

EAST AFRICA CITY CORRIDOR



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East Africa City Corridor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The East Africa City Corridor (EACC) is a strategic effort to harness the economic and migration dynamics of the 940 km trade route connecting cities from Addis Ababa to Berbera.

With support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and facilitation by Cities Alliance, this initiative aims to create sustainable, inclusive urban growth for corridor cities such as Berbera, Borama, Dire Dawa, Gabiley, Hargeisa, Jigjiga, Tog Wajale, and other small and large cities. The corridor's development is transforming regional trade, attracting investments in infrastructure including modern roads, dry ports, and logistics hubs.

This economic corridor is also a migration route, attracting people to cities with the hope of finding work while offering opportunities for those

displaced due to conflict or climate impacts to rebuild their lives. It is also a significant transboundary migration corridor, particularly for those seeking opportunities in the Gulf States. This journey is part of what is known as the "Eastern Route," which is one of the busiest migration pathways in the region; Saudi Arabia is a primary destination to seek employment and send remittances back home.

Yet, the rapid pace of urbanisation, combined with gaps in planning and governance, has left corridor cities struggling to fully realise the benefits of these developments. By empowering local authorities and fostering cross-city collaboration, the EACC aims to ensure that economic growth aligns with the needs of all residents, creating vibrant, resilient communities.

OVERVIEW

as pivotal nodes in regional trade networks. At the same time, these cities serve as key transit and destination points for people on the move – labour migrants drawn by economic opportunities, as well as forced migrants fleeing conflict, climate shocks, and economic hardship. This dual dynamic as both an economic and migration corridor presents unique challenges and opportunities for local governments and communities.

Recognising the potential for more equitable and sustainable urban development, Cities Alliance has worked with three cities in the EACC since 2018 (Borama, Gabiley, and Jigjiga). In 2022, Cities Alliance launched the EACC initiative with expanded support to more cities along the route. The EACC initiative emphasises collaborative urban governance, climate resilience, and the integration of vulnerable groups and migrants into urban economies.

The East Africa City Corridor represents a vital connection between inland urban centers and coastal trade hubs. Investments in the road and logistics infrastructure have positioned cities such as Berbera, Dire Dawa, and Jigjiga



