for instance, CSOs have launched small-scale initiatives to promote economic activity, such as the innovation hub set up for refugees by a local refugee-led organization in Arua.[146] Other programs rely on mentorship and apprenticeship models, which have proved particularly useful in helping women find work in new fields.[147] To make these opportunities more widely available, civil-society actors could work with city and governmental actors, which provide support for Ugandan nationals through the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme and Youth Livelihood Programme, to expand these programs or create similar ones open to other resident populations.

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143 Author interview with a representative of a regional development association, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022. The success of the new market has been dampened somewhat by allegations of corruption in the way stalls were distributed, complaints from vendors over inaccessibility, and competition with the remaining informal markets. See Felix Warom Okello, "Vendors Abandon 500 Stalls at Arua Market for Streets," Monitor, June 3, 2022; Clement Aluma, "Arua City Vendors Protest Demolition of Makeshift Stalls," Monitor, July 13, 2022; Felix Warom Okello and Clement Aluma, "Fight over Stalls Leave Arua Market Vacant," Monitor, July 22, 2022.

144 For example, cities may face more job-market competition and higher unemployment as a result of new arrivals. And while displaced populations and vulnerable migrants often receive humanitarian aid and assistance from solidarity networks to meet their most pressing needs, host communities may resent not having the same support structure.

145 This program also has slots for youth, refugees, and migrants. Its aim was that 20 percent of beneficiaries would be refugees, but it is unclear whether the program met that target. See International Labor Organization (ILO), "PROSPECTS in Uganda at a Glance" (fact sheet, January 2022); ILO, "Implementing an Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP) in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Lockdown and Flooding in Uganda," updated October 8, 2020. Like many government programs, this one has faced its own challenges, such as ensuring beneficiaries are paid on time. Author interview with a civil servant, Arua, Uganda, June 3, 2022; Henry Lematia, "Beneficiaries of Urban Cash for Work in Arua Yet to Receive Funds," Uganda Radio Network, March 17, 2022.

146 Author interview with a representative of a refugee-led organization, Arua, Uganda, June 4, 2022.

147 Author interview with a representative of GIZ, Kampala, Uganda, May 30, 2022.

C.   Gaps in Financing, Capacity, and Engagement

Even when local actors want to respond to the challenges facing migrants and displaced persons and the communities in which they settle, they are often constrained by a lack of resources and capacity. Access to funding is a major challenge for both cities and deconcentrated services in Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda, though limited knowledge of migration dynamics and how to effectively engage with migrant and displaced communities can also hinder such efforts.

Availability of Resources

Local actors often lack the budget to fully address the needs of the most vulnerable populations, both long-time residents and newcomers. Secondary cities tend to be underresourced overall, with limited funding allocated to them by the central government and narrow capacity to generate their own revenue.[148] National authorities may recognize the need for additional resources to support internal migrants and manage internal displacement crises, but they may not respond to the presence of international migrants and refugees in the same way. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, the centers that deliver social services face budget restrictions, including those located in transit and destination cities for international migrants. In Uganda, cities (except Kampala) that welcome refugees do not receive additional funding from the central government because refugee response money only goes to official refugee-hosting districts, which they are not formally considered to be. As a result, cities such as Arua and Gulu have to work within the limited budget they receive from the national authorities.[149]

Issues related to cash flow further add to these funding shortages and undermine local action. In Uganda, for instance, city and district governments cannot predict when the central government will send them their allocated budget. Funds are directed sporadically throughout the fiscal year and have to be returned if not spent, meaning cities often find themselves rushing to spend as much of their remaining budget as possible in June (when the fiscal year ends) but may face funding shortfalls in other parts of the year. This uncertainty disrupts services because it precludes municipalities from consistently paying staff and contractors. Local governments also inevitably end up underspending their already limited budget.[150] This issue is particularly serious because cities do not have immediate access to revenue they directly collect. Rather, this revenue must first pass through the central government, subjecting it to the same unpredictability as the rest of cities' funds.

