Autumn Academy 2018

Opportunities and challenges in cooperation between government and civil society in the management of migration in Europe and North America

Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford
10 - 13 September 2018

Final Report

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The Autumn Academy 2018 is a symposium for senior policy makers, NGO leaders, academic experts and foundations involved in the development, implementation and study of immigration and asylum policies in Europe and North America. Held annually in Oxford (UK), the Autumn Academy provides a precious opportunity, in a private roundtable setting, to share knowledge, expertise and ideas; consider the implications of research evidence and analysis; critique policy and practice options; learn from differing approaches in Europe and North America and consider their potential applicability in differing contexts across the Atlantic.

In 2018, the Academy addressed the issues raised by cooperation between government and civil society in the management of migration. In particular, participants explored the differing ways in which government at national/federal and local level is increasingly working with civil society organisations in the implementation of migration policies: from refugee resettlement and sponsorship programmes, search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean and support for unaccompanied minors, to innovative initiatives at city level, as well as formal and informal structures in which governments engage civil society in policy development.

Working relationships between government and civil society bring significant opportunities for both parties and for the implementation of migration policy. While essential, these relationships can be fragile and carry economic and political costs for both parties. Through discussion and reflection, the symposium aimed to identify general principles on which successful future relationships can be built.

The symposium was organised by the **Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity**, the knowledge-exchange arm of the **Centre on Migration, Policy and Society** (COMPAS) at the **University of Oxford**. Funding was provided by **The Social Change Initiative**, supported by **Atlantic Philanthropies**.

This report was created to summarise key points noted from presentations and, without attribution, from the discussions. The final session drew together some of the themes and learnings that emerged and was summarised separately in a document available [here](#). Links throughout the report provide access to the presentations provided in Oxford and to video interviews with the participants.

Co-directors of the Autumn Academy 2018

Dr Sarah Spencer
Director, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS

Nicola Delvino
Senior Researcher, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS

Participants of the Autumn Academy 2018 at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, 2018

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Gabriela Agatiello	Policy and Membership Development Officer, Eurodiaconia, **Belgium**
Carol Baxter	Head of Asylum Services, Equality and Integration, Department of Justice and Equality, **Ireland**
Fariborz Birjandian	Chief Executive Officer, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, **Canada**
Jacqui Broadhead	Senior Researcher and Project Manager, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, **UK**
Pedro Calado	High Commissioner for Migration, High Commission for Migration, **Portugal**
Robert Carey	Leadership in Government Fellow, Open Society Foundations; former Director, US Office of Refugee Resettlement, **USA**
Lorraine Cook	Policy Manager, Migration, Population and Diversity Team, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), **UK**
Gabriele De Giorgi	Former Political Adviser to the Prime Minister of Italy, **Italy**
Els de Graauw	Associate Professor of Political Science, Baruch College, The City University of New York, **USA**
Nicola Delvino	Senior Researcher, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, **UK**
Christos Dimopoulos	Manager of Protection and Integration Projects, Doctors of the World – Greek Delegation, **Greece**
Mary Giovagnoli	Executive Director, Refugee Council USA, **USA**
Mark Greenberg	Senior Fellow, Migration Policy Institute; former Deputy Assistant Secretary, US Department of Health and Human Services, **USA**
Hannah Gregory	Deputy Director, Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration Directorate, Home Office, **UK**
Simon Güntner	Professor of Spatial Sociology, Technical University, Vienna, **Austria**
Thomas Huddleston	Research Director, Migration Policy Group, **Belgium**
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Pietro Mona	Ambassador for development, forced displacement and migration, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, **Switzerland**

Caroline Oliver	Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Roehampton, **UK**
Aurélie Ponthieu	Coordinator Forced Migration Team, Médecins sans Frontières, **Belgium**
Christina Pope	Network Director, Welcoming America, **USA**
Corinne Prince	Director General, Settlement and Integration Policy Branch, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, **Canada**
Colin Rajah	Civil Society Liaison on the Global Compact on Migration, International Organization for Migration (IOM), **USA**
Sarah Spencer	Director, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, **UK**
Nicola Thomas	Deputy Director, Resettlement, Asylum Support & Integration Directorate, Home Office, **UK**
Maaike Wit	Project officer, Utrecht Refugee Launch Pad (URLP), **Netherlands**
Myrto Xanthopoulou	Senior Program Officer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, **Greece**

Opportunities and challenges in cooperation between government and civil society in the management of migration: a global perspective

Pietro Mona, Ambassador on Development, Forced Displacement and Migration, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

Watch the interview with Ambassador Pietro Mona here.

As a representative of a federal government which has played a central role in the negotiations towards the drafting of the UN global compact on migration, Ambassador Mona gave a keynote speech addressing trends, observed at international level, related to partnerships between governments and civil society in the field of migration. In particular, the role of civil society in this relationship has often been described on one side as "unsung heroes", and on the other as "political scapegoats", however, none of these concepts catches the reality and the complexity of the role played by civil society in the area of migration.

From a governmental perspective, civil society is, first of all, a *partner* with whom governments can together address the challenges and opportunities brought by international migration, and develop migration policy. This partnership is essential, especially in countries of the "Western World", whose migration and reception systems would collapse without the fundamental supported given by civil society. This partnership, and the role played by civil society, can develop into different forms and shapes, according to whether civil society acts within extensive state systems of social intervention, or within countries with a more *laissez faire* approach.

Yet, the civil society-government partnership is not one without significant challenges. The notion of civil society itself is "highly political" and the actions of certain civil society groups can be seen as a "threat to national sovereignty", especially in relation to a highly sensitive policy field such as migration. One consequence of this is that civil society organisations often do not receive due recognition for their crucial role.

Does that mean that they are "unsung heroes"? While this concept may not sound problematic, in fact it is not correct, as indeed it does not capture their role as partners to the government. NGOs cannot and do not want to take over the responsibilities of governments. They cannot and do not want to invest financial resources that only governments can provide. The example is given by proposals and schemes on "civil sponsorships" of refugees, where civil society plays a central role, but one that cannot be carried out without the financial engagement of a government. On the other hand, NGOs add incredible resources to the partnership, but their means and actions need the overview of governments. For instance, civil society can bring the contribution of volunteers who do an enormous job, often under the radar. Yet, their contribution brings with it crucial questions for governments, in respect of quality standards, for instance, establishing liabilities, or ensuring the continuity of their action. These questions can found answers in the overview role that governments play.

The partnership with civil society brings enormous opportunities. Civil society, for instance, plays a crucial role in working on complex issues, such as trafficking, undocumented migrants, stigmatisation of Muslims, the link between migration and criminality or terrorism, and migrants in prison. These are issues that the public may not want to hear about, or that are difficult to discuss

in the political stage. In this sense, the partnership with civil society allows for a pragmatic approach to these issues.

The second connotation of civil society as "political scapegoats" is more problematic. Civil society organisations, particularly those active in the field of migration, are easy targets for political accusations that divert attention from political discussions about the solutions to irregular migration. See the case of NGOs carrying out search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Mediterranean Sea. Political scapegoating of NGOs is no new phenomenon, but in recent years it has reached a concerning level of intensity and the narrative against NGOs is increasingly gaining ground. It is a concerning trend that impacts not only on the partnership between governments and civil society, but on any partnership and on the concept of "multilateralism" too. As much as NGOs, the UN and international organisations have also been attacked politically in recent electoral debates in Europe and North America.

Ambassador Mona continued with reflections on how to address these trends. These can develop around three "clusters", and ensure the continuity of partnerships between governments and civil society:

- *Perception*: civil society and governments should cooperate in developing a good perception of their partnership. Civil society has to play a central role in the development of the narrative on immigration. This is vital, because NGOs can have an impact on the narrative on migration, but at the same time, the space of civil society itself to operate depends on the narrative. If NGOs working on migration are perceived as a threat, migration itself is seen as a threat.
- *Partnership:* civil society has to be part of the solution to the challenges brought by migration. For the reasons previously mentioned, working with civil society brings an added value to the management of migration.
- *Policy and politics*: civil society equally has to be part of the process of developing migration policy. The key point to achieve this result is to ensure the credibility of civil society and establish confidence between governments and NGOs. For this reason, clear channels of communication are necessary, as shown throughout the process of negotiations for the Global Compact on Migration – where, despite tensions and challenges, civil society found a space to be heard.

The presentation concluded by touching on some ways forward to improve the relationship between civil society and governments in the area of migration, through the strengthening of civil society organisations:

- Recognition of the role of civil society in "bridge-building" between society, governments and migrants themselves. Civil society can be a place for encounter and building trust.
- Communications between civil society and governments should always be based on evidence. In this, a key role should be played by academia. The work of civil society creates expertise and experience that builds civil society organisations' credibility.
- Networking across civil society organisations is key. Networks between organisations working on migration in Europe are crucial. It is also important to develop networks with organisations that are not working on migration specifically but on, for example, women or children. That would strengthen the position of migrant organisations, allow more knowledge exchange, and learning from the battles won by other movements.
- At the same time, a strong engagement with diaspora communities and migrant organisations is necessary. Only in this way can NGOs demonstrate the relationship between

immigration and development. Diaspora organisations do much more than simply providing support, they engage with the authorities of the destination countries, e.g. with the police or other authorities. Their role needs to be recognised and strengthened.

- Innovation: the innovative nature of NGOs should be recognised and made available for governments
- Youth: civil society has the valuable opportunity of engaging youth and youth has the energy to bring change, and do not fall in the 'us versus them' narrative. It is a huge potential for the work of civil society, and its interactions with governments.

