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Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

a case study from:

Migrant and Refugee Integration in Global Cities
The Role of Cities and Businesses

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The Hague Process
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Introduction of the Project and How to Read the Report

In collaboration with Maastricht University's Graduate School of Governance, The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration (THP) initiated a research project related to the economic and social integration of migrants and refugees in cities, focusing specifically on efforts undertaken by the private sector and city governments – both separately and in partnership – to provide protections and create greater opportunities in employment markets and communities.

The aim of this project is to ascertain how businesses and governments in eight global cities are contributing towards the integration of migrant and refugee populations, either through specialized outreach programmes, the provision of services or targeted funding of non-governmental organizations, and to what extent these contributions can be deepened or expanded. Perhaps a more important goal is to determine whether and how business and cities are currently working together to create opportunities for migrants and refugees and deepen their integration into society. If collaboration between the private and public sectors does not currently exist, the research identifies barriers and opportunities for potential partnerships.

The project consists of a number of components including a literature review highlighting the importance of urban migration flows, as well as the reality that it is at the local – increasingly city level - whereby migrants interact and experience the process of integration. In this context integration is defined at its most pragmatic, as a process in which migrants are empowered to thrive within the context of their destination – in part - with the help of a number of different local stakeholders. In addition to the literature review, fieldwork in eight countries was carried out to identify relevant stakeholders for qualitative semi-structured interviews. In total 56 interviews were conducted.

The results of the research will be released in a number of different formats. Firstly the main report - 'Migrant and Refugee Integration in Global Cities' presents an overview of the research process and draws together the key findings of the project using data gathered from all cities. It is also intended to be a repository of information for interested parties and thus the good practices and partnerships identified are presented in accordance to the policy dimension to which they are most applicable. For example, if a reader is interested in looking at what stakeholders in other cities are doing to facilitate the cultural integration of migrants, the reader can check this section for clear examples of what is happening in the cities of study.

If the reader requires further information about a good practice or wishes to understand if there are enough similarities between cities to be a viable option to consider for policy transfer, then they can consult the accompanying case study reports. These are intended to act as stand-alone reports for an audience interested in the particular case of a city. For ease of reference, the cities included in the study are: Auckland (New Zealand), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Chicago (United States), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Lisbon (Portugal), Nairobi (Kenya), Rotterdam (The Netherlands), and São Paulo (Brazil).

Introduction

Kuala Lumpur (often referred to as K.L.) is the federal capital of Malaysia and houses its largest urban population. It is located within the state of Selangor on the central west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. In 2012, the population of K.L. was around 1.7 million, representing just under six per cent of Malaysia's total population. If the Klang Valley, the urban sprawl around the official boundaries of the city of K.L, is included, the population rises significantly and was reported to amount to approximately 5.7 million persons in 2010¹.

Table 1: Key Statistics: Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

	Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur
City Size (km2)	330,290	243
Population	29,947,600	1,724,500
Migrant Population ^a	2,587,200	157,300
Immigration Rate	8.4%	-
Number of Refugees	90,185	Upwards of 70% ^b

^a The numbers referenced refer to 'non Malaysian Citizens' as reported by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia.

^b Estimated in interview with UNHCR

Sources: Department of Statistics Malaysia, Yearbook 2011; Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2013; Chanda, 2012; UNHCR, 2013.

Migration history

Malaysia is an ethnically diverse society owing largely to its history. In pre-colonial times, the primary groups came from Malaysia's principal trading partners – China and India (IOM, 2009). During colonial times, the British allowed Chinese workers to enter Malaysia without restrictions until the Great Depression (IOM, 2009). Immigration has remained an important source of labour for Malaysia until the present day, although, since independence in 1957, the government has taken a different stance on migration. In essence, the government requires that foreign workers meet national demands, but, at the same time, it does not support migration for long-term settlement. This immediately makes Malaysia an interesting, yet challenging, context in which to discuss integration.

Since the 1970s, Malaysia's economy has depended more and more on foreign workers, mainly low- or semi-skilled workers who immigrated as temporary or rotating migrants. On the other hand, out-migration of Malaysian workers going abroad for higher wages since the 1980s and 1990s has

¹ Official Website of Greater Kuala Lumpur / Klang Valley - Ministry of Federal Territories "Overview". Retrieved June 2013. <http://app.kwpkb.gov.my/greaterklkv/overview/>