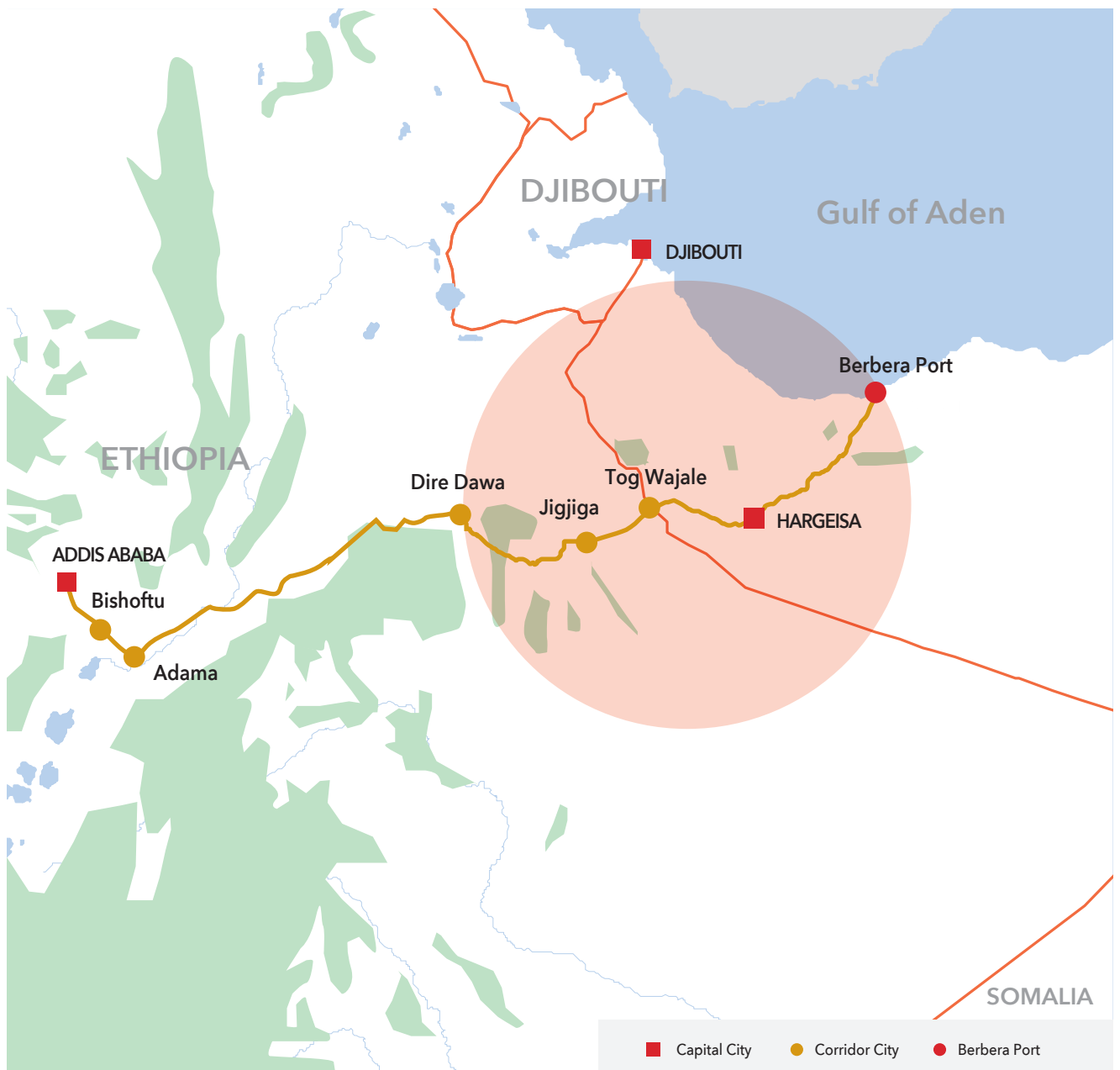
Photo: @ Cities Alliance

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE CORRIDOR

The East Africa City Corridor is central to the region's economic transformation. The trade route, stretching from inland cities such as Dire Dawa and Jigjiga to the port city of Berbera, is expected to facilitate a sixfold increase in trade by 2050, according to World Bank estimates. Investment in infrastructure - including new

highways, dry ports, and logistics hubs - is creating an interconnected economic zone with cities positioned as centers for trade, manufacturing, and agri-processing. Dire Dawa, with its proximity to the corridor's rail network, is becoming a logistics gateway, while Berbera's port expansion aims to handle increasing volumes of regional exports

The East Africa City Corridor



and imports. These economic developments are drawing labour migrants into urban centers, creating a new demand for housing, services, and job opportunities.

Yet, the corridor is also a migration route for those escaping conflict

and climate shocks, particularly from rural areas seeking refuge and economic opportunities in cities. Cities such as Gabiley and Hargeisa have experienced a rise in informal settlements as displaced populations arrive, adding to the existing challenges of managing

rapid urban growth. The economic potential of the corridor, if managed well, can provide employment and social integration opportunities for both labour migrants and displaced populations, helping cities to become engines of inclusive growth.

THE URBANISATION CHALLENGE

The cities along the East Africa City Corridor are witnessing unprecedented urbanisation, driven by a combination of natural population growth, rural-to-urban migration, and the influx of people fleeing environmental stress and instability. Cities such as Borama and Jigjiga have seen significant growth as migrants arrive seeking opportunities in trade, construction, and logistics linked to the corridor's development. However, the speed of this growth has outstripped the ability of local

governments to provide essential services, leading to the expansion of informal settlements where residents often lack access to water, sanitation, and electricity.

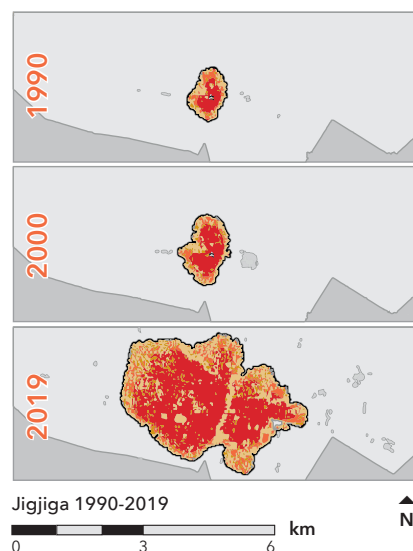
In Berbera, the development of port infrastructure has spurred a demand for skilled labour, drawing workers from neighboring cities and rural areas. Simultaneously, the city faces an influx of individuals displaced by droughts and conflicts in surrounding regions, adding pressure to housing and social services. Hargeisa, a key urban centre along the corridor, has become a hub for both economic activity and humanitarian response, balancing its role as a magnet for job seekers and a refuge for those in need.

Urban poverty remains a critical challenge across these cities, with a high prevalence of informal employment and limited access to quality public services. Women and children are most vulnerable to rising urban poverty and lack of basic social and infrastructure services. With increased cross-border mobility of people along the economic and migration corridor, safety and protection are real concerns for both migrants and host communities.

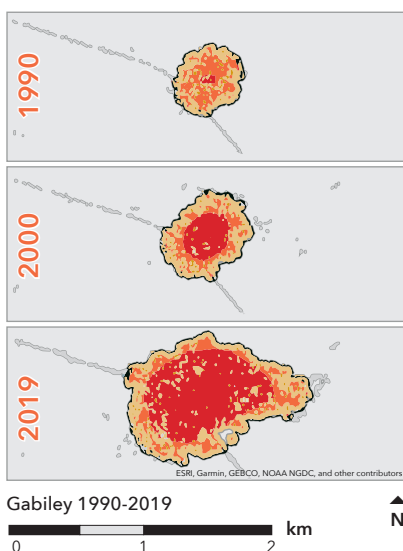
The need for proactive and inclusive urban planning, infrastructure investment, and social services that address both the needs of economic migrants and displaced populations is critical for sustainable development.

