

CHAPTER

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**United Nations Institute  
for Training and  
Research**



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## United Nations Institute for Training and Research

The UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)<sup>1</sup> is a training arm of the UN system. It has provided capacity development opportunities for Member States in the field of international migration since the late 1990s, spearheading the first inter-agency training task force in developing regions, leading to the eventual establishment of a number of regional consultative processes (RCPs); launching the migration and development policy seminar series at the UN Headquarters in New York in 2006 through which hundreds of government delegates are trained annually; and contributing substantively to many international processes, including the Global Commission on International Migration, and since 2007, the GFMD. It also co-facilitates the GMG Task Force on Capacity Development with IOM.

### 1. Migration and development activities since the 2006 High-level Dialogue

Despite their responsibilities in negotiating what at the time was an annual UN General Assembly resolution on migration and development, government delegates in New York had little support in learning and exchanging information on this subject with experts and among themselves prior to 2006. In 2006 UNITAR began to implement the Migration and Development Seminar Series at the United Nations. The series has been funded by the MacArthur Foundation, and also supported by UNFPA and IOM.

Since 2006 the Migration and Development Seminar Series has: (a) imparted knowledge to thousands of diplomats and other migration stakeholders; (b) served as a networking hub for policymakers; provided the opportunity for non-governmental actors to have access to discussions and deliberations; (c) instructed government representatives in the context of intergovernmental deliberations on migration and development at the United Nations and elsewhere; (d) enabled governments, in particular those which have chaired the GFMD, to use this platform to impart knowledge on the Forum and to receive feedback from constituents; and (e) amassed a significant body of knowledge, which is accessible to a larger public on the UNITAR website.

In 2007 UNITAR began to implement the International Migration Law Course (IML) at the United Nations. Annually, 30 to 40 diplomats are certified in IML. Experts who serve as resource persons for IML come from the range of relevant fields, which include migration, refugee, human rights, humanitarian and maritime law. IOM co-implements the course, and the MacArthur Foundation has supported it.

<sup>1</sup> UNITAR was established as an autonomous body within the UN system in 1965, and is governed by a Board of Trustees and headed by an Executive Director. The mission of UNITAR is to deliver innovative training and conduct research on knowledge systems to develop capacities of beneficiaries in the fields of environment; peace, security and diplomacy; and governance. It currently serves some 27,000 beneficiaries annually by conducting more than 400 capacity development and research activities around the world. Further information about the Institute is available at [www.unitar.org/the-institute](http://www.unitar.org/the-institute).

Through its Human Mobility Programme, UNITAR seeks, among others, to strengthen local governance in the field of migration. In 2012 the Learning Platform on Human Mobility (LPHM) was launched. Co-founded and co-developed with the Government of Flanders and the City of Antwerp, the LPHM is a global platform dedicated to strengthening the capacities of local and regional leaders to address migration and human mobility challenges through a prestigious, hybrid curriculum of “face2face” and online learning developed with pre-eminent experts in the field. The first LPHM course, “Addressing public perceptions of migrants, mastering communication strategies and partnering with the media,” took place on 15–16 May 2013, followed by courses on marginalization and migrant youth in October 2013, and entrepreneurship and migrant communities in November 2013.

Through 2015, the LPHM will deliver capacity development to hundreds of local and regional government officials globally; develop an online community of practice and support; build a body of knowledge accessible to a larger public in both in-class and online forms; share valued insights with different levels of governance, including, but not limited to intergovernmental forums such as the GFMD. Further, it will work in parallel with these, drawing from relevant regional and international networks such as the UNITAR–CIFAL Network (see below), EuroCities, Cities of Migration, the EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) and the International Metropolis Project.<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Support provided to the Global Forum on Migration and Development**

In collaboration with its partners, UNITAR has supported the GFMD process by formally lending its UN-based platform for (prior and post) information-sharing on the GFMD since the first GFMD hosted by Belgium in 2007. The Institute has shared the (annual) body of knowledge accumulated with GFMD Chairs.

In addition, UNITAR staff served on the advisory body for the Civil Society Days in 2009 and has contributed informally to civil society organization inputs within the GFMD since 2007.

## **3. Identified good practices**

One good practice has been to maintain open channels of communication with Member States, in particular developing country representatives, who often do not have the same levels of material support to familiarize themselves with this policy area. Before the establishment of the Migration and Development Seminar Series, there was no outlet for informal policy discussions among policymakers and other

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<sup>2</sup> Visit [www.unitar.org/human-mobility-programme](http://www.unitar.org/human-mobility-programme) for more information.

migration stakeholders on this issue at the United Nations. It is evident that such an outlet has served to share knowledge, and, just as importantly, to connect players, introduce emerging issues and push collective thinking.