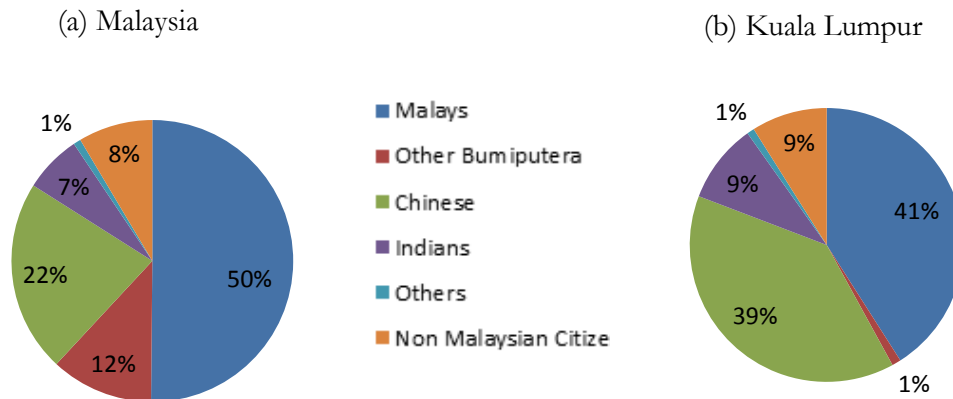
increased, creating labour scarcity in their home country (Kaur, 2008). Despite this, it is also in the post-colonial era that the Malaysia government has taken a stance against long-term settlement in the country with emphasis on the use of foreign workers to temporarily fill labour market shortages. Post-independence immigration can be divided into three waves:

- (1) During the late 1960s until the early 1980s, immigration in Malaysia increased with the industrialization of the country and the development of an export-oriented economy, which demanded a more numerous labour force. In the late 1970s, foreign workers came mainly from Indonesia, Thailand, as well as the Philippines (Kanapathy, 2008). Immigration was often informal and a migration system based on regional ties such as religious and cultural affinities were evident (Kaur, 2008). This was also perpetuated by internal migration towards urban areas, creating labour shortages in rural areas. Foreign labour recruitment was legalized in the early 1980s, but policies remained ineffective (Kaur, 2008).
- (2) The second wave started in the late 1980s until the early 1990s, when immigration to Malaysia started taking place on a large scale. High economic growth attracted a large number of regular and irregular foreign workers who entered the country and highlighted the need for a more systematic approach to migration management. The government approached the problem with different measures including an amnesty programme to legalize irregular foreign workers, as well as a levy on employing foreign workers in 1991-1992.
- (3) Finally, after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, immigration flows became more stable as more restrictive immigration policies were implemented. However, the labour shortages still led to the demand for foreign workers (IOM, 2009; Kaur, 2008).

By 2010, an estimated 2,357,603 documented, international migrants resided in Malaysia, representing 8.4% of the total population (United Nations, 2009; Chanda, 2012). Today, the top source countries of immigrants to Malaysia are Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Bangladesh, India, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Myanmar, and Pakistan (World Bank, 2011). In addition to documented migrants, it is estimated that between one and two million irregular migrants also currently residing in Malaysia.

In 2012, Malays (50%) and Chinese (22%) formed the majority of the Malaysian population. Non-Malaysian Citizens officially represented approximately eight per cent of the total Malaysian population. This is largely reflected in the composition of K.L's population, although some notable differences can be observed (Figure 1), i.e. having a smaller proportion of Malays (41%) and a larger proportion of Chinese (39%). K.L. has a marginally higher proportion of non-Malaysian citizens (9%) and also houses many of the nation's refugee population given the location of the UNHCR head offices in K.L.

Figure 1: Population by Ethnic Group for (a) Malaysia and (b) Kuala Lumpur, 2012 ²



Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia

Migrants in Malaysia are generally from ASEAN member states or neighbouring countries, (International Federation for Human Rights, 2008). Malays are usually Muslims, while migrant groups have a variety of different religions. The next largest group is the Chinese, whose belief usually shows elements of Buddhism, as well as Confucianism and Taoism, while most Indian migrants are Hindus, with some Sikh, Christian, and Muslim minorities (Peletz, 2005). Over 90% of refugees are Burmese and usually part of Christian or Muslim minorities in their country of origin (Crisp, Obi, & Umlas, 2012). Indian and Chinese cultural and linguistic features are similar to those of the major races in Malaysia (Kanapathy, 2008).

As of January 2013, UNHCR had 90,185 registered refugees residing in Malaysia. In addition to this there were 11,650 asylum seekers and 40,001 stateless persons. The vast majority of refugees and asylum seekers are from Myanmar, although 80,000 Filipino's were also categorized as persons of concern to UNHCR, bringing the total population of concern to 221,830 (UNHCR, 2013). The majority of refugees are in Kuala Lumpur, which is also the location of UNHCR's main office in Malaysia, although refugee communities are also found in other, primarily urban areas of Peninsular Malaysia.