Urban expansion in cities in the Horn of Africa over 30 years

JIGJIGA



GABILEY



- Study area
- Urban built-up area
- Rural built-up area
- Rural open space
- Exurban open space
- Urban extent
- Suburban built-up area
- Urbanized open space
- Exurban built-up area
- Water
- ☆ CBD
- No data

STRATEGIES FOR COLLABORATIVE SYSTEMS OF CITIES

Borama, Gabiley, and Jijjiga, where the need for integrated urban planning and capacity building was particularly urgent.

Recognising that many corridor cities lacked the technical expertise and resources to engage fully in the corridor's development, Cities Alliance provided targeted support in areas such as spatial planning, inclusive governance, and climate resilience.

From 2022 onwards, the initiative expanded to include Berbera, Dire Dawa, Hargeisa, and Tog Wajale, facilitating a network of city leaders committed to addressing shared challenges.

Cities Alliance's approach in the East Africa City Corridor emphasises the "Collaborating Systems of Cities" model, where secondary cities benefit from pooled resources, shared learning, and collective advocacy. By strengthening local governance structures, Cities

Since 1999, Cities Alliance has:



Supported cities and strengthened the capacities of urban institutions in **88 countries**.



Leveraged **\$1.7 billion** in additional urban investment.



Supported **176 cities** with a combined population of 240 million to develop inclusive and integrated city development strategies.

Cities Alliance has been at the forefront of fostering sustainable urban growth for 25 years. With initial support from SDC, the East Africa City Corridor initiative began by focusing on collaborative systems approaches for cities including



Photo: @ Cities Alliance

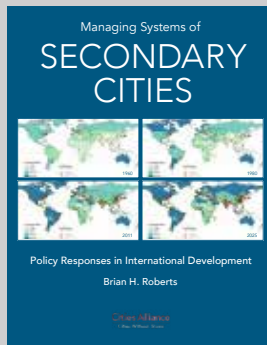
Alliance enables cities to better manage urban growth, integrate new arrivals into the social and economic fabric, and ensure that all residents can benefit from the economic opportunities created by the corridor.

The next section of this report presents different strategic interventions that can be financed through a range of options, including city-level funding, contributions from national and regional governments, public-private partnerships, and international development aid. Additional resources could come from concessional loans, support from civil society organisations, development foundations, and philanthropic contributions. There is also consideration of establishing an endowment fund specifically for this corridor initiative under the leadership of the mayors who will continue discussions to identify the most effective financing mechanisms for the initiative's goals.



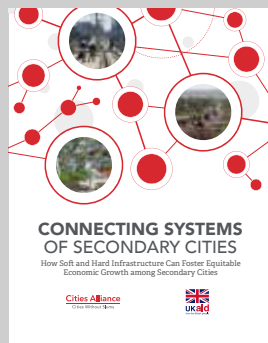
Addressing the Knowledge Gap on Secondary Cities

Apart from its work on the ground, the Cities Alliance is a strong advocate for raising the profile of secondary cities through analytical work and global knowledge transfer. The organisation was one of the first in the development community to focus on this issue in global advocacy. During the last 10 years a number of award-winning books have been published and informed global conferences. Two key publications are:



Managing Systems of Secondary Cities

This publication provides data on the changing trends of secondary cities and the role they can play in regional and national development. It explores how to make these cities more prosperous and efficient, reviews existing literature and trends, and redefines the concept of a secondary city within the global context.



Connecting Systems of Secondary Cities

Using a range of case studies, this award-winning book investigates the role of soft and hard infrastructure connecting systems of secondary cities. It argues for a collaborative form of governance between cities to plan and invest into joint connective infrastructure to foster equitable economic growth within and between cities.



Photo: © Cities Alliance

ENHANCING THE MIGRATION MANAGEMENT CAPACITY OF CITIES

Developing the migration management capacity of secondary cities along the East Africa City Corridor is vital. These cities serve as hubs of economic activities, social integration, and regional development. Enhancing their capacity to manage migration effectively enables them to accommodate and support incoming population, foster social cohesion, and stimulate economic productivity. Improved migration management plays a significant role in mitigating potential conflicts

and in promoting sustainable urban development, leading to the overall resilience of these cities.

It also enables better data collection on mobility trends, information, regional policies, and programmes aimed at harnessing the economic potential of migration for local communities and the region at large. This requires creating robust migration management systems and processes in the corridor cities to leverage their social and economic benefits.

DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATION: BUILDING CITY ALLIANCES

The first 2024 East Africa City Corridor Dialogue marked a significant step towards building a collaborative platform for city leaders and stakeholders. Hosted in Jigjiga with the participation of mayors, regional representatives, and civil society actors from across the corridor, the dialogue focused on key priorities for the next phase of urban development.

The discussions highlighted both the economic potential and human impact of developments along the East Africa City Corridor.

The corridor's expansion is creating opportunities in trade, logistics, and services, attracting investment and generating jobs in construction, transport, and retail sectors. Participants noted that the availability of labour has fueled growth, particularly in the service industry, supporting economic activities across the region.