Discussion

The presentation of Ambassador Mona stimulated a discussion on the need for governments in partnership with NGOs to protect the image of that relationship in a context of toxic narrative on immigration and civil society, and on the nature of civil society itself. In particular, it was debated that:

- The more toxic the narrative on immigration and civil society is, the smaller the space for cooperation. Cooperation can happen more significantly in national contexts where the public debate is not overtly anti-immigration. Even within the same country, as in the UK, the approach of authorities towards civil society working on immigration can be very different according to how the immigration debate evolves in different areas of the country (as, for instance, between England and Scotland).
- In such contexts, governments, which see the added value of cooperating with NGOs, should be attentive in safeguarding the reputation and credibility of their civil society partners. Governments may indeed be a dangerous partner for NGOs in that they could easily "destroy" the reputation of their NGO partners if they use them for political scapegoating, as seen in the case of SAR NGOs in Italy. In a context of a toxic narrative, NGOs can lose the trust of public opinion very quickly but it is in the interest of governments not to lose their civil society partners. At the same time, NGOs operating in sensitive areas such as migration should be ready to react to changes in public opinion quickly, and governments should support them in rebuilding their reputation.
- The toxic narrative is one in which "facts" and evidence are increasingly not believed by public opinion. This is a danger for the sustainability of partnerships, which are based on evidence and pragmatism. Facts, figures and evidence are not enough to conquer the emotions and the support of the wider public, yet they should be the basis of any cooperation between governments and civil society.
- To improve cooperation, the narrative should be improved. Concepts of security and solidarity should not be counter-posed. Solidarity can increase security and vice-versa.
- Defining what "civil society" is not a straightforward process. The concept of civil society embraces a diverse range of actors responding to different needs and with different nature. Trade unions, faith-based organisations, foundations, chambers of commerce, migrant organisations, and so forth, they all play a role in the responses to immigration. Moreover, civil society evolves, as its nature is fluid. Relationships should be tailored to the needs civil society responds to, and the nature of civil society organisations, and to the different approaches taken by different entities.
- The corporate sector and businesses are also important actors that should be taken into consideration in the equation. Businesses have been increasingly active in relation to migration, and lessons can be learnt from the cooperation between businesses and governments.

- In their diversity, civil society should build networks to interact with governments, as this makes cooperation easier.
- It is wrong to consider all "civil society" as migrant-friendly. Many overtly anti-immigration governments found their roots in civil society movements with right wing and populist views. In Europe, we could observe a shift in civil society from the left to the right wing of the political spectrum.
- Civil society should question the "legitimacy" of their operating as non-elected actors. Governments may see in this a weakness of civil society. At the same time, civil society organisations are "respondents to needs", and in this sense, they can operate in the interest of the wider public and in line with the political views of elected representatives.

Tuesday morning 11th September: Trends and drivers in collaboration between government and civil society in Europe and North America

Chair: **Thomas LaCroix**, Research Fellow, Maison Française d'Oxford

Cooperation between governmental authorities and NGOs in the field of migration

Dr Sarah Spencer, Director of Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, Oxford, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK

Nicola Delvino, Senior Researcher, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK

Download the PowerPoint presentation here.

The organisers of the Autumn Academy 2018, Sarah Spencer and Nicola Delvino, provided a general presentation on the trends and drivers in the relationships between governmental authorities and civil society cooperating in the field of migration, drawing on the background paper they had written. Sarah Spencer opened the session with an overview of the main trends observed in academic and policy literature in the cooperation between government and civil society generally, before entering into discussions specifically related to the migration field. It was explained how in a context of neoliberal reforms and austerity there has been an increasing space for cooperation between governments and civil society organisations. This increase is observed at all levels of governance (particularly at local level) and in a variety of fields, particularly in the area of service provision and policy implementation, and to a lesser extent in the area of policy development. The presentation mentioned that the challenges and opportunities in that cooperation – which would be explored throughout the week – are found to be related to the intrinsic differences in roles, priorities and aims that characterise the two actors involved in the government-civil society relationship.

Sarah Spencer introduced a classification initially designed by Professor Adil Najam of relationships between governments and third sector organisation, based on the differences and similarities in the goals and strategies of the different actors involved in the cooperation. Government-NGO relationships could be classified as 'cooperation', 'co-optation', 'complementarity' and 'confrontation', according to whether NGOs and governmental agencies interact with similar or dissimilar ends and/or means. This classification would be used throughout the week by the participants of the symposium to frame the discussions around their experiences of NGOs and governments interacting in the migration field.

Figure 1. The Four-C's of NGO–Government Relations

		Goals (Ends)	
		Similar	Dissimilar
Preferred Strategies (Means)	Similar	Cooperation	Co-optation
	Dissimilar	Complementarity	Confrontation

Najam, A. (2000). The Four-C's of Third Sector Government Relations: Cooperation, Confrontation, Complementarity, and Co-optation. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 10(4).

Nicola Delvino then delved into trends and drivers in the cooperation in specific area of migration management. The peculiarities of cooperating in this field were presented, related mainly to immigration being a highly centralised national prerogative (thus limiting the opportunities for NGO activities) and at the same time a strongly sensitive topic (which implies volatile political support and reputational risks and advantages for the actors involved). Nevertheless, there are many examples of interactions between governments and NGOs in different areas of migration management, at all levels of governance, in different contexts, and with different models of cooperative relationships.

Nicola Delvino's presentation then focused on specific national examples, namely: the cooperative relationship between the Italian government and the NGOs involved in search and rescue operations in the central Mediterranean; the cooperation between the British Home Office and Refugee Action in the assistance of voluntary returns from the UK; cooperation between the US government and non-profit "agencies" in the resettlement of refugees to the USA; and schemes of private or community-based sponsorship for refugees, with a particular focus on the 'Canadian model'.

For all these examples, the presentation introduced the main elements that could characterise the NGO-government relationship as an example of cooperation, co-optation, complementarity, or confrontation. The evolution of these relationships from one classification to another overtime was also noted. Finally, Nicola Delvino discussed examples of cooperative relationships in the field of integration policies.

Sarah Spencer concluded with a list of opportunities and challenges, for both governmental and civil society actors, in cooperating in the migration field. That list (which can be found in the attached presentation and in the background paper to the Autumn Academy) was created through a study of examples of cooperative relationships that could be identified in academic and policy literature.

Respondent 1: Thomas Huddleston, Research Director at Migration Policy Group, Brussels

Watch the interview with Thomas Huddleston here.

Thomas Huddleston pointed at other areas of collaboration in the field of migration and focused on NGO's areas of strength identified by the Migration Policy Group (MPG) through the coordination of the European Website on Integration and capacity building trainings. These include legal advice, expert advice for governments, mobilisation and communications. As NGOs are quicker respondents to governments' evidence needs than academic research, the role of NGOs in providing evidence (as expert insiders/outsiders) was particularly stressed. Similarly, Thomas Huddleston stressed the importance of the role played by advocacy organisations.

It was noted how in the field of migration, NGO-government partnerships are very behind in terms of setting out partnership agreements; and how partnerships between local authorities and NGOs are more common and offer examples for cooperation at national level.

The impact of politicisation of immigration in the years of the "refugee crisis" on government-NGOs relationships was noted. The increased politicisation of immigration debates reduced the space for cooperative agreements and advocacy in the immigration field. This has often led the relationship to shift to confrontation and to difficulty for NGOs in identifying a role in their relationships with governments. NGOs operating in the field of migration have often been political scapegoats in the years of the refugee crisis. At the same time, politicisation also led to an increased appetite for NGO collaboration, external mobilisation and advocacy as a response to hostile public attitudes on migration.

Respondent 2: Els de Graauw, Associate Professor of Political Science, Baruch College, The City University of New York

Els De Graauw noted that civil society is a very broad terminology that includes a variety of diverse actors, including NGOs, non-profit, immigrant serving organisations, but also Chambers of Commerce, Trade Unions, and so forth. The different nature of civil society actors plays a role in the evolution of relationships with governments.

She then focused on two larger issues for discussion:

First, she challenged the assumption that – using Najam's typology – 'cooperation' is the ideal state of relationships between governments and civil society; that it is preferable to complementarity, confrontation or co-optation. Such an assumption can be found both in scholarship and practice, but it is not proven that other states of relationships would be less effective *vis-à-vis* the goal of 'best serving migrant communities'. She invited the participants to reflect on whether instances of confrontation and co-optation need to be part of the picture in order to provide challenge to official policies (though not to the extent where the relationship becomes destructive). There can sometimes be a 'revolving door' between NGOs and government where NGO workers 'advocate from the inside' – does this help or hinder the situation?

Secondly, Els De Graauw stressed the importance of analysing the context in which the relationships between governments and NGOs evolve. In different contexts, different rules and historical legacies can have a significant impact on the evolution of cooperative, complementary, co-optive or confrontational relationships. Historical attitudes ('big government' or *laissez faire* approaches to immigration and or integration) can affect how NGOs operate, as much as different national rules on, for example, taxation, funding or lobbying regulation.

The presentations and responses were followed by a discussion that focused on the evolving nature of government-NGO relationships over time. Recent years have shown dramatic changes in the relationship, with NGOs being severely marginalised (in particular at the national level) in both the US and Europe.

The importance of different contexts was flagged by several participants, with certain contexts being more conducive to cooperation and others to confrontation.

- This includes different historical contexts. In countries like France, NGOs' social intervention was pre-existing in the area of migration, thus we should talk of an "internalisation" of NGO services, rather than an "externalisation" of services to NGOs.
- Cooperation also takes different forms if it happens in ordinary longer-term contexts, or in contexts of emergency, as during the 'refugee crisis' in Greece where, notwithstanding the crucial role played by NGOs in that context, a situation of chaos and panic would not allow any structured cooperation.
- Cultural context is also crucial. For instance, it was questioned whether confrontation can be "productive", and it was remarked that it would be productive in some cultural contexts, as in Canada where a confrontational experience developed into a mature collaborative relationship where partners developed the ability to manage reciprocal expectations. This cannot be said in other contexts, as in Scandinavia where there is a culture of consensus, and confrontation is always seen as a situation to avoid.
- The local level is a context where more productive cooperation could be established, both in Europe and in the USA. However, this may also lead to tensions with other levels of governance and to political and institutional defensiveness, which does not lead to positive engagement.
- Certain contexts are simply not conducive to cooperation. Situations where minimal human rights standards are not respected (e.g. in poorly thought out reception systems) can only lead to confrontation.

The diversity of the actors involved in the relationship is also of crucial importance:

- There is a difference in collaborating with politicians or civil servants, which is also affected by who has influence within government at a particular point in the political cycle.
- Similarly, there is diversity in the civil society sector and in their approach to governments.