² Bumiputera refers to all Malaysian indigenous peoples, including the Malays, the Orang Asli ("aborigines") and all other ethnic minorities in Eastern Malaysia, namely the Sabah and Sarawak (Ooi, 2004)

Policy framework

There are no specific integration policies at a government or city level (IOM, 2009). As such, the main actors promoting immigrant, refugee or asylum seekers rights are international organizations such as UNHCR and ILO, as well as local NGOs, the largest being Tenaganita, Suaram, and the Women’s Aid Organization of Malaysia. However, international NGOs are not allowed to function and cooperate with the government in the country, while national NGOs do not have enough capacity to handle integration and the promotion of immigrants’ rights (Crisp, Obi, & Umlas, 2012).

Nevertheless, immigration policies do have implications for the integration of migrants and refugees. These are made at national level (see Table 2 for an overview). The Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) is the principle Ministry responsible in the area of immigration, represented by the Immigration Department, the Immigration Division, its Expatriate Service, and the Royal Malaysian Police. The Royal Police work together with the Immigration Department and the People’s Volunteer Corps (RELA). RELA is not a department of the MOHA, but a government agency (International Federation for Human Rights, 2008). Furthermore, the Foreign Workers’ Medical Examination Monitoring Agency (FOMEMA) is responsible for medical examinations of foreign workers and the Ministry of Human Resources oversees the national workforce and skills training programmes, enforces labour laws and implements labour policies (IOM, 2009). The main laws governing immigration are outlined in Table 3.

Malaysia is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and, as such, refugees registered in the country by UNHCR are, in the eyes of the government, technically irregular migrants. Moreover, Malaysia is also not a signatory to the primary ILO conventions protecting the rights of migrant workers, including the recently adopted Domestic Workers Convention (C189).

Table 2: Institutional Framework at the National Level

Government Institution	Mandate
Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce immigration laws, immigration and citizenship matters
Immigration Division of MOHA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that policies and regulations concerning the entry of foreigners into the country are in line with national interests • Ensure that eligible citizens are not denied any immigration facility • Coordinate MOHA and Immigration Department in specific and current issues on behalf of either of the parties
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing of passports and travel documents to Malaysian Citizens

Department	<p>and Permanent Residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing of visas, passes, and permits to Foreign Nationals entering Malaysia. • Administering and managing the movement of people at authorized entry and exit points. • Enforcing the Immigration Act 1959/63, Immigration Regulations 1963 and Passport Act 1966.
Expatriate Service Division of MOHA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide fast, efficient, quality service to expatriates and their dependents in terms of immigration facilities
Royal Malaysian Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of Immigration Act
Ministry of Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer the Malaysia My Second Home Project
RELA, the People's Volunteer Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of Immigration Act • Collect information for government (police, Customs, Unit Pengurusan Peperiksaan Anti-Smuggling Unit (UPP), Immigration: regarding security threats • Public Authorities Protection Act 1948 grants immunity from prosecution related to their office to RELA officers
Foreign Workers' Medical Examination Monitoring Agency (FOMEMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee medical examinations of foreign workers, mandatory annual health-screening programme
Ministry of Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysia's workforce and skills training programmes, implements labour policies and enforces labour laws which technically also apply to all workers.

Table 3: National Normative Legal Framework

Law	Content
Immigration Act 1959	General Immigration Law, regulates the admission into and departure from Malaysia, specifies existing entry permits and the procedure on arrival in and removal from Malaysia, specifies the distribution of powers relating to the Act
Passports Act 1966	Specifies passports and visas relevant to enter the country
Prisons Act 1995	Regulations concerning detention facilities and prisons
Prisons Regulation 2000	
Immigration Regulations 2003	
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Bill 2007	Specific legislation regarding problem of human trafficking
Minimum Wage Law 2012	This legislation applies to migrant workers although some concessions have been made that allow employers to deduct some costs such as the migrant levy and accommodation and good costs - previously incurred by the employer - from the migrant worker's salary.

Methodology

The first challenge to be addressed with regards to integration of migrants in Kuala Lumpur comes from the very use of the term ‘migrant’ or ‘integration’. While standardized interview guides were prepared to ensure a degree of comparability across the eight cities covered by the project, this was not always straightforward enough to apply in the Malaysian context for several reasons. Firstly, many respondents steered the researcher away from the term ‘migrant’ in Malaysia. If we are to apply the terminology of the UN, to refer to a migrant as someone living in a country other than their own for a period longer than three months then it is evident that the vast majority of the foreign born population in Malaysia can be considered to be ‘migrants’. However in the Malaysian context the term ‘migrant’ appears to have connotations of settlement and thus interviewees frequently speak of ‘foreign workers’ and ‘expatriates’. In addition to this, given that Malaysia is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention, refugees in Malaysia are not recognized under Malaysian law. Strictly speaking, refugees are undocumented migrants and have no recourse to public services. Despite this, it appears that there is a degree of acceptance for refugees possessing UNHCR registration cards. As such, there is no overarching policy for the integration of migrants or refugees in Malaysia.