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148 In some countries, budget allocation also depends on historical and political factors. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, northern cities are known to be closer to the central government and have also needed additional support for reconstruction efforts after the wars. As a result, cities in the south may at times have felt neglected. The pandemic further reduced cities' own limited revenue streams, such as business tax revenue, market fees, and transportation taxes. Author interview with a civil servant, Arua, Uganda, June 3, 2022. Finally, many local authorities fail to collect local taxes, often for lack of resources and because large swaths of the economy in many low- and middle-income countries are informal.

149 For instance, funding for activities targeting women from host and refugee communities is restricted, with funding in Arua primarily aimed at Women's Day activities rather than more relevant and wider-reaching programming. Author interview with politicians, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.

150 Author interview with civil servants, politicians, and a journalist, Arua and Gulu, Uganda, June 1–10, 2022; Easton-Calabria, Abadi, Gebremedhin, and Wood, *Urban Refugees and IDPs in Secondary Cities*.

Over the years, some secondary cities have sought to attract international assistance to fill these gaps, especially when hosting displaced populations. However, many cities lack the capacity to engage directly with donors, and donors often lack the capacity to consult municipalities on their specific needs and instead engage with national authorities that may not have as fine-grained a picture of city-level needs. Donors also usually prefer to work with national governments, given this is the level at which strategic policy decisions are made. For example, in Uganda, the World Bank has funded or financed infrastructure projects in official refugee-hosting districts as well as in cities, but this work is coordinated at the national level and guided by national priorities and policies. The lack of official recognition for urban refugees means that the World Bank's Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development program cannot directly track whether and how many refugees are among the program's direct beneficiaries, though they (like all local residents) receive secondhand benefits in the form of significant improvements in city infrastructure.[151]

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In some rare instances, donors have allocated funding directly to cities. For example, the European Union, through its Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, is implementing a pilot project that directly provides 2.8 million euros of funding to Koboko municipality, a town an hour north of Arua and home to a large number of urban refugees, to improve socioeconomic inclusion and social cohesion for refugees and host communities. Koboko has actively advocated for this type of support, and its mayor is a leader among mayors in the region, which has helps the city's government more easily reach international donors.[152] But because of Uganda's cash flow requirements, the EU funds still have to go through the central government first, which has caused implementation delays and tensions between the municipality and central government.[153] At any rate, direct funding comes with its own challenges. For example, secondary cities often do not have the capacity to comply with international donor requirements, making it imperative that development agencies work to help them develop these skills (or that donors adjust their requirements).[154]

Information, Technical Knowledge, and Capacity

Beyond resources, some local actors are constrained by their limited knowledge of and mechanisms to address the specific challenges presented by migration and forced displacement. Local actors in secondary cities often do not have comprehensive data about the migrants and displaced persons living within their cities. City authorities and deconcentrated services usually have some information about internal migrants and IDPs, who can relatively easily register with national and local services after moving, but registration data are not always analyzed with an eye to identifying newcomers within the service population, nor do

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151 Author interview with a representative of the World Bank, Kampala, Uganda, May 31, 2022; World Bank, *Uganda - Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development Program Project: Additional Financing* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018).

152 Author interview with a representative of the EU Delegation to Uganda, April 29, 2022; EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, "CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility," updated December 6, 2021; author interview with a representative of Cities Alliance, April 6, 2022.