The source of funding was found to be a crucial factor in determining the relationships:

- Some NGOs rely on public funding, which impacts on their independence and on the relationship they have with governments. Other NGOs refrain from obtaining public funding to preserve their independence. However, private funding and independent philanthropy are not always an alternative answer, as this kind of funding can be short term. It is important to differentiate between different sources of funding.

Taking Canada and Ireland as two contrasting national approaches towards engaging NGOs in the management of migration and integration, the session explored the implications of different models, the discussion drawing in examples from other countries.

Cooperation between government and civil society in the management of migration: the Canadian approach

Corinne Prince St Amand, Director General of the Settlement and Integration Branch of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Watch the interview with Corinne Prince St Amand here.
Download Corinne Prince St Amand's PowerPoint presentation here.

Corinne Prince St Amand comprehensively set out the long-standing Canadian approach of planning and delivery of services with Provinces, municipalities and NGOs. Her presentation explained the benefits of having a multi-annual plan for forward planning and the financial stability for NGO partners. The expectation that each newcomer will become a Canadian citizen sets the context for high quality service provision and the expectation that all tiers of government, the public and employers will play a part in facilitating integration. The government's 'whole society' model of integration, framed by legislation and enabling programmes, directly engages a wide array of actors who are essential to their success. It is not a question of whether to collaborate with civil society but of how. The outpouring of support for Syrian refugees in the past year had led to further planning with NGOs and contributed to some internal reorganisation to be able to enhance the department's planning capacity.

Ireland's Approach to Managing Collaboration with NGOs on Migration Issues

Carol Baxter, Head of Asylum Services, Integration and Equality, Department of Justice, Ireland

Watch the interview with Carol Baxter here.
Download Carol Baxter's PowerPoint presentation here.

In contrast to the Canadian case, Ireland's experience of *in*-migration is more recent but NGOs similarly play a key role in relation to resettlement, provision of services and informing public service providers on refugees' needs. As in Canada, the programme had to be adapted to accommodate the Syrian refugees. Asylum seekers, however, are accommodated in 'Direct Provision' by the government, a system of which many NGOs are critical so that relationships with NGOs are more confrontational. In relation to the wider Integration Strategy, NGOs are regularly represented on committees including the Minister's oversight committee, meeting quarterly to review progress, to which they bring their particular expertise. Whereas mainstream services are for the population as a whole, NGOs can deliver pilot, targeted services to meet particular needs. The government wants to build the capacity of NGOs so that they can contribute more to integration and has a Communities Integration Fund that contributes to this. NGO are contributing to development of a Community Sponsorship programme for refugees. The government also seeks their views when it is reporting to the international monitoring bodies and there is a need for

specialist NGO expertise to inform government policy. Ireland's history of emigration helps to create a culture in which the contribution of migrants to society is recognised. Any delegation of delivery to NGOs raises issues of monitoring quality outcomes, not least where volunteers are part of delivery and of resolving issues if relationships break down. NGOs are disproportionately dependent on government funding as little philanthropic funding is available. In a competitive environment for funding, NGOs need to attract media attention but government can be sensitive to negative media reporting.

Discussion

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Even long established programmes continually need to adapt to changing circumstances, so relationships with partners also need to evolve.
- While cooperation between government and NGOs can be highly productive, and harmonious where there is a shared vision, trust and respect, challenge and confrontation can also be important as a driver for change.
- Key to success in these relationships is channels of communication. Canada has a National Settlement Council, for instance, meeting twice yearly to discuss an agenda which government and civil society develop together; but there are also many other fora for discussing forward plans, identifying gaps in the programme and proposals for improving services and outcomes.
- In a mature, long-term relationship of trust, NGOs can feel able to share the challenges they are experiencing as well as their successes.
- Rebuilding relationships after there has been strong criticism from NGOs, and particularly if there has been a breach of trust, can be difficult. Civil servants want to take as few risks as possible so that it can in these circumstances, and more generally, be difficult to move beyond arms-length consultation.
- Governments are (and need to be) aware that NGOs are also taking risks and need to see gains if they engage with government in a controversial system or programme. Otherwise, they can lose support and resources. More broadly, it is a question of each 'side' being aware of the need to manage each other's expectations from the relationship. However, the question is how to achieve that level of reflection and understanding. The answer is for each to be explicit, to lay out on the table what they need, and for there to be a joint planning process. The conversation on expectations may need a third party facilitator. The relationship can still break down but it is more likely to avoid misunderstandings.
- The absence of a far right party in both countries, of politicisation of the issues and polarisation of views (relative to many other countries) has helped to set a conducive context for integration and, arguably, of good government – civil society relationships.
- Yet public attitudes can change – both to become more negative in response to events, and (not always so visibly in the media) more positive in public offering unprecedented levels of assistance.
- The role of political leaders is maintaining that consensus is hugely important – listening to concerns across the country and talking with local communities about the place of migrants within them. That helps to build the positive narrative that can combat negative and sceptical views.
- Provinces and local authorities do not feel squeezed out by government-civil society partnerships if also receiving funding and being part of co-planning of integration and resettlement initiatives.

- Changes in political leadership in government can have a significant impact on relations with NGOs. A negative political climate on migrants and refugees can lead to relationships that are more conflictual but also to NGO concern about voicing criticisms of policy and of being targeted together with migrants as the problem rather than the solution. On the other hand, elections do not bring a change of integration system in Canada or Ireland in the same way as it has in the USA. There is greater consensus across parties on what is needed, and institutional continuity.
- There appears to be a difference in the extent to which migrants themselves are directly engaged in planning and delivering resettlement and integration programmes in Canada while significantly less so in European countries.
- The level of resources allocated to these programmes in Canada, and procedural efficiency such as the speed with which refugees are provided with a work permit, facilitates long term and effective planning and delivery.
- Canada and Ireland stand out as two countries that do have national integration strategies, and in each highlighting the role of NGOs in their delivery.
- Where the media or other third parties voice criticisms of government's NGO partners for doing the work in which they are engaged with government, government needs to defend them – and vice versa.
- It is not however for governments to take a role in how the NGO sector develops, to rectify imbalances between silos for instance.

Tuesday afternoon 11th September: Cooperation in refugee resettlement and private sponsorships in North America and Europe

Chair: **Jacqui Broadhead**, Senior Researcher and Project Manager, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK

Overview of U.S. Refugee Admission Program

Mary Giovagnoli, Executive Director, Refugee Council, USA

Watch the interview with Mary Giovagnoli here.
Download Mary Giovagnoli's overview and notes on the US Refugee Admission Programme here and here.

Mary Giovagnoli introduced the main features of the US resettlement programme which relies on the involvement of nine U.S. refugee resettlement non-governmental agencies with over 200 local sites and affiliates. Resettlement in the USA is historically linked to NGO involvement, as NGOs were active in facilitating the settlement of refugees to the USA even before the US Congress regulated the US resettlement programme in the 1980 Refugee Act. When the US federal government started implementing resettlement, NGOs had the right expertise and experience to offer in this field, and therefore the programme evolved around a scheme of public-private partnerships between the federal government and the resettlement agencies. For a long time, the programme has represented a successful model of public-private partnership, one based on fluid communications between the NGOs and the government. Resettlement is not the only area where the US government relies on private actors in managing migration and, for instance, businesses are involved in the management of immigration detention centres.

The US resettlement programme has seen, however, dramatic changes in the last years, which led to a significant downsizing of the programme, and consequently of the number of non-

governmental actors needed to implement the programme. Many organisations saw significant reductions in the federal funding received to do resettlement work, and had to rely on alternative funding to survive. All this has inevitably impacted on the relationship between the federal government and the non-governmental agencies that traditionally supported the government in implementing the resettlement process. Many of those agencies and a number of advocacy organisations are represented in the Refugee Council USA (RCUSA), which became increasingly active in the last years to give voice to non-governmental actors on the issue of resettlement. The US refugee admission programme has suffered from a general backlash of public opinion on immigration, including on refugee issues, which led to the downsizing of the programme and to a deterioration of communications between NGOs working on resettlement and the federal government. One main consequence of this is that gaps and problems in the programme that pre-existed this deterioration in communications are becoming more evident, as less-fluid communications are not able to address them.

Civil society engagement in the US Resettlement Programme and the current 'crisis'

Robert Carey, Leadership in Government Fellow, Open Society Foundation; former Director, US Office of Refugee Resettlement

Watch the interview with Robert Carey here.

Robert Carey, as the former Director of the US Office of Refugee Resettlement could provide an overview of how the programme looks today compared to during previous administrations of the US federal government. He provided additional details on public-private partnership that characterises the US resettlement programme, and clarified to what extent the US scheme is a 'hybrid model' between the Canadian model of private sponsorship and the schemes of countries whose resettlement programme is fully government-owned. This is due to how the resettlement was initially framed by the US Refugee Act of 1980, and the system can hardly be changed towards a 'private sponsorship scheme' of Canadian inspiration, as this would require amending the 1980 Act. Carey restated the concerns over the current downsizing of the programme, which led to a "crisis" of the non-governmental infrastructure on which the programme had relied. The NGO actors, however, now have an opportunity to ask themselves how to best use their "infrastructure" to serve refugees and other populations beyond the resettlement programme, or how to improve the infrastructure itself in view of a future when the 'crisis mode' will terminate, or when the volumes of resettlement will be restored to the same levels seen during previous administrations. It is now an opportunity for NGOs to address the gaps that flawed the system. At the same time, while the programme was downsized, NGOs concomitantly registered an increased engagement from civil society in support to refugee families. The US resettlement programme is indeed based on community engagement and on personal contacts between the refugees and local communities. It is an opportunity to consider how to capitalise on this engagement now and when the 'crisis window' comes to an end.

Opportunities and challenges of refugee resettlement (Canada)

Fariborz Birjandian, CEO, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Canada

Watch the interview with Fariborz Birjandian here.
Download Fariborz Birjandian's PowerPoint presentation here.