However, the rapid influx of people into corridor cities presents challenges. As migrants arrive seeking opportunities or fleeing hardship, urban centers face increased pressure on infrastructure, including housing shortages and strained water and sanitation services. Addressing these pressures requires inclusive planning that balances economic growth with social needs. Participants emphasised the importance of involving all stakeholders in shaping a development strategy that ensures economic benefits are shared while maintaining social stability.

One of the key outcomes was the decision to establish a City Coordination Committee, which would serve as a forum for cities to jointly address issues such as housing shortages, employment opportunities, and environmental sustainability. Participants also stressed the importance of involving



local communities in planning processes, particularly those from marginalised groups who are most affected by rapid urban changes. This collaborative spirit set the stage for ongoing dialogues and joint action, as cities work together to leverage the benefits of the corridor while managing its challenges.

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Participants attend the first East Africa City Corridor Dialogue in Jigjiga, 26 May 2024

Photo: @ Cities Alliance



Key recommendations from the Dialogue

The following recommendations emerged from the Dialogue to support the development of the Corridor:

1. Establish a transnational coordination committee to focus on infrastructure development, trade promotion, migration management, and security.
2. Create a platform for mayors of the corridor cities to coordinate planning efforts and address common challenges.
3. Prioritise proactive spatial planning in areas influenced by the corridor to guide development.
4. Establish specialised urban planning and management departments at universities in Jigjiga and Hargeisa.
5. Ensure equal participation and benefits for women and marginalised groups in all development processes.
6. Address climate change and environmental challenges in the corridor's catchment areas through targeted actions.



Photo: © Cities Alliance

PROACTIVE SPATIAL PLANNING

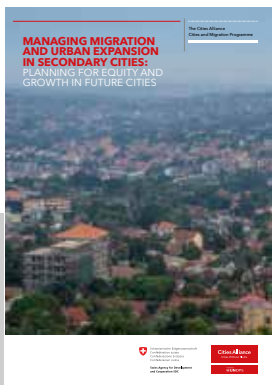
Sub-Saharan Africa is at the centre of global urban growth, with 34.7 per cent of the world's urban population growth from 2020 to 2050 expected to be in the region.

Secondary cities like those along the East Africa City Corridor contribute to more than 50 per cent of this growth, which is taking

place through both natural increase and rural-urban migration. This shift in the population is leading to urban expansion that is fast and disorderly. Urban planning can help cities promote the socio-economic inclusion of rural-urban migrants and new urban natives. Addressing this challenge requires planning techniques that focus on the urban periphery, where most new growth is occurring.

The Cities Alliance has supported the introduction of long-term spatial plans, known as Urban Expansion Plans, in several East African secondary cities including Jigjiga and Gabiley. These plans enable municipal planners to project the

city's future population growth and corresponding land demand for the next 30 years. They promote the development of a network of arterial roads connecting the entire city enhancing mobility and connectivity. Additionally, the plans help to protect environmentally sensitive and natural resource reserves from settlement. The straightforward approach of urban expansion planning makes it perfectly suited to the local context of secondary cities, thereby strengthening ownership, management and updating of the plan by municipal planners and decision makers.



Managing Migration and Urban Expansion in Secondary Cities by Patrick Lamson-Hall, Shlomo Angel, and Tsigereda Tafesse shows how cities can use urban expansion planning to accommodate new migrants and manage spatial expansion.

Small investments allow cities to take control of peripheral growth for 30 years, organising it into a framework that is economically and socially inclusive and more environmentally sustainable.

Cities including Borama, Dire Dawa, Gabiley, Jigjiga, and Togo Wajale are working on urban expansion plans that anticipate growth over the next three decades, identifying land for housing, industry, protection of environmentally sensitive land (particularly for water conservation), and green spaces. These plans aim to balance the demands of incoming labour migrants and provide space for the integration of displaced populations, ensuring that urban growth is orderly and inclusive.

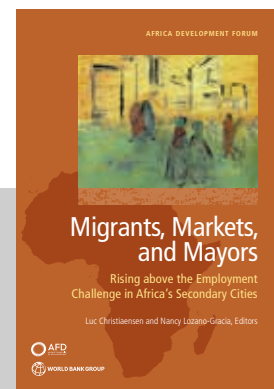
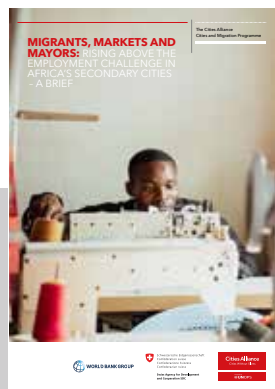
- **Jigjiga's Urban Expansion Plan:** In Jigjiga, the prolonged drought has severely impacted the pastoralist economy, pushing many people to seek livelihoods in the city. Most are settling in informal areas on Jigjiga's outskirts. As the city's population grows, urban expansion has gradually encroached on a small, man-made reservoir that serves as a crucial water source for Jigjiga. During the city's urban expansion planning, it became evident that if unplanned growth continued, the reservoir and surrounding water infrastructure would be at greater risk of contamination. To mitigate this, planners are directing future development westward, away from the reservoir, and providing alternative sites for expansion to protect the integrity of the city's water supply. With support from Cities Alliance, Jigjiga has now developed an urban expansion plan to accommodate over two million new residents over the next 30 years, creating grids of arterial roads and protected green spaces to guide growth.
- **Gabiley's Climate-Resilient Planning:** Gabiley's urban plan anticipates an expansion of 20 km² to accommodate a population that is expected to double to around 60,000 residents. Using climate and hydrological data, the city designed the plan to steer growth away from environmentally sensitive areas, thereby safeguarding critical water sources. With the draft plans approved, the next step involves securing land for arterial road networks and open spaces. This will ensure that Gabiley's expanding population has adequate space for housing and economic activities, supporting orderly and sustainable urban development.

INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKETS

The development of the East Africa City Corridor, is poised to generate significant employment opportunities, primarily due to the expansion of transport, logistics, and infrastructure. The construction and maintenance of these new facilities require a skilled workforce, opening up jobs in sectors such as logistics, construction, and related services. Beyond the immediate needs of infrastructure projects, the anticipated rise in investment along the corridor is expected to spur growth in various commercial sectors, including retail, manufacturing, and agri-processing, creating a more diversified job market.

To ensure that both local communities and incoming

migrants can fully benefit from these opportunities, it is essential to expand access to education and vocational training programmes. These programmes should be tailored to the needs of the evolving labour market along the corridor, as well as to the capabilities of the urban poor and marginalised groups. This would include training in technical skills relevant to logistics and construction, as well as providing pathways for women and youth to enter emerging sectors through gender-sensitive skilling initiatives. Such efforts increase local employment and foster social inclusion by integrating marginalised groups into the formal economy.



New Evidence on Cities and Migration

The publication *Migrants, Markets, and Mayors: Rising Above the Employment Challenge in Africa's Secondary Cities*, produced by the World Bank and Cities Alliance, reviews how secondary towns and cities in Africa can better prepare for and manage the internal economic migration of workers to the mutual benefit of cities and migrants alike.

It takes three perspectives: these of the migrant, the market, and the mayor, broadly referring to how migrants fare in the urban labour market, how they affect aggregate urban productivity, and how mayors can leverage their potential to the benefit of all. The publication was funded by SDC and is available in English and French.

A founding member of Cities Alliance, the World Bank hosted the Cities Alliance Secretariat from 1999-2013 and is a member of the Cities Alliance Board.

Micro- and small-enterprise support programmes play a crucial role in this strategy. Access to finance, business mentoring, and entrepreneurship training can help both local entrepreneurs and migrant workers establish small businesses, stimulating economic activity at the community level. This support is particularly important for women and youth, who often face greater barriers in accessing formal employment. By equipping them with financial literacy and business skills, these initiatives can drive economic empowerment and boost overall productivity along the corridor.

Moreover, creating an enabling environment for local economic

development is vital. This includes reducing regulatory barriers that hinder business growth and improving urban infrastructure, such as affordable housing and reliable public transport, which are critical for workforce mobility. Streamlining business registration processes and improving access to serviced land can attract more investment, helping cities along the corridor to become vibrant hubs of economic activity.

In addition, fostering connections between cities, local businesses, and training providers can facilitate job placements, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training for migrants. Establishing business incubators and linking with microfinance institutions can further support new

entrepreneurs, ensuring that the economic benefits of the corridor are widely shared. By focusing on inclusive job creation, the initiative aims to transform corridor cities into engines of growth where both long-term residents and new arrivals can find pathways to economic stability.

- **Berbera's Port Expansion and Labour Market:** Berbera's port has become a gateway for trade, and the city is developing vocational training programmes to equip its youth for jobs in logistics and transport, ensuring that the local population benefits from regional trade growth.



Photo: @ Cities Alliance

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Achieving gender equality is fundamental for sustainable development in the cities along the East Africa City Corridor. Men and women often experience city life differently due to ingrained social norms and expectations, which can limit women's access to economic opportunities, social services, and civic participation. These disparities reduce the potential of urban areas to foster inclusive economic growth. A key challenge is that urban planning processes have traditionally been gender blind, failing to address the specific needs of women and gender minorities. This oversight restricts access to essential services such as safe public transport, affordable housing, and opportunities

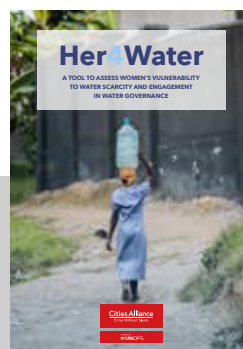
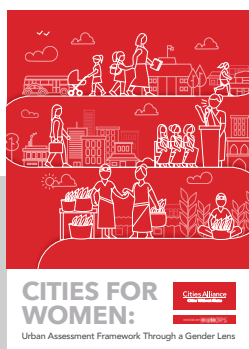
for economic participation.

To address these challenges, Cities Alliance has introduced the Cities for Women Framework, which helps cities integrate gender considerations into urban planning. The framework encourages local governments to assess the impacts of policies and projects on women and men, ensuring that both benefit equally. This approach improves women's access to resources and enhances their role in shaping city life through active participation in planning processes. By involving women directly in decision-making, cities can create more effective and equitable urban environments that are better able to address the needs of all residents.