Based on the aforementioned features of the Malaysia policy context, it quickly became evident that it is not just simply a matter of applying the categories of ‘business’, ‘city’ and ‘partnerships’, as experienced in the majority of the other cities selected as case studies for the project. Based on these findings it was decided to also include the work of NGOs and International Organizations to ensure that a holistic view was generated. Interviews were requested with the main international organizations working on migration issues in Kuala Lumpur: i.e. UNHCR, ILO and IOM. Regrettably the IOM could not be reached in the timeframe allocated for the study.

Specifically, given that the Malaysian government does not recognize the 1951 convention, the work of UNHCR is of great importance with regards to the lives of the estimated 100,000 refugees, predominantly from Myanmar, currently living in Malaysia. Of the 11 unique examples of work being done with urban refugees in Malaysia, as listed on the website ‘UrbanGoodPractices.com’³, 10 relate to work either being done directly by, in partnership with or funded by UNHCR in Malaysia. The remaining example states that their work is ‘designed to avert a situation in which individual cases fall through the cracks of UNHCR’s organization structure’ (Urban Good Practices, 2013).

Except for international organizations, the sample for Kuala Lumpur was reached through a combination of web search and respondent referrals. Their inclusion was intentional, given the nature of the research question. The response rate for Kuala Lumpur was low. In several cases, those that were asked to participate did not feel that their work was relevant to the research question. This included organizations whose work with vulnerable populations, including migrants

³ This is a user generated website and, while the posts are controlled, it is plausible that the overrepresentation of work by UNHCR is due to better marketing and dissemination of their work as compared to other, smaller organizations.

and refugees had been highlighted in the international press. In most cases, however, a reply was simply not received.

Table 4 Response rates for Kuala Lumpur

City	Stakeholders contacted	Rejections	Non-replies	Stakeholders interviewed	Interview response rate
Kuala Lumpur	28	2	17	9	82%

In total nine qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone or Skype in K.L (see Table 5). This included the aforementioned international organizations (ILO and UNHCR), representatives from the Malaysian Bar Council; a lawyer offering pro-bono services to migrant workers and refugees and currently seeking funding for a pilot programme to extend these services; a school for refugee children; a company offering assistance to applicants for the MM2H, and a website developer providing information to potential expatriates coming to Malaysia.

Table 5: Sample size by category in Kuala Lumpur

Respondent Type	Number of Interviews
Policy Maker	0
Practitioner	0
Businesses ⁴	6
Civil Society	1
International Organizations	2
Total	9

A key and regrettable omission is the NGO, Tenaganita, whose work was referred to by several of the interview respondents when asked who else should be contacted with regards to the study. Despite several emails and telephone calls, it was not possible to obtain an interview. It is also highly regrettable that no representatives from the K.L City Council were interviewed for the study. This was despite several phone calls and emails to the City Council and the Mayor's Office. It is likely that the description of the project may have influenced this lack of response however, even when integration was not mentioned, no response was received.

⁴ The Bar Council and Legal Aid Clinic has been tentatively classified as a business since, although it is a creature of statute, is also a professional body representing legal professionals in Malaysia. Additionally, the Malaysia Employers Federation (MEF) is also classified as a 'business' although strictly speaking is an organization representing the interest of employers in Malaysia.

Findings

Integration challenges to different migrant groups.

As mentioned previously, it is not straightforward to discuss integration and thus identify good practice examples in the Malaysian context. Nevertheless, applying the broad definition of integration adopted by this study, some of the common challenges facing migrants and refugees in Kuala Lumpur can be identified and it can be observed how the various organizations that are working to assist migrants are responding and, where relevant, how services are being offered in partnerships between these organizations.

Low skilled workers

The largest proportion of migrants to Malaysia is of low skilled workers and found primarily in the agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and services sectors. While there has been concern about the dependency on foreign labour – and the government has responded by placing sanctions on the recruitment of foreign workers in the manufacturing and service sectors – labour shortages have led to a dependency on foreign labour ; rising from two per cent in 1985 to 11 per cent in 2004 (Kanapathy, 2008). The key challenges faced regarding integration relate to the conditions of their work permits. ‘Foreign workers’, as they are often described, do not have the right of a family life. Their permit does not allow them to bring their families, to marry locals and female migrants who become pregnant are deported. Access to permanent residency is a long process and is generally not encouraged. The intention is that migrants are in Malaysia to work and then return home.

Under the recently adopted Minimum Wage Act, foreign workers are entitled to receive the same remuneration as native workers for their labour efforts. Although there have been some exceptions made for foreign workers, notably that employers may deduct accommodation charges and the migrant levy owed to the Malaysian government from their wages. Nevertheless, according to the Malaysia Employers Federation, this has still led to increased costs for employers of around 20-25 per cent, depending on the employer, which they argue translates into a better position for foreign workers and is acting as a ‘pull’ factor for workers coming from within the ASEAN region to Malaysia.