Fariborz Birjandian, who was himself a refugee to Canada, provided a historical overview of Canadian refugee policy, which traces its origins to 1776 when Canada was sheltering Black Loyalists during the American Revolution. More recently, in the last century, Canadian refugee policies evolved around the engagement and involvement of local communities since the arrival of significant numbers of refugees from the Vietnam War. At that time, the surge in arrivals led many local groups, particularly religious and catholic communities to get involved in supporting the settlement of those refugees. Since then, the Canadian government in cooperation with local bishops and other community leaders decided to capitalise on volunteer engagement to arrange the resettlement of refugees to Canada. In that context, the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society was founded. Therefore, the Canadian tradition of refugee resettlement relies on three elements: welcoming communities, migration managed in small centres, and the active involvement of faith groups (80% Christians). Canadian refugee policies rely both on a system of government sponsored refugee resettlement and schemes of private sponsorships of refugees from the communities. Around 7,500 are resettled through government-sponsored resettlement, while around 16,000 refugees are resettled through community sponsorship. Therefore, community sponsorship represents a great opportunity and asset for the government in their resettlement policies. In both cases, there is a mix of community involvement and government funding. The assumption in that relationship is that government funding does not make civil society a "contractor", as community-based organisation represent the people and provide a service with and for the people. Yet, there are challenges in the relationship, which is in constant evolution. These challenges relate mostly to managing the political obligations of government, the costs for resettlement (which need to be kept sustainable), and to managing the expectations of both government and civil society on what is feasible. These challenges are exacerbated in a context of increasing volumes of refugees and consequently their needs. Moreover, this relationship and the schemes, while they build on community support to resettlement and refugee policies, also need to be aware of and consider people's fears vis-à-vis immigration and refugee policies.

Working with civil society: what we have learned (the United Kingdom's Community Sponsorship Scheme)

Nicola Thomas, Deputy Director, Integration & Vulnerability, Resettlement, Asylum Support & Integration Directorate, Home Office, UK

Download Nicola Thomas' PowerPoint presentation here.

The experience of the British Community Sponsorship Scheme offers many lessons on the opportunities and challenges for government of working with civil society in the sponsorship of refugees. Nicola Thomas explained how the scheme was set up with a decision and backing of the British Prime Minister following the many offers of British families and business to host Syrian refugees during the years of the 'refugee crisis'. The history of the scheme therefore offers an example of the opportunities and challenges of capitalising on a will to engage local communities. This is a relatively small scheme (concerning 20,000 refugees to be sponsored) compared to the spontaneous arrival of refugees to the country, but it marked a new way of working on refugee resettlement with non-traditional partners. It was a proof of concept that although there could be challenges in working with civil society in this area, it is possible and it offers many opportunities. In particular, the presentation focused on how the involvement of NGOs and community organisations allows government to capitalise of a willingness of people to engage in hosting refugees. Indeed, when in 2015 the British government registered a widespread will of British citizens to engage in support of incoming refugees and offered their resources and expertise to do

so, the main challenge for both government and the people was to define how to use those resources and expertise in a coordinated manner. The many offers were not channelled through a coordinating body or infrastructure, which made it hard for the government to accept the offers or coordinate the actions of generous citizens. NGOs and community organisations represented the linking factor between the government and the people, in that they offered a structured framework that could serve as a convener of people's offers to engage, and an expertise on how to coordinate and use volunteers' engagement.

Yet, there are many challenges in this way of working. One such challenge was to find a balance in the need of government to set minimum standards for refugee reception that would be offered by volunteers, without imposing too much on volunteer workers. Another challenge was that civil society and the Home Office were not traditional partners in this area, therefore the scheme needed to be based on a co-design approach to manage the expectations of both parties. The co-design approach allowed both parties to be aware of what were the limitations of the scheme (e.g. in terms of budget), but also to make the British scheme unique and tailored to what British civil society and the UK government could offer. It also allowed a feeling to develop that government and civil society were taking the responsibility and risks of the scheme jointly.

Discussion

The discussion focused on how changing political contexts and narrative on migration can impact on resettlement and sponsorship schemes, and on the relationship between government and non-governmental agencies.

- The experience in the USA shows that hostile migration narratives can profoundly impact on resettlement schemes, regardless of how successful the schemes prove and how strong the relationship between government and NGOs are. To secure a good relationship between governments and NGOs in the area of resettlement, partners need to be mindful of keeping a good narrative on resettlement.
- Similarly, a good narrative on the relationship itself must be safeguarded, e.g. by trying to solve differences of views between NGOs and government with discretion and without involving third parties and media which could send the wrong messages on the quality of cooperating between government and NGOs.
- Racism and xenophobia play a role in impacting on sustainable refugee policies. Hostile immigration narratives can impact on the narrative of regulated resettlement inflows and it would be naïve to think of immigration and resettlement narratives as watertight compartments. Thinking that narratives on refugees should be kept separate from immigration narratives is part of the problem, not a solution.
- In the UK, people's engagement with the Community Sponsorship schemes and a generally supporting public opinion on refugee resettlement was key in ensuring the birth and successes of the programme. Governments and NGOs need to ask themselves how to obtain similar support in other areas of migration management.
- Narratives on migration and resettlement are different at national and local level. At the level of local communities, local engagement breaks down the partisan perceptions of migrants and refugees.
- Engaging communities in the management of migration flows helps foster a positive narrative on migration.
- Changing political contexts, as in the US, can be seen as a threat to the sustainability of resettlement schemes and other cooperative schemes between governments and NGOs in

the area of asylum and migration. NGOs need to be mindful of changing political contexts, and be ready for them.

- At the same time, political change offers opportunities for NGOs: to reflect on their work; on how to adapt their infrastructure to changing political climates; and on how to use their infrastructure to serve different populations and different needs when political change occurs; and to address gaps in the infrastructure with a view to consolidating it and keeping it sustainable in changing political contexts.

The discussion also focused on the opportunities and challenges of working with non-traditional partners:

- This can be challenging as work can suffer from reciprocal bias and suspicions over the partner. Working together, co-designing, clear communications and a good management of reciprocal expectation help get over those challenges.
- To work with non-traditional partners, compromise is needed. Working on managing reciprocal expectations is key. Government may offer opportunities and support to NGOs, yet NGOs need to be aware of the limitations of what they can do together with the government.
- Yet, working with non-traditional partners allows many opportunities to both government and NGOs. The UK's example on NGOs being the convener of the energies of British citizens is the perfect example. Government can do much more with the support of trusted NGOs, can understand better people's needs and resources, and can secure support for its policies.

Group problem solving exercise – solutions to challenges identified so far

Participants divided in four groups to focus on identifying solutions to the challenges identified in the earlier presentations and discussions, and from their own experience. Below are the key points fed back to the roundtable:

- Replicating community sponsorship programmes despite different contexts, (already happening e.g. in Italy and France), helps get community ownership of the resettlement of refugees, a promising practice that is attracting funding.
- In Europe there is greater scope at the local level for the kind of institutionalised relationship between government and NGOs that we see in Canada as cities/local authorities are more willing to sit down with different stakeholders, including unions and business for regular dialogue, in order to keep channels of communication open and continuous and not only in emergencies.
- Who should initiate these relationships, at national and local level? Is it NGOs or government? Depending on the context, it could be philanthropic organisations.
- Common principles and minimum standards sound good – but standardising frameworks in practice is problematic.
- There is a need to move away from 'silo working', not just on refugees or economic migrants but also to shift the narrative away from groups on to issues, e.g. to focus on employment, housing, health, and bringing community together under those headings. The focus here would then be community development (rather than community relations) so that communities feel they are benefitting.
- If the first point on narrative is to focus on issues not groups, the second is to focus on the positive.

- Changing the narrative needs a budget for communication, and for the long term not just an ad hoc initiative.
- Philanthropy could play a stronger role in bringing government, NGOs and private sector organisations together – although how would be different in each country.
- Need long-term collaboration between NGOs and government, but a question then is what the mechanism is to ensure that new civil society organisations get an opportunity to participate.
- NGOs are most powerful to influence new legislation, so there is a question how to maximise their capacity to play that role.
- Government and NGOs need to have a more sophisticated approach to crisis planning, including responding to the media.
- Local authorities need to facilitate volunteers or their motivation is wasted.
- Need long-term commitment to NGOs not short-term funding.
- Need long-term shared vision.

Wednesday morning 12th September: Cooperation in the context of emergency: search and rescue in the Mediterranean

Chair: **Nicola Delvino**, Senior Researcher, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK

Relationship between the Italian Government and NGOs in the activities of search and rescue in the Central Mediterranean

Gabriele De Giorgi, Former Political Adviser to the Prime Minister of Italy

Watch the interview with Gabriele De Giorgi [here](#).
Download Gabriele De Giorgi's PowerPoint presentation [here](#).

Gabriele De Giorgi's presentation focused on the Italian Government's approach to Search and Rescue (SAR) including providing an overview of the shift in government and NGO relations. The presentation provided a historical overview of Italian and EU engagement in search and rescue operation in the Central Mediterranean, from the delivery of the Mare Nostrum operation (by the Italian Navy) through to the significantly more limited Triton operation (delivered through the EU) and the EU military operation Sophia. It explained how search and rescue activities were increasingly complemented by NGO boats authorised to disembark rescued people in Italian ports. NGOs were initially seen as a helpful support to governmental efforts and were fully integrated in the SAR framework developed by the government. This, however, was accompanied by a shift in Italian public opinion in relation to search and rescue from 2015 to 2017. Polling presents a complex picture, but broadly showed increasing antipathy towards search and rescue. This had an impact on the public imaginary of NGOs engaged in SAR activities, and an increasing view was heard that NGOs use search and rescue to increase their own profile. These accounts led the government to ensure that NGOs were operating in an appropriate and legal manner, and required their agreement to of a Code of Conduct for NGOs operating at sea. This has matched a broader shift in policy from 2015 to 2018 from cooperation with NGOs, through to increasing tensions and breakdown in communication between NGOs and government.