Additionally, targeted initiatives such as Her4Climate and Her4Water engage women in addressing climate and water management challenges. These tools harness the knowledge and leadership of women to improve community resilience. For example, women in water-scarce areas have been involved in projects that establish

rainwater harvesting systems, ensuring a sustainable water supply for their communities. By empowering women to take leadership roles in these initiatives, cities improve their environmental resilience and ensure that women's voices are central to the solutions being implemented.

Economic empowerment is another critical focus area. Expanding access to vocational training, financial services, and entrepreneurship programmes helps women take advantage of new job opportunities created by the economic growth along the corridor. Initiatives that focus on building skills for sectors like logistics and small-scale manufacturing can significantly boost women's participation in the workforce. This is particularly important as gender-sensitive economic policies can lead to higher productivity and innovation, driving faster economic growth. In this way, fostering gender equality benefits women while also contributing to the overall prosperity and social cohesion of corridor cities.



Tools for Mainstreaming Gender Equality into Development Initiatives

Cities Alliance has developed and tested a series of approaches and tools for co-designing gender-sensitive infrastructures and urban policies as well as guidelines for targeting and involving women in urban governance. The tools have been applied in multiple countries around the world, including in Liberia, Nepal, The Gambia, Tunisia, and Uganda.

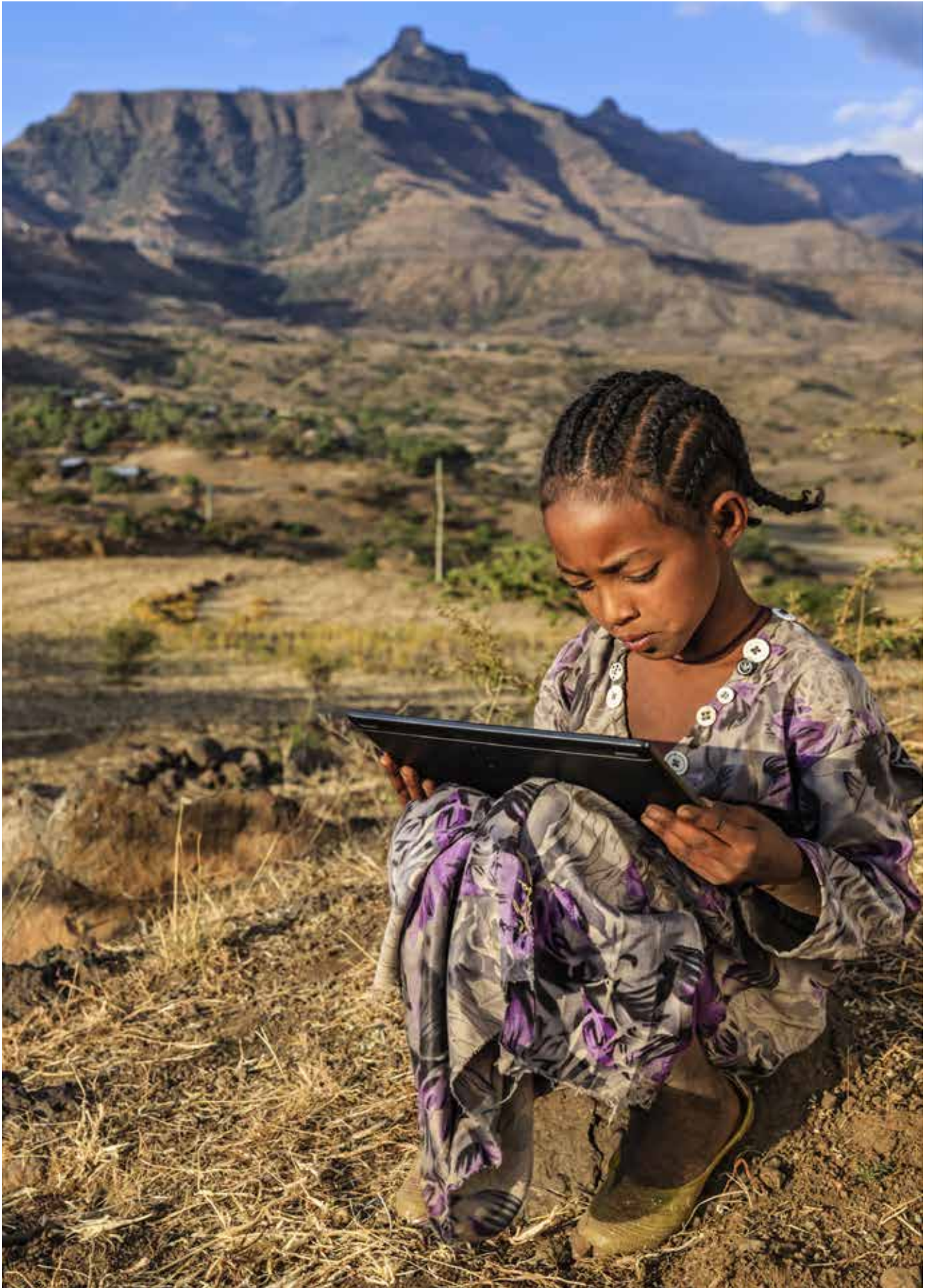


Photo: © Cities Alliance



Photo: @ Cities Alliance

ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES AND SOCIAL COHESION

Access to quality public services is fundamental for the social and economic integration of residents in cities along the East Africa City Corridor. However, rapid urbanisation, migration influxes, and the expansion of trade routes have placed significant pressure on the ability of cities to provide essential services such as healthcare, education, water supply, transportation, energy, waste management and sanitation. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach to urban planning and investment that ensures all residents, including migrants and marginalised groups, can benefit from improved infrastructure and services.

By supporting urban authorities in identifying service gaps and prioritising investment in critical services and infrastructure, the initiative aims to create more resilient and inclusive urban environments. The Cities Alliance

approach emphasises the importance of creating inclusive urban environments where all residents, including women, youth, and displaced populations, have access to quality education and healthcare services. This involves partnerships with local governments, international donors, and community organisations to strengthen public health infrastructure and expand access to schools, especially in underserved areas. Such efforts are designed to ensure that economic growth along the corridor is matched by investments in human capital, enabling residents to thrive both socially and economically.

The initiative also recognises that enhancing access to public services is crucial for fostering social cohesion between host communities and migrants. For example, efforts to improve transportation networks can facilitate better access to jobs and services for residents across the

city, reducing barriers to economic participation. Integrating public service improvements into broader urban development plans helps ensure that all residents benefit from the corridor's economic opportunities, creating a foundation for long-term stability and growth. By focusing on equitable service delivery, the East Africa City Corridor initiative seeks to transform urban centers into inclusive hubs where everyone has the opportunity to access the resources they need for a better quality of life.