A second good practice has been to focus on proper needs assessments, which can and have emerged from open discussions on areas of differing competence among and across countries. Many of the seminars in the Migration and Development Seminar Series have led to more precise, detailed and demand-driven capacity development courses, including in the fields of environmental change, humanitarian disaster and data-gathering.

A third good practice has been to support individual champions who have shaped policy advancement in this field. As many of the same government representatives participate in the migration seminars over a two- to three-year period (and receive certification in the IML course), during which they receive an induction in migration policy and practice. A number (from Ecuador, Haiti, Niger and the Philippines, for example) have gone on to serve as migration experts in their respective countries, and as lead facilitators in intergovernmental negotiations in this field.

#### **4. Challenges identified in carrying out UNITAR work**

As the world becomes more reliant on new technologies for imparting knowledge, it is important that the United Nations offer more opportunities for online and blended learning. The LPHM courses represent for UNITAR a first example of blended learning in this field and will draw both from the Institute's extensive e-learning catalogue<sup>3</sup> and its "City Share" methodologies. Much more work needs to be done through the United Nations to update instructional methodologies and to integrate the conceptualization and delivery of capacity development at all levels of governance.

#### **5. Gaps evident within the migration and development sphere**

One gap, as argued in the 2009 Human Development Report of UNDP, is that migration and development must look at internal dimensions. This is particularly relevant as we bring to the fore new, and, in many cases natural, partners such as local and regional authorities (LRAs) and civil society organizations (see below).

<sup>3</sup> Visit [www.unitar.org/event/elearning](http://www.unitar.org/event/elearning) for more information.

## 6. Recommendations for the 2013 High-level Dialogue

- (a) Effective capacity development is central to strengthening States' ability to address governance challenges. However, in the migration field as in others, there exists a glaring inability to demonstrate the results and to analyse the full impact of capacity-building programmes because of the lack of systemic measurement of results of learning interventions. The link between learning outcomes and development goals is often weak, and the chain of results not well articulated. The United Nations must work to ensure professionalized capacity development planning, design, delivery and monitoring and evaluation.

Effective capacity development: (i) is founded on demand-driven approaches; (ii) requires early needs assessment (and consultation with stakeholders); (iii) is dependent on explicit qualitative and quantitative learning objectives; (iv) works best with blended training methodologies and through innovative support and knowledge tools; and (v) can only be evaluated through sophisticated means of monitoring and evaluation.

- (b) As epicentres of human mobility, with more migrants expected to arrive in city centres in the next 30 years than ever before, a greater focus is required on the role and support of LRAs in promoting integration and social cohesion through thoughtful urban planning and effective provision of basic services, among others. LRAs are best positioned to address important migration-related challenges including those pertaining to: (i) social cohesion and adapting to change; (ii) economic growth and entrepreneurship; (iii) human security; (iv) environmental change; (v) access to health services; and (vi) youth empowerment.

A City's "body language" can have a determining influence on successful efforts at inclusion. LRAs must work on how to develop neighbourhoods in which migrants are ensured access to what is needed to prosper, for example, adequate and appropriate housing, viable schools, actualized enfranchisement, employment opportunities, among others. If designed with demographic needs in mind – incorporating local talent and interests – such services are more likely to yield results.

- (c) There is a need to better understand the impacts of CSOs' contributions to migration policymaking, and to ensure their effective inclusion in intergovernmental forums. Indeed, until recently, CSOs broadly defined as non-governmental organizations, diaspora groups, religious institutions, trade unions, advocacy groups, among others, have had a relatively limited role in influencing the policy debate due to the nature of international migration and of policy networks in this field. However, more recently "state partnerships with CSOs ... [have become] known to infuse policy debates with new perspectives and critical on-the-ground knowledge of

what migrants need and want...”<sup>4</sup> CSOs can also use soft power to impose “moral authority” and play an important implementation and monitoring role.

In line with the priorities outlined above, the GMG has established the Task Force on Capacity Development, co-facilitated by IOM and UNITAR, whose objectives through 2014 include to: (a) act as the GMG focal point for activities related to capacity development, collecting and disseminating current GMG capacity development activities within the GMG and to the wider public; (b) promote good practices in the area of effective learning and knowledge management (including needs assessments and evaluations) and their application to capacity development activities undertaken within the context of the GMG Multi-Annual Work Plan, and where relevant, relating to the actualization of GFMD recommendations; (c) deliver joint GMG capacity development products in conjunction with the other working groups and task forces, and building on priorities identified within the GFMD process; and (d) build and support a network of institutional partners including (migration-dedicated and non-migration-dedicated) national and regional training centres in the field of migration and development in the post-2015 context.

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<sup>4</sup> N. Banulescu-Bogdan, *The Role of Civil Society in the EU’s Migration Policy: Perspectives on the EU’s Engagement in its Neighbourhood* (Washington, D.C., Migration Policy Institute, 2011), available from [www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/eucivilsociety.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/eucivilsociety.pdf).

