Virtual Knowledge-exchange Session on

Municipal response to the COVID-pandemic in refugee-hosting cities

Date: 27th August 2020

Time: 13:30-15:00 CEST

Language: English and Arabic

In refugee-hosting cities particularly in those where refugees have settled in camps, measures to avoid community transmission of the virus, such as physical distancing and frequent hand-washing, would be difficult to implement. In the time that most refugee-hosting countries reported local transmission of COVID-19, avoiding an outbreak of the coronavirus among refugees calls for special measures tailored to the needs of this vulnerable group. For example, information-sharing through local networks of community volunteers, religious leaders and humanitarian workers became a decisive factor in combatting the spread of the virus. Other effective measures undertaken by refugee-hosting cities have put the Global Compact for Refugees into action with respect to targeting migrant and refugee communities in the context of the pandemic. These measures include the inclusion of refugees and displaced persons in public health systems, addressing challenges related to accommodation, water, sanitation and hygiene, infrastructure, food assistance, and environmental challenges in or near refugee hosting areas during the pandemic. Furthermore, developing guides and websites available in multiple languages has also been registered as good practice since such information signposts help mobilize resources to assist refugees and other people who are displaced or stateless.

In this virtual session, the experience of the municipal unions of Dreib Al Awsat and Jurd El Qayteh in Lebanon will be presented and their good practice of developing and employing an open source tracking application will be showcased. In addition, insights from Irbid (Jordan) will be shared by the representative of the city's municipal council who will shed light on the economic impacts on refugees and host communities employed in the agricultural sector. Moreover, questions we seek to answer include:

1. What have been the core challenges for refugee-hosting municipalities?
2. What measures have refugee-hosting municipalities implemented to protect the vulnerable group of refugees?
3. Are there any lessons learned with respect to service provision and preparedness against pandemics in refugee-hosting settings such as camps?

Contribution by participating municipalities

1. For this virtual session, municipal representatives can either 1) share an experience from their city **and/or** 2) provide reflections and answer some questions posed during the webinar. If a PPT would be prepared, it should include:
    i. A brief description of the practice (also mention if it was initiated before or during the pandemic)
    ii. Benefits accrued especially in this phase
    iii. Lessons learned
    iv. Replicability of the practice
2. After the virtual session, participants can continue their exchange on Connective Cities virtual platform within dedicated virtual working groups.
3. Possible development of joint projects on topics discussed during the virtual session.