Cooperation in the context of emergency: search and rescue in the Mediterranean

Aurélie Ponthieu, Spokesperson and Humanitarian Specialist on Displacement, Médecins sans Frontières

Watch the interview with Aurélie Ponthieu here.
Download Aurélie Ponthieu's PowerPoint presentation here.

Aurélie Ponthieu's presentation focused on Medecins sans Frontières' (MSF) decision to undertake Search and Rescue (SAR) in the Mediterranean in Italy and Greece from 2015; the interactions between MSF and the Italian state in delivering this; and the changes in the relationship over time. Whilst MSF acknowledges the value of cooperation, it also engages in the ethics of refusal, so that interaction with the state operates in a context of 'natural' tension and necessary distance. MSF's intervention in SAR is predicated on the principle of 'do no harm', taking a broad definition of distress (i.e. all unseaworthy boats) and taking preventative as well as reactive action. This posed several challenges, both in terms of MSF's own capacity in this new area, the legal frameworks at play at sea (both territorial and humanitarian) and the state priority of border control (as either complementary to or in opposition to rescue). Between 2015 and 2016 there was a cooperative relationship between the Italian state and MSF, however 2016 to 2018 has seen rising tensions, with negative shifts in public opinion, changes inside the Italian government, and a Senate investigation contributing to this, up until the actions of the current Interior Minister Matteo Salvini closing ports and stopping the SAR programme. The key question is how to resume SAR and cooperation in order to save lives, but underneath this, there remains the question of whether the state and NGOs simply have different means in relation to SAR or fundamentally different objectives.

Discussion

The discussion focused once again on how changes in the political climate and public opinion on migration-related issues can impact on the good relationship of governments and NGOs, with particular reference to the Italian case. The participants in particular discussed the following:

- Whose role is it to maintain public support? Is there a lesson for government and NGOs on how to maintain, bolster and mutually reinforce public support? It is true that whilst MSF had prepped for a backlash when they established their SAR project, they could have done more in terms of generating proactive support – particularly post 2015, in both avoiding public fatigue and adapting communications beyond the image of the 'rescuers': an image which was no longer successful and actually in some sense became counter-productive, in promoting the idea that the number of arrivals was higher than in reality. The backlash was focused on migrants disembarking in Italy (rather than in Malta or returning to the country of origin, such as Libya), though this was not an NGO decision but that of government.

- In terms of maintaining support, there is a wider question as to whether politics should follow or lead public debate and how this intersects with populism. Where civil society and governments are in agreement, they should seek to bolster each other, but sometimes it is necessary to be distinctive in order to play to their own strengths. In Italy, the shift from Mare Nostrum (Italian state) to FRONTEX/ Triton (EU) matched a shift in public opinion, because the latter programme was not well understood or explained and so this proved corrosive to public opinion. There were also allegations of blame shifting between NGOs and the government. In

Italy, there has been a legitimising (2015) and then subsequent de-legitimising (2016 onwards) process in relation to the role of civil society in SAR and it is important to keep in mind how communications with the media and the public communicate these roles. The change of Interior Minister in 2016 also impacted on relations. Government/civil society relationships have also been soured by allegations by government of smuggling following undercover operations on NGO ships.

- Finally, the transition from a country of transit to a country of destination in Italy could be one factor, which has impacted the perception of SAR over time. However, this sits within wider issues relating to reception and, in particular, scandals in relation to the misuse of funds by criminal gangs, which ultimately soured public opinion.

The discussions also focused on the following points on the relationship between government and NGOs in Italy.

- What are the red lines and what should we draw as the red lines for NGOs to cooperate with a government? The current battle in relation to search and rescue is one of values, which may be won or lost in the coming years. However, what is worrying is that what was once considered the unsayable in terms of debate, has become acceptable and an increasing part of the discourse and there needs to be a strategy to counter this.
- There is an open question as to whether NGOs have been temporarily filling a state gap in providing SAR services. NGOs would be happy to step back from such role, if the state steps up; or would they consider SAR a function best carried out by NGOs? Similarly, there are different points of view in relation to whether NGO resource is best dedicated to SAR or to other solutions, which look at causal factors.
- NGOs with private funding (like MSF) perhaps have more freedom to act independently, whereas other charities have to maintain relationships with states, due to ongoing funding.
- Similarly, NGOs working internationally have to consider their operations in other countries in order to ensure that their statements do not negatively impact other operations. There are also potential impacts on fundraising.
- Governments do not act as homogenous blocks (even if this can be the external perception) and different ministries have different priorities and operate in different ways. However, is there a centralising role for the Prime Minister's office to play, or for the EU Commission?
- The role of the judiciary: the legal system adds an extra player to the civil society/ government relationship. In Italy, investigations into SAR dramatically affected public opinion.

Wednesday morning 12th September: Cooperation in assistance to Children

Chair: **Myrto Xanthopoulou**, Senior Program Officer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Greece

Unaccompanied Children in the US: Government and Non-Governmental Roles

Mark Greenberg, Migration Policy Institute, Washington DC; former Deputy Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services

Watch the interview with Mark Greenberg here.
Download Mark Greenberg's PowerPoint presentation here.

The presentation described the US programme for unaccompanied children, the reason why the children go to the USA, scale of numbers, process at the border and their transfer to shelters that are run largely by non-profits (NGOs). NGOs provide services while efforts are made to find family members. Once the children leave the shelters, more minimal services can be provided. The speaker explained the role of the Federal Government and that of the NGOs: NGOs are funded by the government to provide shelter and post relief services. Advocacy, litigation and a public informing role are also played by NGOs, but not funded by government to do so.

The presentation then focused on opportunities and challenges in providing services to children through NGOs. Services are delivered by NGOs in part because of limits on federal employment expenditure – departments can spend their budget on NGOs but not on direct provision – but also because of the skills and flexibility that NGOs provide. The unpredictability of numbers creates a need to increase or decrease capacity that is better met by NGOs, but provision through NGOs also makes it more difficult to control costs and has an uncertain impact on the quality of staffing and services. There is a monitoring process but less effective than direct control of providers; and it is more difficult for government to have the knowledge needed for programming, to conduct research and to share practice: that is, it sets limits on its own ability to learn. There can be concerns relating to some faith based providers, for instance in relation to making abortion available. NGOs however are well placed to be a public voice for children. They play an important role in identifying gaps in services, and litigation they have initiated as has contributed to programme development. If, as recently, there is a sharp change in practice (e.g. separating children from their parents at the border), so that the mission becomes the opposite of what it has been and attracts media criticism, the relationship poses difficulties for the NGO staff involved.

Challenges & opportunities in working on child rights and migration

Karen Mets, Senior Advocacy Adviser Children on the Move, Save the Children, Brussels

Watch the interview with Karen Mets here.
Download Karen Mets' PowerPoint presentation here.

The presentation described the range of programmes run by Save the Children across Europe from Scandinavia to Italy, including a Search and Rescue operation. The media images of children in that context have had a huge impact, some supportive but others sceptical, as in questioning the age of children, with notably less sympathy for teenagers than younger children. There had been a shift in narrative from child rights to criminality and 'anchor children', not supported by the facts. There is concern about the impact of detention on children and their vulnerability to return to their country of origin when they turn 18. The recent and continuing shifts in power dynamics at EU level has made it difficult to know who is making the key decisions. Member States are playing a greater role, in changing alliances, so that decisions have become unpredictable, making a difficult context for NGOs to work in if part of the role is to influence decision making. NGOs can no longer be confident that all Member States support children's rights, so that alternative arguments have to be put forward in advocacy. The environment for providing protection, in Greece for instance, is also very difficult: a complex situation in which it is not clear who is in charge of child protection, coordination is challenging, and there are security issues for staff visiting countries of departure. There is, however, still space for advocacy: it is still possible to get things done at an operational level, below the highly politicised debates. Evidence based arguments still work at that level. Where NGOs are well coordinated they can avoid overlap in provision and can get more leverage with EU decision makers.

Participants had a long discussion on narrative on migration:

- If positive narratives on migration is key to working relationships, what scope is there for changing public opinion towards less hostile narratives? President Trump changed his mind in one week when he faced a barrage of criticism over separating children from their parents; but NGOs doubt their capacity to change the narrative. They are subject to sustained attack by some media and politicians (a Belgian Minister refers to all migrant NGOs as 'Open Border NGOs', for instance) and can garner empathy for children only to a certain extent. Is it in fact the NGO's role *to* change the narrative? In the US case of children, the answer was yes – it was the NGOs that turned around the debate, helped families to tell their story, made the abstract concrete. To play this role NGOs must not be fettered in what they can say by government funding contracts. They must be able to speak out without losing their grants. Someone gave media access to the reception centres in the US which is how there was the coverage that changed public opinion: this points to the need for NGOs to think strategically which media they are working with, how to ensure that there is ongoing coverage not just reactive, and a need to anticipate what a hostile government may do next so that civil society can be prepared and forestall those views in the press.
- Some NGOs missed opportunities in their media responses to separated children – which undermined their credibility, e.g. by making claims that were incorrect, or arguing for an impossible demand which played into the hands of their critics, and not being well coordinated in their responses.
- In the US, NGOs sometimes suggest messages to cities to use and vice versa – but this mutual assistance could be extended through training.
- There is a need to make a distinction between who delivers the message and the message. E.g. from children's guardians rather than Save the Children.
- Good that civil society is diverse but also problematic that some argue for no borders so all can be tarred with that brush.
- Better to refer to youth not only children as the public feel betrayed; and to explain why youth are nevertheless still vulnerable.
- Starting at local level is one way to change the narrative, so that local papers and the public have the conversations e.g. around community sponsorships without the spin of national migration debates.

The discussion also focussed on the following issues:

- The extreme conditions that children face in crossing the Mediterranean and in the camps and in detention crosses a red line – that these are children raises the bar for the need for assistance.
- There is a significant need for more resources for helping children with mental health issues arising from traumatic experiences, e.g. survival sex with traffickers. They can access medicines but not diagnoses and treatment, which should not be affected by their immigration status. In the US more can be done in shelters than, ironically, once the children are with sponsors in the community. In Europe, the undertone fear of radicalisation has led to some attention to this issue.