153 Author interview with a representative of the EU Delegation to Uganda, Kampala, Uganda, May 31, 2022.

154 Author interview with a representative of the EU Delegation to Uganda, Kampala, Uganda, May 31, 2022.

all people on the move register.[155] For international migrants and refugees, data are much more piecemeal, dispersed across governmental and nongovernmental sources, and not disaggregated in a way that would assist in the development and delivery of targeted services (e.g., by gender). In San-Pédro, Bouaké, and Korhogo, for instance, local actors report knowing roughly which nationalities are represented in the cities' migrant communities and which economic sectors they are engaged in. However, they lack actual data on these populations and have divergent perspectives on the size, characteristics, and vulnerabilities of these groups.[156] Similarly, in Gulu, city officials acknowledge that refugees have settled in some neighborhoods, but they have little information on the newcomers' profiles and occupations and how the challenges refugee women encounter may differ from those faced by refugee men.[157]

In addition, some local actors lack the expertise to engage effectively with migrants and forcibly displaced persons, for instance by delivering linguistically and culturally relevant services or addressing issues related to legal status and access to rights and services. These stakeholders may also choose not to or be unable to invest resources in developing this expertise to avoid being perceived as favoring these groups over other local residents. For instance, in San-Pédro, Bouaké, and Korhogo, there is no coordinator for migration issues at the municipal level despite the large number of migrants who live in these areas.[158] In comparison, deconcentrated services tend to have more experience responding to migration, but their work is often not systematically coordinated with that of municipalities.[159] Those deconcentrated services as well as some CSOs that are engaged on international migration issues often do so in the context of initiatives that aim to curb irregular migration, leading them to focus on preventing out-migration toward Europe rather than better managing intra-regional migration.[160] In Arua and Gulu, because urban refugees are integrated into the broader population of social service users, along with host-community members, these services' overall capacity constraints rather than their lack of refugee-specific expertise is often the dominant issue. In addition, CSOs, including those led by women and refugees, have gained substantial experience and expertise in working with these populations, allowing them to serve as trusted partners within the community and support the development and implementation of programming targeted to these newcomers' needs.[161]

Engaging Migrant and Displaced Communities in Policymaking

A third common constraint on local action is the absence of sufficient consultative opportunities through which migrants, displaced persons, and host communities can provide input on policy and program

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155 Easton-Calabria, Abadi, Gebremedhin, and Wood, *Urban Refugees and IDPs in Secondary Cities*.

156 Author interviews with city officials and representatives of deconcentrated services, San-Pédro, Bouaké, and Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12–24, 2022.

157 Author interview with Gulu City politicians and civil servants, Gulu, Uganda, June 8–9, 2022.

158 Where engagement exists, it usually takes the form of city representatives of sociocultural affairs in Bouaké and San-Pédro referring international migrants to deconcentrated services. Author interviews with representatives of municipalities, deconcentrated services, CSOs, international organizations, and bilateral development agencies, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12–24, 2022.

159 In social centers, for example, staff members are very aware of migration dynamics, but this information is not consolidated or shared with external partners. Author interviews with representatives of municipalities, deconcentrated services, CSOs, international organizations, and bilateral development agencies, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12–24, 2022.

160 These projects are primarily funded by European donors and include awareness-raising campaigns about the risks associated with irregular migration. They also include programs that assist migrants returning from Europe, Niger, Libya, and other countries as they reintegrate into Ivoirian communities.

161 Author interviews with representatives of women-led organizations, Arua and Gulu, Uganda, June 2, 3, and 7, 2022.

development. This limits local actors' ability to assess the needs of the communities they serve and to respond to feedback on policies and programs. One contributing factor in this regard is that many migrants and displaced populations do not have their own formal representative mechanisms. Developing such mechanisms is particularly challenging in countries such as Uganda, where refugee-led organizations face difficulties formally registering with local and national authorities (see Section 3.C. on this point). In Gulu, for example, a refugee community association had difficulty securing a meeting with city officials because the organization was not officially registered.[162] Some migrant- and refugee-led organizations, such as those run by refugee women in East Africa, also frequently lack sustainable funding sources, with donors often unfamiliar with their work, and the networks to effectively engage with authorities.[163]