Commonly faced challenges for foreign workers relate to the non-payment of wages and the retention of documentation by employers. Foreign workers suffer from the risk of becoming irregular migrants because of the working permit system. Through this system, employees’ residence permits are tied to a specific employer, location, and sector and are therefore automatically cancelled if the contract ends. However, this gives employers the power to influence the migrants’ legal

situation and problems occur if employers revoke work permits or if employers or recruitment agents hold the passports of migrants, even though migrants are responsible for their proof of legality (International Federation for Human Rights, 2008).

Irregular migrants

There are also significant numbers of irregular migrants in Kuala Lumpur. Estimates cited by interview respondents range from one to two million. The largest groups of irregular migrants who overstayed their visa were Indians and Chinese, whose cultural and linguistic features are similar to those of the major races in Malaysia. Therefore, it is difficult to recognize these irregular migrants once they are in the country (Kanapathy, 2008). While services promoting the integration of irregular migrants are not the focus of this study, it is important to be aware that many migrants in Kuala Lumpur do face the challenges associated with irregularity.

Refugees and asylum seekers

There is no legal framework governing the position of refugees in Malaysia and, therefore, their integration into society is not a goal of existing government policies (International Federation for Human Rights, 2008; Crisp, Obi, & Umlas, 2012). As such, they face restrictions in access to the labour market and social services. The de facto status accorded by UNHCR, and the lesser known IOM status are not always effective in protecting refugees from detainment. Their position in Malaysia is therefore precarious. Nevertheless, given the number of refugees compared to the scale of resettlement, refugees clearly have needs. These relate to access to employment, healthcare, education and housing.

Ex-pats

Another important, but smaller group of immigrants in Malaysia is expatriate workers, representing less than two per cent of total immigration in 2008 (Kanapathy, 2008). Policies for expatriate workers are far less restrictive. The labour market is open to them, with the exception of positions relating to national security. Moreover, in contrast to low skilled workers, expatriates are allowed to bring their families with them which can facilitate their integration into Malaysian society, although generally speaking the dependents do not automatically qualify for the right to work. Ex-pats face fewer challenges in their settlement in Kuala Lumpur and are the target of companies seeking to facilitate their stay in the country. There are several international schools. Long-term settlement, however, is not generally available.

MM2H

A final group of foreigners coming to Malaysia are families and people who come through the Malaysia My Second Home programme (MM2H). According to CK-TEN, a company certified by the Ministry of Tourism to provide support to applicants for the programme, up until July 2013, 21,089 families had been assisted under this programme. The majority coming from Asia (76 per cent) and 14 per cent from Europe, 4 per cent from the Americas and the remainder from other regions of the world. Eligibility is independent of religion, race, age, or gender, but economic eligibility criteria apply⁵. Often applicants for MM2H are people reaching the end of their career and looking for a place to retire. Malaysia is seen as an attractive choice because of the relatively high standards of healthcare and the low cost of living. The Ministry of Tourism licenses several companies to act as agents for applicants, guiding them through the process and assisting them in various aspects of Malaysian life both pre- and post-arrival.

Programmes and Services for Migrants and Refugees

Table 6 categorizes the programmes and services offered by the interviewed institutions aimed at facilitating the integration of migrants and refugees. The table follows the policy dimensions determined for this study: social, cultural, legal, political, and economic. In K.L. most of the activities identified fall under the dimensions of legal integration (n=6) or social integration (n=5). Within legal integration this relates primarily to status determination and ensuring the rights of migrant workers and refugees are respected through advocacy activities and pro-bono legal services. A key area in which several respondents were working was on promoting the right to work for refugees. Although the Malaysian government has publicly signalled that this is under consideration, this has not yet been adopted. Within social integration we can see that many service providers are aimed at filling the provision gap in the area of healthcare and education. While less common (n=3), some of the most interesting examples fall into the economic dimension with the micro financing of refugee enterprises and self-help initiatives. Finally, it is important to mention that none of the respondents reported assisting migrants or refugees in political participation.

⁵ Upon application, applicants younger than 50 years have to proof that they have liquid assets of at least RM500,000 and a monthly offshore income of RM10,000 at their disposal. Applicants older than 50 years need to proof liquid assets worth a minimum of RM350,000, as well as a monthly offshore income or pension of RM10,000. Once their application is approved, applicants younger than 50 years are obliged to open a deposit account of RM300,000.00 of which they can only withdraw up to RM150,000.00 after one year for expenses such as house purchase, medical treatment or children's education in Malaysia. For those over 50 years, the choice between opening a deposit account worth RM150,000.00 from which they can withdraw a maximum of RM50,000.00 after one year under the same conditions as younger applicants or by proving that they have access to a monthly pension of RM10,000. Correct at time of writing.