- Procurement of services is very important but not given sufficient attention. Is there intrinsic added value of NGOs over internal providers and if so how should government balance cost versus social value?
- Governments can put NGOs under pressure to work with children without funding them to do the work, as they know that they care and cannot refuse a power imbalance.
- Government shifts the burden of employing staff and of contraction onto the private providers. Hiring, training and letting staff go is hard for government; but when capacity contracts there is a loss of expertise, knowledge that is difficult to recover and is no longer available to children once they leave the system and go into the community.
- By the time government finds out that something has gone seriously wrong in an NGO, e.g. sexual misconduct, it is too late. The question is how to monitor to prevent that? They can only try to minimise the risk and then respond appropriately if something does go wrong.

Wednesday afternoon 12th September: Cooperation at the municipal level

Chair: **Simon Güntner**, Professor of Spatial Sociology, Technical University, Vienna, Austria

Cooperation at the Municipal Level (USA)

Christina Pope, Network Director, Welcoming America

Watch the interview with Christina Pope here.
Download Christina Pope's PowerPoint presentation here.

Christina Pope presented Welcoming America as a network combining NGOs and municipalities, facilitating in many ways close partnerships at local levels. Such partnership responds to different goals, including meeting the needs of migrant communities, communicating the benefits of migration, and fostering a welcoming environment. Through partnerships, NGOs and municipalities work together to face the challenges of migration. In particular, they work jointly to develop welcoming plans, make cases for policy development and develop policy, advocacy and messaging on migration. Welcoming America provides assistance on developing best practices, particularly in relation to multi-sector welcoming plans. Municipal governments are usually the conveners of this process, and indeed many municipalities created their own municipal offices working specifically on migration. Sometimes the convener is an NGO (foundations, immigrant organisations, chambers of commerce, etc.). Other actors can be involved in the partnerships, as businesses that are often taken on-board by municipalities. The presenter explained how the partnerships prove successful locally in gathering data on migration and develop plans that can inform and have an impact on federal policy on immigration, or on the public perceptions of migration. In working jointly, there are also challenges, as in relation to conflicting goals. Welcoming America identifies good practices in addressing those challenges. One such good practice is to involve both actors from the very beginning in the design of the partnership, to build trust, and/or use a neutral facilitator to overcome conflicts.

Managing Immigrant Integration Together: Government-NGO Relations in Large U.S. Cities

Els de Graauw, Associate Professor of Political Science, Baruch College, The City University of New York

Download Els de Graauw's PowerPoint presentation here.

Els De Graauw provided a presentation on the interactions between immigrant-serving organisations and local governments in the USA. Interaction has been happening for various reasons, including the provision of services, the development of policies, and the capacity building of institutions, but also advocacy, litigation, civic engagement and mobilisation. The presentation provided a historical overview of how these interactions evolved. The 'Great society' programmes in the 60-70s led to an increase of funding to NGOs to provide services for disadvantaged populations; subsequently, the increasing privatisation of services and the retrenchment of government-spending on services saw an increasing engagement of local governments with NGOs. In the field of immigration, there are additional factors that increased local engagement. In particular, the lack of a national immigrant integration strategy and the missed immigration reform at national level (with increasing numbers of undocumented people) led cities to establish their own responses to migrant communities. Moreover, federal officials have initially welcomed a greater engagement of local authorities in immigration matters. Under the current administration, a further activism of municipalities is observed.

The Italian 'Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees' (SPRAR)

Lucia Iuzzolini, Management and Legal Support Office, Central Service for the Protection System for asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR), Italy

Watch the interview with Lucia Iuzzolini here.
Download Lucia Iuzzolini's PowerPoint presentation here.

Lucia Iuzzolini provided an overview of the Italian 'Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees' (SPRAR), a decentralised system for the reception of refugees based on a multilevel governance model that sees the involvement of the Ministry of Interior, local authorities, and organisations of the 'third sector'/NGOs. SPRAR is made up of a network of local authorities that – in agreement with the Ministry of Interior – decide voluntarily to participate with a project of reception, that in most case involves the active participation of an NGO. In this way, through municipalities, NGOs are involved in an integrated reception system. The network involves both big cities and small villages. Iuzzolini explained that each municipality with an interest in being part of the network has to present their own reception project. The 'local dimension' of the network is key: each project is drafted differently according to the local realities and the aims local authorities want to attain, so that the integration of refugees and asylum seekers is framed around the realisation of local objectives. The projects are also differentiated because they are framed around the individualisation of integration processes, as integration is a different process according to local reality but also to the personal stories of each refugee. What makes the Italian system different (e.g. from German models) and particularly successful is the voluntary nature of the SPRAR system, which thus avoids situations where the reception is imposed on local authorities, or where the reception of refugees does not fit particular local situations.

A fundamental element of the system is the intrinsic connections between public administrations and private organisations (mostly NGOs): the system is designed in a way that each reception project is based on the engagement of civil society and local communities and that reception is not only aimed at completing one's "migration plans" but also at creating a national system that provide local instruments for integration.

This infrastructure allows for a myriad of different reception projects, and the involvement of a wide range of actors. Yet, to ensure equal standards the system is integrated with a 'waterfall' model of control, where the Ministry of Interior oversees the actions of municipalities, and municipalities oversee the work of NGOs engaged in implementing each municipal project.

The diversification of projects in the system offer many different opportunities and challenges. One such opportunity is to collect best practices and positive experiences from different projects, which could be replicated elsewhere (*e.g.*, Iuzzolini introduced a project in Sicily where asylum seekers were providing English classes to local police officers). The system of control and monitoring of the network allows the termination of any negative experiences with the withdrawal of ministerial funding to local projects. Other opportunities offered by the integrated system is allowing a sense of ownership by local communities over refugees' reception and a fair redistribution of newcomers across the country.

Citizenship and Integration Initiative (London)

Bharat Mehta, Chief Executive, Trust for London

Watch the interview with Bharat Mehta here.
Download Bharat Mehta's notes on the Citizenship and Integration Initiative here.

Bharat Mehta provided a presentation on the initiatives that the Trust for London, a charitable foundation, implemented with the cooperation of the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority (GLA), thus presenting on a particular kind of cooperation between public administrations and independent philanthropies. In particular, Bharat Mehta presented the Citizenship and Integration Initiative (CII), a pooled fund to support work on citizenship and integration in London. Concomitantly with this initiative, the Mayor of London appointed a Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, and the GLA has made an equivalent investment into its new Social Integration team. The Citizenship and Integration Initiative began to be developed with the GLA and brought on board a number of civil society organisations (CSOs) as partners. The intention was to second four staff from the CSOs to the GLA – two of those were recent migrants – with additional funding available for project ideas developed by the secondees but delivered outside of the GLA. The secondment scheme places secondees employed in civil society organisations into the Social Integration Team within the Communities and Social Policy Unit of the GLA. The secondment model was chosen to enable the GLA to draw on the strengths of civil society, facilitating culture change within the regional authority and a more informed approach to citizenship and integration issues. The aspiration is for this model to have a more lasting effect than less intensive partnership approaches (such as delivering joint projects without formal secondments). This project nevertheless also experienced challenges: in terms of lessons to be learnt, for instance, it is important to ensure that public administration does not patronise NGO staff in the relationship, but realise the value the secondments bring to their departments. Such a scheme is also about building future leadership within the CSOs and potentially future leadership in local government. Funding and influence are critical to bring to a relationship with a local authority.

Local government and civil society cooperation in Athens

Antigone Kotanidis, Special Advisor to the Mayor, Athens, Greece

Download Antigone Kotanidis' PowerPoint presentation here.

The presentation of Antigone Kotanidis on cooperation between the municipality of Athens and NGOs in the area of refugees' integration started with the premise that civil society engagement in Greece is a recent phenomenon, so that cooperation between local government and NGOs is also still developing and must be analysed in that context. Civil society engagement and volunteerism in Greece only emerged in the 1990s, but recent events have boosted that activism and cooperation with local government. The financial crisis and ensuing impact on Greek society led to the rapid need for groups and local government to come together to provide services to those most in need. This led in Athens to the SynAthina programme, led by a new department for innovation and civil society. In addition, the 2015 refugee crisis led to the formation of the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR). During the refugee crisis, Athens had a huge influx of international NGOs, but the city had little experience of how to co-ordinate all this activity. In Greece, there is no decentralisation of refugee services, everything is top-down, but as there was a clear need for immediate coordination, the Mayor's office in Athens needed to build capacity for municipal services and to build on collaborations with NGOs. This led ACCMR, with the involvement of 80 members, to start different thematic groups (housing, health, education etc.) and 65 pilot projects, using a digital platform created for SynAthina. Other cities now want to replicate the project. Kotanidis presented on one relevant project, 'Curing the Limbo,' implemented by the municipality in partnership with the International Rescue Committee, the Catholic Relief Services, the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency and the University of Athens. The project aims to help refugees move towards active citizenship and playing a part in active urban life, by providing them with accommodation, and in return, refugees commit to engaging in community service and a program of skills development. There were many challenges for all these projects. For civil society organisations, the limited knowledge of the Greek civil service needed to be addressed. For the municipality, making sure that citizens knew that city services needed to be developed in the area of integration and refugee services is one clear role for city government.

Discussion

The discussion touched on the following issues:

- If the local level shows great examples of integration plans, to what extent should integration be governed nationally? Should local authorities be free to create their own integration plans? Participants stated that a national coordination on integration is needed, but it should not be too imposing in a top-down system on local realities.
- Cooperation and projects developed in a time of crisis with civil society might work temporarily, but need to be reflected upon to be sustainable and adapt to programme planning in normal times. Developing a 'theory of change' for organisations might be a helpful tool to track the transition.
- Good examples at local level break the toxic narrative on migration at national level. Local authorities and NGOs should reflect on how to use and document best practices and good examples to create a space in the narrative of migration.