In other cases, refugees are chosen to participate in consultative processes, but they may not be recognized as leaders by their own communities. For example, the board that oversees implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Uganda has refugee representatives; however, it is unclear how these representatives were selected, with one leader of a national refugee-led organization commenting that he had never heard of them.[164] The situation is different in Côte d'Ivoire, where representatives from migrants' origin countries and ECOWAS often play the role of formal intermediary between migrants and the local and central governments. These representatives are widely recognized as the go-to people for all sorts of issues, and local authorities may reach out to them to help manage conflicts between migrants and host communities. But there are limitations to this model as well. For example, the representatives tend to be men, meaning that female migrants may not be comfortable approaching them regarding sensitive issues such as sexual and gender-based violence.

Meanwhile, some cities have formal consultation bodies, though these often have limited decision-making power. For example, in Arua, the City Development Forum is a consultative body that gathers representatives from different local communities, including refugees, and identifies issues to be addressed by the city government. It is required by charter to have at least two women on the executive board, and as of June 2022, 40 percent of board members were women.[165] This forum has proved effective in raising awareness about challenges facing refugees in Arua, such as increasing difficulties accessing schools and health facilities.[166] At times, it has also helped resolve small-scale problems, such as grievances about a road construction project that disturbed graves.[167] A similar forum in Gulu has recently been reconstituted; however, as of mid-2022, there were no refugee representatives on it.[168]

162　Author interview with refugee leader, Gulu, Uganda, June 10, 2022.
163　See, for example, Andhira Yousif Kara, Abis Getachew, Mary Gitahi, and Uwezo Ramazani, *Refugee-Led Organisations in East Africa: Community Perceptions in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania* (Nairobi: Refugee-Led Research Hub, 2022).
164　Author interview with a representative of a refugee led-organization, Kampala, Uganda, May 31, 2022.
165　Author interview with the president of the Arua City Development Forum, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.
166　Author interview with a representative of a refugee-led organization, Arua, Uganda, June 3, 2022.
167　Author interview with the president of the Arua City Development Forum, Arua, Uganda, June 2, 2022.
168　In Gulu and Arua, officials also directly coordinate with CSOs and refugee representatives, in particular through community development officers. But such coordination reportedly has limited efficacy given the lack of actionable budget. Author interviews with representatives of CSOs and civil servants, Arua and Gulu, Uganda, June 1–10, 2022.

5   Conclusion: How Local Actors Can Enhance Socioeconomic Inclusion

For secondary cities in Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda, migration and displacement raise both challenges and opportunities. Local actors need to be able to adapt policies, infrastructure, and programming to prepare for new arrivals and meet the diverse needs of newcomers and the communities in which they live—whether these stem from sudden, emergency influxes or long-term integration processes—while also capitalizing on the skills and experience newcomers bring and promoting broader societal goals, including advancing gender equality.

Yet, as this study has shown, local actors face a range of challenges to effectively responding to migration's opportunities and challenges: many have an incomplete picture of who is moving to and staying in their cities, they generally have limited legal authority and capacity to act on migration issues, mechanisms for effectively engaging migrants and displaced persons in policymaking are often lacking, and many local entities have few opportunities to connect and coordinate with international humanitarian and

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development actors active on migration and refugee issues. Focusing on these four areas can help chart a path toward stronger local responses to migration and forced displacement and empower secondary cities to grow as key actors in this space.

A.   Collecting Reliable Data in Secondary Cities

The first challenge for local actors and their partners is the general lack of comprehensive data and analysis about migrants and displaced persons in secondary cities. In the Ugandan and Ivoirian cities visited during this study, there was a clear dearth of information about the profiles of these populations, where they settle and how long they intend to stay, what needs they have (especially the most vulnerable), and what opportunities and challenges their presence holds for a city.