An important aspect of integration and social cohesion is providing critical information to migrants newly arriving in corridor cities. Currently, there is very limited information on the agencies migrants use to relocate, as well as the type of information, orientation, and services that are most valuable to them. Cities

Alliance has experience in setting up a migrant resource centre in Adama, where a significant number of migrants voluntarily register and seek vital information about life in their new destination, including culture, language, and employment potential. The centre also serves as a job referral point by issuing 'job seeker IDs' and connecting migrants with employers in the industry, service, and construction sectors. This service should be replicated in corridor cities to facilitate the integration of migrants into their host communities, helping them become productive members of society. The information collected through voluntary registration can provide valuable insights into mobility trends, which can inform local and regional migration and urbanisation programmes.



Key points

- The case study of Adama, Ethiopia, demonstrates how local governments can respond to urban IDPs. Adama's city government allowed government and regional authorities to increase their IDP shelter and service provision by building the housing facility, a school and social infrastructure for them.
- Documentation and registering local and migrants is crucial for both emergency and long-term planning.
- The housing and administrative IDP services responses require transparent policies and long-term integration.
- City leaders need to integrate and address local challenges such as religious differences and competition for employment.
- City leaders need their own indigenous voluntary associations between IDPs and IDPs and other relevant stakeholders to provide regular information. They should be encouraged to support social integration with local hosts as well, who have the most type of assistance.
- The case study of urban IDPs in Adama, Ethiopia, also offers lessons, demonstrating the need for housing to provide for the most vulnerable IDPs.

Recommendations

- Encourage a variety of country response to forced migration arrivals by creating and sharing an agreed list of local facilities.
- Create a register system for migrants entering the host city through the local city government.
- Ensure that housing registers are accessible each five houses, which is crucial for the long-term urbanisation plan.
- Encourage the integration of IDPs through social and cultural gatherings and activities such as clubs, book clubs and other groups.
- Offer community activities and enable models to provide training and economic training about IDPs that address local challenges.

Adama: A Secondary City's Successful Response to IDPs

The case study of Adama demonstrates how local government can successfully respond to urban internally displaced persons (IDPs). Adama's city government received over 1,300 IDP families at very short notice and facilitating the building of houses, a school, and crucial infrastructure for them.

This case study is particularly significant because increasing numbers of forced migrants move not to capital cities, but instead to secondary cities such as Adama, which often lack the resources to accommodate and integrate them. from federal, regional, and - in particular - local urban actors.



Photo: @ Cities Alliance



Photo: @ Cities Alliance

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Cities along the East Africa City Corridor face grave climate risks. With limited resources, they will be forced to confront extreme precipitation, drought, landslide risk, and other geophysical shocks. Social and economic dislocations will change migration patterns and, in some cases, could lead to extensive forced displacement. These challenges add to existing obstacles, including inadequate service provision, rapid urban expansion, and the proliferation of informal settlements.

Rapidly growing cities are primarily expanding into peripheral areas, which are often poorly planned and disorderly. Fragmented growth patterns undermine the formation of metropolitan labour markets and can impede socioeconomic progress, particularly for rural-urban migrants.