Table 6: Policies, programmes and services provided to facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees according to policy dimensions retrieved from interviews in Kuala Lumpur

Typology	Stakeholder	Social	Cultural	Legal	Political	Economic	Observations
Policy-maker	n/a						
Practitioner	n/a						
Business Representative	CK-TEN	Housing* Schooling Healthcare Intercultural trainings for service providers*	Cultural events*	Documentation		Banking	Customized Settlement Services
	Ex Pat Malaysia.com	Information Services ^a					
	Private Firm	Legal		Pro-Bono Representation	Legal		Future plans to develop pilot project
	Migrants, Refugees & Immigration Affairs Committee of the Bar Council ^b			Legal Clinic Advocacy*			

	Malaysia Employers Federation			Advocacy*		Knowledge Generation*
Civil Society	Refugee School ^c	Housing Health-care Food		Legal Clinic Advocacy*		
	UNHCR	Health Education		Status Determination	Social Protection Fund	SPF projects can fall into multiple policy areas
International Organizations	ILO	Information Centres	Perception Campaign	Advocacy*		

^a Including answering received via email and advertising services relevant for expats.

^b Although the Bar Council is a creature of statute, it has been classified as a business for the purpose of the study as it represents a professional body. It could have been classified as a policy implementer in the sense that legal professionals work to uphold the rule of law although, given the advocacy work, this did not seem appropriate in this context.

^c To preserve anonymity the name of the school is not disclosed. As there are several schools providing informal education to refugee children in Kuala Lumpur, this should also be considered

* Occurs in partnership

Table 7 lists all of the partnerships identified through the interviews. No partnerships between the city and businesses were identified during the research. While it is possible that this is because no representatives from the city were interviewed by the researcher, all participants were asked if they knew of any such initiatives being run by the city, but no positive responses were received. Several participants did however refer to some interest among city councils in other parts of Malaysia with regards to urban refugees, but this was beyond the scope of the project. Two loose public-private partnerships could be identified: 1) between the Ministry of Tourism, and the agents licensed to promote MM2H and support its applicants; and 2) between UNHCR and the Ministry of Health, with respect to healthcare provision for refugees. The vast majority of partnerships identified, however, exist within networks of organizations working on similar issues relating to the promotions of the rights of migrant workers and refugees. Often UNHCR partners with service providers by financing these activities, prompting the representative of UNHCR to say that they perform and/or support many of the tasks such as curriculum design, teacher training and building maintenance, that one would expect from the Ministry of Education. While these often involved NGOs, international organizations, and faith-based groups, they have been classified as private partnerships, due to the fact that the government is not involved.

Table 7: Partnerships for migrant and refugee integration programmes and/or services obtained from the interviews in Kuala Lumpur

Stakeholder	Partner	Typology of partner	Benefit / Service	Description of Partnership
CK-TEN	Property Agents	Private	Intercultural training	Seminar Workshops on intercultural communication with expatriates service users
	Health Workers	Private	Intercultural training	Seminar Workshops on intercultural communication with expatriates service users
	Banks	Private	Intercultural training	Seminar Workshops on intercultural communication with expatriates service users
	Car Dealerships	Private	Intercultural training	Seminar Workshops on intercultural communication with expatriates service users
	Ministry of Tourism	Public-Private	Cultural events	Annual events in which the MM2H project is promoted.
MRIAC (Bar Council)	NGOs, International Organizations, Faith based Groups	Private	Advocacy	Advocacy work for promoting the rights of migrant workers.
UNHCR	Partners in Enterprise	Private	Micro-Finance	Small business loans are funded by UNHCR through Partners in Enterprise
	Ministry of Health	Public-Private	Health Provision	Although often UNHCR also funds free health clinics since refugees cannot always afford the fees for public health care.
	NGOs, Groups	Faith-Based Private	Education	Provides funding for schools, uniforms, school bags, library supplies (sometimes through SPF)
	Refugee Businesses	Private	Micro-Finance	Finance for quick impact projects through SPF.

Refugee School	UNHCR	Private	Education	UNHCR partially funds the activities of the school
Malaysian Employers Federation	ILO Bangkok	Private	Knowledge Creation	MEF is researching good practices among employers for migrant worker's rights.

Good Practice in Migrant and Refugee Integration in Kuala Lumpur.

Several important lessons emerge from the K.L. case study. This concluding section discusses some of the key services being offered to migrants and refugees in K.L that were identified through the interviews.

Low-Skilled Workers

No particular good practices by businesses were identified among employers of the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF). However, this is the subject of a research study commissioned by the ILO Bangkok which is due to be published in early 2014. The study will aim to identify good practices in promoting the rights of migrant workers in Malaysia across the whole migration process from: 1) pre-departure trainings and costs incurred; 2) arrival in terms of navigating immigration procedures and cultural adjustment 3) employment including services facilitating the migrants stay in the country such as accommodation, skills-recognition, and access to healthcare and conflict resolution services, where necessary; and finally 4) departure by ensuring that the migrants return to their home country goes smoothly.