Gathering, analyzing, and sharing such data are not easy, given the sensitivity of migration-related issues in many places and the significant resources required. An initial step (where this has not already been done) is for local authorities and their partners to acknowledge the presence of migrants and displaced persons within a city—something that can be politically sensitive if it requires recognizing, at least tacitly, populations living outside of a government's policy framework. Overcoming this barrier may involve champions within the municipality or the central government advocating for this to be done and steering the process. In Uganda, some city governments have pushed for better data, with Arua successfully advocating to development partners for a census of its Central Division (which was previously Arua

municipality) in 2020.[169] The populations being enumerated should also be engaged as active partners throughout the process, including by consulting leaders and representatives of certain target groups (such as women) on approaches to the survey. Active engagement of this kind can help overcome some communities' reluctance to interact with authorities, something particularly common among groups with precarious legal status.[170] It is also important to ensure the research tools used are culturally sensitive and that data collection occurs in a way that does not create harm.

Once local authorities and their partners agree to the collection of such data in principle, the next step involves answering questions about what entity or entities should design and manage the data collection. By working directly with national statistical agencies, cities and their development partners can ensure that the government takes ownership of the exercise (and manages political concerns) and that harmonized practices are used across cities. Nevertheless, these agencies' staff may lack sufficient resources and technical expertise to conduct detailed local surveys that account for mobile populations. In some contexts, international donors and development actors have stepped in to support capacity building among civil servants and local researchers embarking on such surveys.[171] For instance, in Uganda, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) funded Arua's census, which has proved a critical first step to establishing an accurate count of refugees living in the city. In such exercises, the disaggregation of population data by gender and age can provide an important baseline on which to build gender-sensitive and youth-focused programming. International support for the Arua census has also had broader benefits by helping strengthen the Uganda Bureau of Statistics' capacity to design and implement such research.

This exercise may be the start of a larger trend. In 2023, VNG International and Makerere University's Urban Action Lab conducted a survey that covered all of Arua City, as well as Gulu City and Koboko, and other actors, such as the Mixed Migration Centre, are conducting and publishing their own surveys of Arua.[172] These approaches could be replicated in other cities to move toward a more robust understanding of urban refugees across Uganda and potentially in other countries as well. It should be noted, however, that conducting multiple surveys with the same population (as is the case in Arua) runs the risk of creating survey fatigue, which not only leads to diminishing response rates but also can build resentment among the surveyed communities. As such, the actors designing and implementing these surveys should seek to coordinate their work as much as possible. Given the multifaceted nature of migration and displacement issues, quantitative surveys should also be complemented with qualitative research to contextualize the survey findings.

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169 Author interview with a representative of Cities Alliance, April 6, 2022. This has proved challenging in Côte d'Ivoire for a UN Habitat project collecting data on Abidjan, as there are conflicts over where in the government the work is hosted. Author interview with a representative of UN Habitat, March 23, 2022.

170 Many data collection challenges extend beyond secondary cities and are well discussed within research communities. As a result, local data collection efforts should seek to draw on best practices for working with these groups to ensure their safety during data collection as well as the security of the data. These include producing and abiding by do-no-harm guidelines, engaging with community leaders, and fully explaining the purpose of the data collection exercise and the potential benefits and risks of participation.

171 This is one of the objectives of the Global Compact on Migration.

172 Felix Warom Okello, "W. Nile Leaders to Turn Refugee Presence into Urban Opportunities," Monitor, August 29, 2023; author interview with a representative of Cities Alliance, April 6, 2022; Olivia Akumu and Emma Wachira, *4Mi Cities: Data Collection on Urban Mixed Migration – Arua City Report* (Geneva: Mixed Migration Centre, 2022).

The next set of considerations centers on how the data should be analyzed, disseminated, and used. City authorities may be able to conduct a survey but lack the capacity to analyze the data gathered and produce timely reports. Meanwhile, researchers from local universities or companies may have the technical capacity but lack the resources. And international development and humanitarian organizations may have the capacity and resources but lack the contextual knowledge and local networks to disseminate the findings. Given these limitations, partnerships and careful coordination are often key to making the most of these research exercises. For example, by improving how they share data, national and local officials and their implementation and researcher partners can make it easier to triangulate survey findings and other information sources and to feed the newly produced information into policymaking and programming. This includes making data publicly accessible and utilizing local actors' networks and relationships to raise awareness about the information.