- Even in examples of positive relationships between public administrations and NGOs there can be frustrations, e.g. in relation to the division of work between the two parties. To avoid them, it is essential to set out the division of tasks and the goals of a cooperative project with clarity from the beginning.
- International, EU and national rules (e.g. on funding) pose limitations on what can be done on reception at the local level. Yet, municipalities play a key role and need to reclaim some control over the process. Mayors may react to the limitations in networks voicing their concerns over immigration processes, as increasingly happening in the USA.

Thursday morning 13th September: Cooperation in the policy-making process

Chair: **George Joseph**, Director, Migration Department, Caritas Sweden, Sweden

Cooperation in the policy-making process – Portugal's High Commission for Migration

Pedro Calado, High Commissioner for Migration, High Commission for Migration, Portugal

Watch the interview with Pedro Calado here.
Download Pedro Calado's PowerPoint presentation here.

Portugal's High Commissioner for Migration, Pedro Calado, provided a presentation on how the High Commission for Migration of the Portuguese government develops its policies through a consensual way of working with NGOs. The presentation started with an overview of the High Commission, a government body that was created in the mid-90s to respond to a sudden inflow of migrants to Portugal in those years. The Commission was created to provide services to migrants, but also to coordinate the work of all the Ministries, as integration is conceived as a crosscutting issue that requires the involvement of all branches of government. The Commission produces and oversees the implementation of national strategies for integration. The work of the Commission is framed around five axes: the coordination of migration work; ensuring migrants' integration; the promotion of the social inclusion of immigrant descendants; the reinforcement of the quality of migration services; and the connection and support to emigrants. The presentation then focused on the Council for Migration, a consultative body within the Commission that ensures support and participation in the definition of the general lines of action of the High Commission; and ensures the participation and collaboration of public and private entities (e.g. foundations) in the definition and implementation of migration policies. The Council indeed includes a number of different strategic entities, including international NGOs, private companies, agencies and associations from the ten largest migrant communities in Portugal. The Council for Migration covers all practice issues in the field of integration, advises on issues that are related to public policies for migrants, advice on detected obstacles – each time they find obstacles they meet through the network to try to mitigate them.

The defining approach of integration policies over the last 20 years is to move from a whole of government approach to the whole of society approach. This is based on multilevel coordination, working through local and national levels and ensuring that there is a clear and comprehensive solution that is joined up across the different levels. Therefore, the Council for Migration, for instance, participates in the definition and evaluation of the national strategic integration plan. Projects are implemented with involvement of civil society and government, in the 'one-stop-shop' model adopted for the three National Migrant Integration Support Centres and the 94 Local

Migrant Integration Support Centres across Portugal. These centres are based on two types of partnerships, bringing together on the one hand different departments of the central administration under 'one roof', and, on the other, involving the third sector (mostly migrant associations and social entrepreneurs), for the provision of migrant integration services. The whole of society approach is also leading the implementation of a 'local dimension' of integration policies: local plans for integration are drafted that contribute to the national strategy on migration through a bottom-up process coordinated by Mayors.

Civil Society Engagement with States in the Global Compact for Migration

Colin Rajah, Civil Society Liaison on the Global Compact on Migration, International Organization for Migration (IOM), USA

Download Colin Rajah's PowerPoint presentation here.

Colin Rajah's presentation shifted to the international level with an overview of the Global Compact on Migration and on the negotiations process followed to draft it. It focused in particular on the engagement of civil society in the consultation phase towards the drafting of the Compact. Rajah explained how his role as Civil Society Liaison on the Global Compact on Migration was set up by IOM to ensure the engagement of civil society. The New York Declaration (which set in motion the process of consultations and negotiations for the adoption of the Global Compact) and subsequent resolutions of the UN General Assembly (particularly A/RES/71/280) gave prominence to the need to engage all stakeholders in the preparation of the Compact. It required multi-stakeholder consultations to collect feedback from all stakeholders in regional platforms where civil society could have the opportunity to participate concretely in the drafting of the Compact. The process followed to ensure the participation of civil society in the regional platforms showed lessons to be learnt on challenges to address when involving civil society in policy-making processes at international level. One lesson is that grassroots organisations and large international NGOs (BINGOs) face different challenges in making sure their voice is heard. The latter are better resourced and staffed, better informed of policy processes and have no problems in engaging in policy making at international level. On the other hand, grassroots organisations are often invisible in these processes, but their voice is incredibly valuable to understand the challenges on the ground that policy needs to tackle, and they need to be involved. To do so, in the case of the Global Compact, it was necessary to raise awareness of the Compact amongst those organisations. The presentation stressed that the whole process of consultations showed the need for government support to civil society consultations, for government officials to provide a 'safe' and appropriate space for NGOs to speak, otherwise civil society risked being heard 'too little, or too late', or not being heard at all by governments. To avoid that, the format of consultations and discussions had to be changed in a way that civil society could speak and engage in fruitful discussions with government officials in time to influence their views. There were several challenges faced by civil society during the consultation and negotiation phases and changes in format helped address them. Yet, the process helped set a precedent of civil society engagement and it helps understand how to make sure that civil society's voice is heard in future. There are lessons to be learnt from this precedent on how to engage civil society in international policy-making processes.

Discussion

The presentation on the Portuguese model raised the following points for discussion:

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- The value of engaging representatives of migrant communities. This sends a positive message to the diaspora communities, and it communicates the message that "your community has a seat in the decisional process". It also allows policy-makers to understand the challenges that migrants face in their everyday life.
- Involving community representatives also ensures that voice is given to those who live in the shadows, such as undocumented migrants.
- Another positive impact of involving migrant representatives in policy-making is ensuring the development of strong leadership in politics. In many countries, as in Portugal, there is still a problem of voters with migrant background being little engaged in politics. However, involving migrant communities in developing policy increases the sense of representation in politics and increasingly more and more migrant descendants are getting involved.
- It is sometimes challenging to involve civil society in that formal government approaches sometimes do not fit with informal approaches taken by local civil society organisations.
- Regardless of the challenges, by including society representatives you make sure that when consensus is reached, it is safe ground to take solid steps.
- It is equally important to ensure migrants' representation in the provision of services, as in the Portuguese one-stop-shops. Similarly, it is important to create a culture of trust in service providers, so that undocumented migrants also can feel in a safe place.
- Discussants also focused on the 'whole-of-government approach' and on the challenges of having ministries in different areas engaged on migrant integration, considering that it is not their main agenda. It is however an on-going and needed process, a day-to-day challenge that requires long time scales to create a culture that sees the value of that engagement. The presence of coordinating bodies as the High Commission of Portugal is key.

The presentation on the civil society engagement in the preparation of the Global Compact for Migration led the discussion to focus on the following issues:

- There is often a discrepancy between the policy discussions at global level and the day-to-day work of grassroots organisations. The latter often do not have a sense of discussions at international level, which are felt as abstract, while their day-to-day work has a more local and pragmatic approach. There is a need for a better communication between these two spheres.
- Information to grassroots organisations is key to enable them to understand global processes. In the case of the consultations process for the Global Compact this was an increasingly felt need and the actions of international agencies, and the setting up of 'open dialogues' with them helped with the flow of information to civil society of 'what was happening behind the scenes'.
- Discussions 'behind the scenes' between government officials and NGOs are sometimes more impactful than dialogues in formal settings.

Thursday morning 13th September: Closing session: What have we learnt?

Chair: **Nicola Delvino**, Senior Researcher, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK

What did we learn? Take-away themes, reflections and forward agendas

Dr Sarah Spencer, Director of Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, Oxford, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK

Nicola Delvino, Senior Researcher, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, University of Oxford, UK

Download Sarah Spencer and Nicola Delvino's PowerPoint presentation here.

In the final session, Sarah Spencer presented on her shared reflections on the symposium debates with Nicola Delvino, co-directors of the Autumn Academy, drawing together eight key themes that had emerged from the discussions, and the concrete ideas that had been put forward to strengthen relationships between government (at all levels) and NGOs.

Key themes

1. Context is all

- **Public attitudes towards migrants: polarized toxic debate or space for inclusive narrative**
    - whether migrants are perceived as future citizens (Canada), legitimising investment in integration and creating expectations that other citizens and employers will play a part in facilitating it – most likely where there is no far right party (as also in Ireland).
    - alternatively, seen as a threat: we saw in some countries that hostility to migrants (and NGOs that help them), and scapegoating, has reached a new intensity, alongside hostility to multilateralism (both threats to national sovereignty), fueled by far the right, narrowing the political space for humanitarian action and government action on integration. Even children, we heard, are not sacrosanct. As we were told in the opening session 'the more toxic the narrative the narrower the space for cooperation'.
    - politicization can sideline officials; policy is led by politicians, making officials vulnerable, creating uncertainty, so that working with NGOs poses a risk to them.
    - a situation in which media coverage does not always reflect the facts (a constant theme), and emotion can be more powerful than evidence – though not, we learnt, at the operational level, away from the spotlight, where officials still want to get things done and evidence based arguments still carry weight. Politicisation can indeed create opportunities – civil servants needing NGOs as allies, 'saviours' in dark times.
- **Differing political cultures:** from perceptions on the role of the state (contrast the distrust in the US to expectations in Scandinavia) and with it contrasting perceptions of the role of NGOs in a democracy; attitudes to state relationship with religion (and hence faith organisations); to whether there is a culture of dialogue and cooperation (as in Sweden) versus one of exclusion of NGOs from the policy making process (as at the national level in Greece, Hungary); and attitudes to international criticism which makes a government more sensitive to NGO concerns.
- **Scale of migrant/refugee numbers** that government has to manage, and the speed of change, putting pressures on the reception/integration system and increasing reliance on NGOs, but

also <u>changing the politics</u> – as we saw in how attitudes changed to rescues at sea as numbers grew.