Nevertheless, the largest area of work identified by this case study was the legal dimension of integration. Often in this area, the distinction between refugees, migrant workers, and undocumented workers becomes blurred and the focus is on promoting human rights to everyone, regardless of citizenship or status.

The Legal Aid Clinic is run by the Bar Council. It began in 1982 and works together with NGOs to provide legal support to migrants and refugees. Non-migrants can also use the service; but for them the service is means tested, meaning that the income of the client is assessed to determine whether they can afford to pay for the service without financial assistance or whether they are eligible for legal aid support. It is primarily staffed by legal professional waiting to be called to the Bar and who are expected to provide 14 days of pro-bono work. Some of the key problems that they encounter regarding refugees relate to detention, work rights and access to healthcare and education. For migrant workers, passport retention, non-payment of wages and employer abuse are concerns commonly raised. Domestic workers are not covered by the Employment Act and thus face challenges relating to working hours, payment of wages and employer abuse.

Aside from the Legal Aid Clinic, some private legal firms also provide pro-bono services to refugees and migrant workers. One such practice is currently seeking funds to implement a pilot project for the provision of legal support to migrants and refugees. The firm has recently recruited voluntary law students from countries where the refugees originate. As well as being familiar with the law, these students also have cultural and linguistic abilities that assist in bridging the gap between migrants and legal professionals. While not yet implemented and therefore not eligible to be considered as a good practice, this example has the potential to be a practical, innovative, transferrable and strategically relevant intervention. The concern raised by the legal practice, however, was that funding

for this type of work is often allocated to non-profit organizations which do not necessarily have the legal expertise to deliver the required services and thus rely on contracted legal professionals. By developing a project housed in the pro-bono section of the company, the respondent argued that a sustainable programme could be developed.

The ILO is also active in K.L. with regard to the promotion of the rights of migrant workers. A key example of work being done by the ILO in K.L. is the “Migrants Works” campaign which is part of a larger project: “GSM Tripartite Action to Protect and Promote the Rights of Migrant Workers within and from the Greater Mekong Sub-region” (the GMS TRIANGLE project). A study conducted by ILO in 2010 highlighted that the public perception of migrants in Malaysia was poor and that this may contribute towards their precarious position in society. The Migrant Works campaign aims at changing attitudes towards migrants. The work is focused on youth and aims to collaborate with both public and private universities to dispel commonly held myths regarding migrants. As part of the campaign they wish to organize field trips to refugee and migrant worker communities to create situations in which young people can meet and engage with migrants and learn first-hand about the challenges they face. In the long term, the hope is that by changing perceptions of migrants that this will translate into countering abuse and exploitation in the future. The campaign is supported by the creation of a Facebook group that hopes to disseminate information about migration in Malaysia with the hope of countering some of the myths relating to migrant workers and highlighting human rights violations. At the time of interview the campaign was facing challenges due to negative portrayals of migrants in the media and thus was not as active as initially intended. This GMS Triangle Project is subject to evaluation and, as such, has the potential to be a good practice example given that it is innovative and transferrable and strategically fits into the policy (or lack of policy) framework of Malaysia.

Refugees

Since refugee communities are mainly self-reliant and do not receive substantial support from the Malaysian government, services that promote self-reliance are top of the agenda for many of the interviewed organizations. While skills training and labour market readiness are also key factors in the integration of refugees into cities, the policy environment of Malaysia prohibits efforts in these areas from being truly effective.

In 2009 the UNHCR developed the Social Protection Fund (SPF) programme to support refugee communities in sustaining themselves. The SPF programme consists of grants for community projects focusing on the well-being of the refugee group which are provided to community-based refugee groups and works with existing skills and knowledge in the communities. A key point to note with regards to the SPF is that it allows the refugee community to identify their own needs and to develop projects accordingly. Training is targeted at refugee groups to assist in the preparation of grant requests. Examples of projects are skills training, income-generation, community service and development such as youth or child day care centres, microbusiness support, or

information sharing (UNHCR, 2013). The projects funded by the SPG are described as ‘quick impact’ projects and, although not a completely new concept in the field of migrant and refugee integration, they are certainly making an impact. The programme is regularly evaluated and has evolved as a result of the findings of these evaluations. For example, one of the early evaluations in 2010 identified that the amount received by migrants was often overwhelming and thus they decided to pay out grants in instalments. To date, 389 projects have been funded, 74 in 2013 alone and currently 91 are active. While the project originally started with earmarked budget, it has now been mainstreamed into the core budget and, as such, it is anticipated that it will remain a core part of UNHCR’s work in Malaysia.