As part of dissemination efforts, it is important to ensure that information is shared with the host, migrant, and displaced communities that are the focus of this research. This can be done in a number of ways, including local media stories, social media campaigns, press releases, and infographics. In countries and communities with lower literacy rates, it is particularly important to work with radio, television, and other non-written media outlets so that information can reach a wide audience. Such communication efforts can have wide-reaching impacts, including deconstructing prejudices and misconceptions about migrant and refugee groups (e.g., that certain groups are more well-off or more heavily reliant on government services than other locals). In recent years, actors such as the IOM, BBC Media Action (the international development branch of the British Broadcasting Corporation), and CFI (France's development agency focused on supporting the capacity of local media) have engaged in a wide range of trainings and produced media content for local journalists, and these approaches could be further replicated to ensure broader media engagement with migration and displacement stories.[173]

B.   *Building Local Capacity on Migration and Displacement Issues*

For officials in many secondary cities, as well as state representatives and CSOs at the local level, migration and displacement are relatively new topics, and they may lack the knowledge and experience to effectively integrate mobility considerations into their work. For instance, some may be unfamiliar with the legal framework governing immigration and displacement, the issues affecting specific groups (such as migrant women and children), or how to interpret migration-related data to make informed decisions. A municipality's government may also not have the institutional infrastructure to manage migration and displacement, and the division of labor between local authorities, the national government, and nongovernmental actors may be unclear. Therefore, efforts to build local capacity are critical, including investments in both individuals and governance structures.

Building the capacity of local actors to engage effectively with migration issues can involve a wide range of activities, from trainings to study visits to peer-to-peer exchanges. In Morocco, for example, international projects have organized migration-related awareness-raising and peer-learning sessions for subnational

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173 CFI, "Journalistic Approach to Migration-Related Issues: Initial Training in Senegal," updated September 15, 2022. For an example of training on how to combat disinformation on migration, see IOM, "EU-IOM Joint Initiative Organizes Media Training for North African Journalists on Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration" (news release, September 28, 2022).

authorities.[174] These efforts have reportedly increased local officials' knowledge about Morocco's national migration and asylum strategies.[175] International city networks can also play a part by providing city officials with relevant examples and lessons learned by peers in other cities. For instance, the EU-funded

Building the capacity of local actors to engage effectively with migration issues can involve a wide range of activities, from trainings to study visits to peer-to-peer exchanges.

Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM) project has set up a network of cities in North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe that are facing migration challenges and organized regular exchanges between local staff on these issues.[176] In Uganda, the governments of Arua and Gulu are working with international actors on migration management, which includes trainings and convenings on local governance and migration. Gender issues should be systematically integrated into these efforts, and the participation of female government staff and women-led organizations should be encouraged. Creating specific objectives or monitoring indicators to incentivize the involvement of women and to track whether gender equality is treated as a strategic topic in capacity building activities can help in this regard.[177]

At a structural level, many cities would benefit from better-developed mechanisms for local governance of migration- and displacement-related issues, alongside better tools for coordinating between local actors and central governments. These systems would help clarify what role each actor plays and ensure that vulnerable groups do not fall through the cracks due to confusion over responsibilities. The need to more clearly delineate local and national responsibilities is not specific to the migration portfolio, and lessons could be drawn from coordination mechanisms established in other policy areas. For instance, Côte d'Ivoire has set up local thematic working groups on priority topics such as child protection and sexual and gender-based violence. These working groups gather local and state officials, including from the police force and social services, and could be used as a model by efforts to mobilize stakeholders to better manage migration issues in secondary cities. In Uganda, the Office of the Prime Minister's branch offices already steer local coordination mechanisms focused primarily on refugee settlements, but these could be a starting point for the development of similar forums focused on urban refugees, especially as they already bring significant subject matter expertise on issues affecting the country's refugee populations. Beyond coordinating at the local level, cities need to be able to work directly with migration and displacement actors in their country's capital in order to inject local insights, concerns, and expertise into the formation and implementation of national policies. Local engagement with representatives in the national legislature could be one way to do this, as could regular consultations jointly facilitated by ministries in charge of migration and local governance.[178]