- **Design of the programme** into which government brings NGOs as partners – whether it works well, there is agreement on aims and means, or, as in the Greek reception system, very negative conditions which do not protect human rights so that NGOs can only be confrontational, there is no room for collaboration; or the challenge where it is an untested space for cooperation, there is no clarity on who is responsible, or unclear goals.
- **Central or devolved governance system:** whether decisions are all taken at the national level (a pitfall we heard in the US Resettlement system; of the Dutch asylum reception system when cities such as Utrecht want to innovate; and of the rigidity of the Greek regulatory environment); or whether it is devolved to the provincial level (and so less vulnerable to a polarized immigration debate) or to the local level – where municipalities can work with NGOs and build capacity, credibility and solidarity at that level.
- **Whether there is political leadership,** motivation, to deliver and to do so with NGOs – a question related, in part, to public attitudes: at the <u>local level,</u> we are seeing more courage to lead, to try to shift the narrative, than at the national level.
- **Ideas and capacity:** whether government feels it already has the ideas and capacity to deliver, or is looking for fresh ideas on how to proceed and cannot act alone.
- **Rules on non-profits/charities** that constrain relationships of advocacy more than they need.

2. Diversity and complexity of civil society and its stage of development

- Whether the <u>sector is young</u> (as in Greece), relatively <u>new to immigration</u> as in Ireland, or there is a long tradition of NGO service provision role in the migration field (as in Canada, France and USA) so that NGOs already had capacity and experience when the state wanted to provide services; were already authoritative to inform policy; but also potentially negatively impacted by the state <u>investing selectively</u> in the sector – as in France – creating competition within the sector to keep out state sponsored new players.
- Differing <u>types of organisation</u> – differing views, priorities, capacity, approaches, contributions; the extent to which values or commerce is their motivation; extent to which they have <u>private funds</u> and a board with influence so that they can afford to risk their relationship with the government. That is, the diversity in the sector in turn means a diversity of relationships with government.
- <u>Fluidity of the sector</u> over time: different actors, driving different agendas, forging different relationships – described by one participants as 'complexity and chaos' but that it can nevertheless coalesce.

3. Many countries' migration systems would collapse without NGO contribution

- Governments can lack capacity to deliver on many fronts, while NGOs can (but do not always) have flexibility, capacity to innovate, to respond to needs, to do what government cannot do, to expand and contract with demand (albeit at a cost to their staff and sustainability), to engage local networks which national governments do not necessarily have and to pilot services that could not be provided through the mainstream system.
- Beyond any service role, we learnt that NGOs are ideally placed to build bridges, mediate with, inform and mobilise migrants; to test messages; and to provide evidence/understanding on what is happening in source countries

4. But the 'unsung heroes' narrative is also flawed

- There are issues on performance, standards and accountability; of NGOs pursuing own agendas (including those related to faith); and the downside that NGOs can replace government responsibility rather than complement it.

5. NGO relationships vary between departments in government and between tiers of government

- Can be strong at municipal level while faltering at the national level.
- Strong with one government department when not with another – just as the Search and Rescue NGOs were supported by the Italian Transport department, responsible for the Coast Guard, while the Interior Ministry was giving them a hard time.
- Even long standing relationships can unexpectedly change.

6. Change of policy can threaten partnership, even be an existential threat

- However, US experience on refugees suggests it can also be seen as an opportunity to rethink the basis of the partnership so that it works better – and is less vulnerable to threat.

7. Lack of transparency on mutual aims and priorities is a major weakness

- We heard of projects where partners find, mid project that they have differing ideas on what they are trying to achieve.

8. Weak communications strategies

- Where neither NGOs nor government partners anticipated the need to maintain public support and have neither individual nor a shared media strategy to maintain it.

Twelve steps to create an upward spiral in government – NGO relationships

1. **Civil society needs to be part of the new narrative on migration,** a narrative voiced by governments and by NGOs to change perceptions; to ensure that the vital role of NGOs is valued and not seen as a threat to security; that they are essential partners for government, adding value and doing things government cannot do. A narrative that thinks global as well as local is outward not inward looking; which separates reception issues from migration; and focuses on issues, like health, that the public can relate to, not groups of people they cannot.

2. **New narrative needs effective communication to the media**, by government and by NGOs, to forestall and answer negative coverage of NGOs and of governments working with them. A need to ensure that positive dimensions, like spontaneous volunteer support, get media coverage; while not shying away from issues that concern voters like impact on hospitals and schools.

NGOs cannot afford just to do good work – they need to engage with the media to ensure the public knows it and to maintain support; NGOs do have capacity to change narrative (as recently in the US on child separations); and governments need to be willing to talk up NGOs and defend their role. Going against public opinion is 'political suicide' a government participant said. Therefore, this must mean a shared responsibility to maintain public support. That needs to include local papers, on positive local stories like community sponsorship and SPRAH's refugees teaching municipal officials English; but only national impact will ultimately save the day

3. **Strengthen solidarity across the NGO sector,** overcoming silo working between refugees and other categories of migrants and their separate narratives that weaken capacity to withstand attack, or to cope with policy change, developing strategies that anticipate political / policy change and how they will react. We live in very uncertain times. The sector needs stronger coalitions at all levels, from community development to national and international networks that can work together across current divides; where possible to speak with one voice, and to show solidarity when an NGO partner is under attack. Long term funding not short term project funding enables NGOs to plan effectively.

4. **Devolve responsibility where possible to local government tiers** to empower them to work more closely with migrants, building solidarity.

5. **Ensure communities feel they are benefiting from NGO work, not only migrants –** through the focus of activity (for the community as a whole) and a narrative that makes clear that is the goal. Even small local organisations need budgets for communication.

6. **Be clear on the goal of cooperation:** harmonious cooperation is good but challenge is also necessary for policy to develop. Pressure on government can be constructive to achieve an aim that (at least some of) government shares; and so funding conditions need to protect the right to be critical. Too much pressure, for unachievable outcomes, can damage relationships. There can be a need for compromise on both sides. The aim is to avoid a painful divorce – but not to avoid all disagreement and confrontation which can be necessary to bring about change

7. **Manage mutual expectations** through government and NGOs each understanding what the other needs if taking the risk of working together – recognised through dialogue, at the outset of the relationship (which could be facilitated by an honest broker, a neutral third party – like Welcoming America and philanthropy) to avoid risk of relationship breakdown. Individual NGO staff need to understand the risk that governments and individual officials take when they work with them – and maintain confidentiality if mutual trust is to grow.

8. **Improve channels of communication** within the partnership so that there is continual dialogue in the planning and implementation process, building mutual understanding and avoiding unforeseen conflicts, and planning together how to communicate the work and respond to media attacks.

9. **Build new partnerships** between NGOs and nontraditional allies: departments focusing on issues not migrants – like health and education: to match new framing on issues not migrants; and

with municipalities which are increasingly willing to diverge from national government approaches; and develop new forms of partnership like the evidence gathering example we heard from Welcoming America, working together to get evidence to inform plans, so there is shared ownership of the evidence base.

10. **Capture the motivation of new volunteers** as a means to change public attitudes, rebuild solidarity (as Ireland is trying to do through its new Communities Integration Fund, sponsoring small organisations to get involved), as well as building a vital resource to support refugees; and draw in diaspora organisations so that migrant led organisations are part of the solution; and bring in others, like youth, who build the movement.

11. **Replicate schemes and relationships that are seen to work**, like Canada's sponsorship programme, including the co-planning and regular dialogue that accompany it, and Athens' SynAthina and ACCMR. There is a need to find a way to harness this learning, to ensure successful initiatives (and unsuccessful ones) are well known.

12. **Encourage NGO staff to go for public office and administration jobs** – so that they can promote the kind of partnerships they wanted when they worked for 'the other side'.

Discussion

The presentation stimulated a discussion around the following final considerations:

- The messenger is as important as the message, and sometimes other people (beneficiaries or media) can be better messengers than NGOs or Government and there is a need proactively to attend to this. NGOs are very good at consolidating and mobilising the base – but those in the 'anxious middle' are not necessarily being well served by the NGO community.
- Viewing migrants as future citizens and starting integration accordingly from day one provides clarity. In Europe e.g. not allowing asylum seekers to work or focusing on temporary migration (such as German guest worker programmes and the historical failure of this approach) provides a lack of clarity on when they then turn into longer-term citizens down the road.
- The split between enforcement and integration within government can mean that not all of government agrees on the value of a cooperative approach.
- There is a contrast in the proactive nature of the need contrasted with the reactive thrust of much policy making. Rules of engagement should be established in advance, so that in the 'crisis situation' the ground rules have already been established.
- Behind Najam's typology, there is a dynamism and fluidity of relations; trust, networks and personal relationships sit underneath these relationships. The idea of individuals moving from NGOs into Government and vice versa provides an example of this. Political fluidity and the policy cycle is contrasted with the longer view of some NGOs.
- It is important to define narratives, as some communications frames can be superficial and end up having thin support. Political leadership is crucial to legitimising or de-legitimising ways of thinking.
- Participants discussed the role of government in the 'Civil Society Ecosystem' – is there a role for government in taking on oversight over the sector and ensuring that it is fit for purpose? Is this an appropriate role for government and if not, whose, if anyone's is it? Should we let '1 thousand flowers bloom' or attempt to have an oversight or planning function – in particular in

terms of addressing gaps in the system. Is there a space for the state to convene? Is there a role for brokers and intermediaries to do this?

- There is sometimes a normative assumption of civil society good and state bad or an assumption that innovation is the exclusive preserve of civil society. This is not necessarily always the case, because sometimes the opposite situation is observed with NGOs (or e.g. trade unions) with obsolete structures. Engaging with such organisations is a challenge for a state that instead wants to invest in innovation and flexibility.

- Capitalising on volunteerism and civic engagement is a great opportunity. Yet, there are also challenges in engaging with grassroots organisations and ensuring that they have capacity, volunteer management is a particular challenge and the need for infrastructure to manage this.

- Migrant representation in both civil society and in government is important in order to improve advocacy. The NGO sector can act as a training ground for public administration and office.

- The discussion focused also on the role of national government as creating the evidence base, doing some of the strategic thinking alongside developing some practical initiatives. It is important to widen out the integration of migrants to broader community inclusion and the need to have a wider community vision for the local community, which takes into account the local context and asset base.

- It is important to have spaces where sharing can happen in a non-pressurised context that encourages dialogue – as in this symposium.

Global Exchange
on Migration & Diversity

The Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity is an ambitious initiative at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) opening up opportunities for knowledge exchange and longer term collaboration between those working in the migration field.