One example of a project funded by the SPF was a community clean-up project that was initiated in a neighbourhood where media attention had highlighted complaints from local Malays regarding the condition of a local play park in an area with a high presence of both refugees and migrant workers. Through the SPF, the refugee community initiated a project to tidy up and repair the play park. The local council got involved through the provision of tools and equipment and the work received media attention. Internally it has been considered as a good practice and has been replicated. This type of project meets the needs of a community and allows for different groups to interact in the pursuit of a common goal: a safe play park in which their children can play. Another example is an organic farm run by refugees. The produce is used by a local refugee soup kitchen serving the most vulnerable members of the refugee community. The farm sold on excess produce which resulted in a self-sustaining project.

UNHCR has also partnered with Partners in Enterprise Bhd⁶, a private micro-finance NGO which provides microfinance services to urban refugees. The loans are intended to start or expand small business and the organization goes with the refugee, to directly purchase what is required for the business, to avoid situation in which the refugee ends up in further debt, due to using the money for other purposes. The fact that the funding comes from UNHCR is not public knowledge and this is argued to be the reason for the near perfect repayment rate. The project targets the Rohingya community who, owing to their stateless status are considered to be particularly vulnerable, as well as targeting female refugees. As already noted, UNHCR also plays the pseudo role of ‘Ministry of Education’ for the refugee community. Through the funding of refugee schools, around half of the refugee children in K.L. are in informal education institutions. While this does not provide them with a certified education, it ensures that, at minimum, refugee children are still given access to basic education which can improve their future prospects.

Expats and MM2H

The Ministry of Tourism licenses several companies to act as agents for applicants of the MM2H programme guiding them through the process and assisting them in various

⁶ Regrettably not interviewed.

aspects of Malaysian life both pre- and post-arrival. CK-Ten has assisted 400 to 500 of the approximately 21,000 families that have come through the MM2H programme since 2001. The company provides services tailored to meet the needs of each client. Services can range from: opening a bank account; assistance with purchasing a home, often in prime ex-pat neighbourhoods; buying or importing a car; selection of a school or healthcare provider; advice on leisure activities, relocation services, furniture supplies and more. The staff at CK-Ten offer support to new arrivals with the intention of embedding them into Malaysian society. This differs significantly from the types of services provided to other migrant groups in Malaysia.

There is less support for ex-pats through such companies although their employers generally offer relocation packages that include the provision of accommodation, relocation services, and transportation. According to some respondents, expats require less support because they are younger and more mobile although evidence from other cities covered by the study brings this assertion into doubt. One service that is available to expats is a website called 'ExpatMalaysia.com'. The website was initially started as a way of generating leads for a wealth generation company although it quickly evolved into a platform upon which those interested in migrating to Malaysia could obtain information. The website is currently receiving around 8000 visitors per month from all across the globe. Although, by being online, it does not limit who can use the service, it primarily provides information to potential expats and migrants interested in the MM2H programme, answering questions about the best places to live, the quality of the hospitals and healthcare clinics, where furniture can be bought, social gatherings usually take place and so forth. The website is now described as being in its 'infant-shoes' with potential ideas for growth, including the inclusion of a forum to allow users to engage with one another, advertisements for local companies and services to assist migrants. It would be too early to consider the website as a best practice in migrant integration however, in the context of Malaysia, it does appear to be providing valuable information to potential and current migrants.

Conclusion

By applying the good practice criteria developed for the purpose of the study⁷ the following good practice examples have been identified.

The SPF represents a good practice in the sense that it is practical, successful, transferrable, sustainable, and it fits strategically into the policy framework of the city by filling a gap in service provision. Quick impact projects are not new in the field of integration although one could argue that the SPF stimulates innovation by facilitating members of the refugee community to come up with innovative solutions to the challenges

⁷ The six categories of analysis devised for the identification of good practices are: (1) practicality, (2) innovation, (3) successfulness, (4) transferability, (5) sustainability, and (6) strategic fit.

they face. Its transferability is a particularly strong point given that users generate the ideas and thus the project is not contextually bound.

CK-Ten, and other agencies providing support services to applicants for the MM2H could be considered good practice in the sense that they facilitate the immigration experience. By supporting clients through the visa application, assisting them in settling into Kuala Lumpur, and by providing intercultural communication training to staff that are relevant to them (such as estate agents, car salespersons or healthcare/education professionals), the business model can provide new arrivals with the information and support that they require to settle into the city. We could therefore consider CK-Ten to be a good practice in the sense that it is practical, successful (from the point of view of client testimonials), and transferable.

It is difficult to speak about identifiable opportunities for cities and businesses to work together within the Malaysian context. Many participants would like to see the government taking a different stance on many issues relating to migrant workers but do not consider this to be feasible. Others work, in what is described as a 'grey area' and 'non policy', in which the government neither supports nor condemns their activities. While we can talk about good practices in the area of migrant and refugee integration, it is not possible to speak about this within the context of partnerships with the city.

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