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174 These include the European-funded Regional Migration Initiatives Programme, the Deployment of Migration Policies at Regional Level project, and the project Strengthening Selected Moroccan Municipalities in the Management of Migration.

175 Author interviews with provincial representatives, Oujda, Morocco, April 2022.

176 EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, "Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM) – Phase II," accessed August 28, 2023.

177 The project Coopération Régionale des Politiques Migratoires (CRPM), for instance, is a migration governance project that has developed a range of specific monitoring indicators on gender equality to track the gender balance in government delegations and CSOs as well as the extent to which gender equality was an objective in project activities. See Expertise France, "CRPM - Coopération régionale des politiques migratoires," updated April 19, 2021.

178 In Uganda, for example, this could involve the Ministry of Local Government and the Office of the Prime Minister.

Finally, cities need a budget that reflects the additional responsibilities that come with managing migration and displacement. Better (and gender-disaggregated) data on the needs of migrant and displaced populations and their host communities can help inform central authorities' funding discussions (where these are population based), though nationally allocated funds may still not be enough to meet local needs. This is where humanitarian and development actors can assist, by earmarking development assistance funding at the national level for programs targeting migrant-receiving cities and by supporting local actors working in these areas. In Uganda, for instance, SDC is supporting Gulu City through the UN Capital Development Fund, with a particular focus on financial management and capacity building.[179] This will not only help improve Gulu's refugee response by enhancing its understanding of and ability to muster the financial resources to respond to forced displacement, but it could also allow Gulu to better engage with donors on other issues.

Another option is for international actors to provide funding directly to municipalities. Because donor application and reporting requirements can be complex, doing so should come with additional support to help municipalities meet these regulations. The knowledge gained in the process can in some cases benefit local actors beyond the migration field. Channeling funding directly to local actors can, however, be a sensitive proposition, given that would mean bypassing the central government. This sensitivity can help explain why, for now, private foundations (which do not have the same diplomatic or political relationships with host governments as internatioanl organizations and donor governments) are the actors most likely to work directly with cities to pilot migration-related interventions. For example, in November 2022, the Global Cities Fund for Migrants and Refugees received a top-up of USD 1.2 million from the IKEA Foundation to work directly with municipalities on issues related to migration, displacement, and climate.[180] Direct funding is thus an approach whose tradeoffs should be carefully assessed, and whose viability may depend on the political context and the actors involved.

C.   *Strengthening Consultations with Affected Communities*

Engaging migrants, displaced persons, and host community members in meaningful consultations can enrich local responses to migration in a variety of ways. Such engagement is a crucial tool for contextualizing data and analysis as well as building trust between these communities and local actors. It can also act as a reality check during the design and implementation of policies and programs, helping verify that the most pressing issues are being prioritized and addressed, that the approach used is locally appropriate and gender-sensitive, and the risks associated with the planned activities have been identified. This process can also help earn the buy-in of relevant stakeholders, facilitate implementation, and ultimately allow for more effective and accurate evaluation.