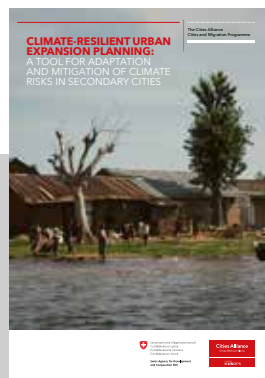
City governments can take meaningful action to prepare for climate change. Cities can use urban planning to create a framework for adaptation and mitigation investments by reserving land for drainage and resilient infrastructure, encouraging titling and formalisation of informal settlements, reserving land for flood control, protecting water supply areas, and enhancing connectivity and opportunities for the provision of public transit. Planned investments in urban infrastructure can be made more orderly and climate resilient, and land for future necessary

adaptation investments can be reserved in advance of settlement.

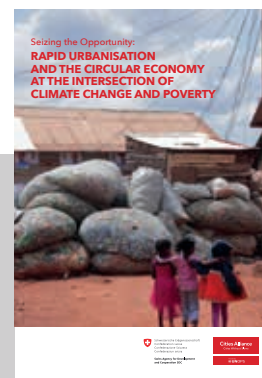
In addition, urban planning can help to guide growth away from high-risk areas by offering alternative sites along the arterial road network. This can help promote higher density and more compact development, making future adaptation programmes more cost-effective, helping cities attract needed funds and supporting mitigation targets in the transport sector.

People living in the poorest areas of cities are often agents of change, both in terms of climate mitigation and adaptation, as they exist at the nexus of the circular economy, urbanisation, and poverty.

Climate-Resilient Urban Planning and the Circular Economy



Climate-Resilient Urban Expansion Planning argues that municipal governments can take meaningful action to prepare for climate change using the same methodology that is used to help secondary cities plan for rapid population growth: urban expansion planning.



Rapid Urbanisation and the Circular Economy at the Intersection of Climate Change and Poverty examines how circular economy and climate mitigation actions can improve socioeconomic conditions in developing cities, and the role of an integrated, inclusive city planning planning.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next phase of the East Africa City Corridor initiative will build on the momentum of the first EACC Dialogue, focusing on the establishment of a regional coordination mechanism and strategic partnerships to support sustainable development. Key activities to come include facilitating city dialogues and providing technical and grant assistance to address urban challenges identified during the first round of consultations.

The initiative aims to empower cities to develop and implement localised action plans that address their unique needs while aligning with the broader goals of the corridor. These plans will focus on areas such as infrastructure development, housing, and social and economic integration, enabling each city to leverage the corridor's growth for the benefit of all residents. For example, Jigjiga plans to expand its water management systems and improve access to public services in newly settled areas, while Gabiley is prioritising affordable housing projects to accommodate incoming labour migrants and displaced populations. These action plans will

serve as blueprints for sustainable urban growth with a focus on inclusivity and climate resilience.

A Regional Coordination Mechanism to Ensure the Effectiveness of City-Led Initiatives

The initiative will act as a platform for cities to partner and seek financing from public, private, or international sources. This platform will allow cities to share knowledge, coordinate on cross-border challenges such as migration management, and advocate for their needs at regional forums. It will also facilitate collaboration with national governments and regional bodies such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), ensuring that cities have a voice in the broader development plans for the East Africa City Corridor. The coordination mechanism will promote joint planning for infrastructure projects that span multiple cities, such as transport networks, logistics hubs, and green spaces, fostering a more integrated approach to regional development.

The success of the East Africa City Corridor initiative depends on strong partnerships with development agencies, the private sector, and civil society. Cities Alliance will work to deepen existing partnerships while forging new alliances that bring additional resources and expertise to the table. Collaboration with international development partners will be crucial for mobilising the investments needed to implement the large-scale infrastructure projects identified as priorities by the City Coordination Committee.

Partnerships with academic institutions such as Jigjiga University will continue to play a key role in providing training and research support to city administrations, ensuring that local governments have access to the latest knowledge and best practices in urban management. The private sector, including companies involved in logistics and trade, will also be engaged to support job creation and local enterprise development, helping cities to become more competitive in the regional economy.

Expected Outcomes and Vision for the Future

The East Africa City Corridor initiative aims to achieve several key outcomes that will lay the foundation for long-term sustainable growth.

These include:



Enhanced regional cooperation through the City Coordination Committee, leading to more effective management of migration and trade flows.



Improved infrastructure in corridor cities, including better roads, transport, water systems, housing, and public spaces that support the needs of both new arrivals and long-term residents.



Stronger local economies, driven by increased investment in trade, manufacturing, and services, and supported by a well-trained local workforce.



Greater social cohesion, as inclusive planning processes ensure that the voices of marginalised groups, including women and youth, are heard and their needs addressed in urban development.



Photo: @ Cities Alliance

The initiative envisions a future where cities like Berbera, Hargeisa, and Jigjiga are not only hubs of economic activity, but also inclusive, resilient communities where all residents have the opportunity to thrive. Through continued collaboration and a

focus on locally driven solutions, the East Africa City Corridor can become a model for regional development, demonstrating how cities can play a central role in shaping a more prosperous and equitable future for the region.

Cities Alliance

Cities Without Slums

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