But consultations must be well planned and carried out in order to reap these benefits. Engagement with migrant and displaced populations can sometimes be tokenistic, especially when conducted by international actors that do not have a robust local presence and networks in the secondary cities involved. When consultations are organized as one-off exercises to inform a specific project, there is also a risk

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179 Author interview with a representative of the UN Capital Development Fund, Kampala, Uganda, May 31, 2022.
180 C40, "Global Cities Fund for Migrants and Refugees Announces 6 New African City Grantees Delivering Solutions for People Affected by Climate Crisis" (press release, November 16, 2022).

that any benefits will be short lived and not lead to more durable, impactful forms of engagement. This is why established consultation mechanisms, where they exist, are good starting points for bringing the perspectives of migrant and displaced communities into policy discussions, alongside those of the host community. In Uganda, for example, development actors and local officials can rely on bodies such as the Arua City Development Forum to not only learn about issues as they arise in local communities but also to bounce ideas off and get feedback from local residents and build public awareness of upcoming projects.

Ultimately, to be effective, consultation mechanisms need to account for the full range of vulnerabilities and needs within a community, including those of women and youth—populations often underrepresented in official processes. Ensuring this diversity of profiles and needs is represented can involve

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giving a platform to CSOs led by these groups, for instance women who have created formal or informal organizations, such as community-based networks. However, because such groups often have limited support and resources,[181] CSOs led by migrant women and refugees could benefit from training on how local governance mechanisms work and how to participate effectively as well as long-term mentorship by host community members who are similarly engaged in advocating for local interests. International donors and other partners in these consultations should also reflect on how to compensate CSOs for the time and the expertise they share in these forums (in the form of core support, for instance) as many of the individuals involved face financial pressure and have full-time occupations they are taking time away from to participate.

D.   *Improving International Coordination and Global Advocacy Efforts*

Better coordination between the many actors involved in addressing migration-related issues—municipalities, state actors, and local CSOs, alongside humanitarian and development organizations—is needed to fully leverage each one's expertise and networks to improve how migration and displacement are managed at the city level. This starts with fostering connections between cities at the country, regional, and global levels. At the country level, regional development forums and local government associations can provide the space for local actors to organize joint advocacy around shared concerns and help ensure migration and displacement issues are on the political agenda. These organizations can partner with other umbrella organizations, such as national networks of refugee-, migrant-, or women-led organizations, that may be interested in advocating for the same issues from a different angle.

There are also opportunities to raise the profile of local migration-related issues at the global level. The governments of secondary cities may find global networks such as United Cities and Local Governments, Cities Alliance, and the Mayors Migration Council promising forums for such efforts. They can also work within regional structures such as the Horn of Africa's Intergovernmental Authority on Development and

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181   Demba Fall, Kamden, and Gamberoni, *Regard actuel sur les mobilités féminines transfrontalières ouest-africaines*; Kara, Getachew, Gitahi, and Ramazani, *Refugee-Led Organisations in East Africa*.

ECOWAS to build regional policy models for cities. Capital cities have long been represented in these global networks, but secondary cities—with sufficient resources and support—could play a greater role.

Finally, international donors, humanitarian agencies, and development actors should aim to improve how they coordinate with each other to best address the needs of migrant- and refugee-receiving secondary cities. Rather than operating in siloes, as is standard practice, better communication and collaboration could help foster more cohesive international efforts. Improved coordination should span from the design phase of policies and programs to sharing data and lessons learned, with the goal of avoiding the duplication of efforts that currently exists and identifying opportunities for synergy. Coordination efforts should also extend to strategic discussions; for example, international actors could work together to navigate the political complexities of supporting cities' push for policy reform. Upcoming global processes such as the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 and informal convenings of donors and development actors ahead of time could steer these conversations, provided secondary cities are given a seat at the table.

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By investing in these four areas, development, national, and local actors can strengthen local responses to migration and forced displacement and empower secondary cities and their partners to grow as key actors in this policy area. These strategies promise to help cities leverage their first-hand experiences to develop and advocate for more effective policy and programming at the local, national, and global level. And once developed and implemented, these policies and programs can help ensure that migrants, displaced persons, and host communities in secondary cities alike are socioeconomically better off, and that these cities can grow sustainably.

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