



REDE SEM FRONTEIRAS

ENGLISH VERSION

**Solidarity Cities:  
Experiences of San Fernando del Valle de  
Catamarca - AR, Cuiabá and Recife - BR**

**Rede Sem Fronteiras Report**

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REDE SEM FRONTEIRAS

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## 1. Introduction

*The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire.*

David Harvey, 2012.

The Report “Expanding Solidarity Cities Networks”, an initiative of the Rede Sem Fronteiras (RSF), with the support of the Comité Catholique Contre la Faim Et Pour Le Développement (CCFD) - Terre Solidaire, provides a comparative overview of three models of good practices in local policies for migrants and refugees integration.

Interculturality, Transversality, Sustainability and Migrant Protagonism (Social Participation) were the transversal axes of the research carried out between October 2021 and April 2022, which sought to deepen knowledge about practices aimed at universal access to rights.

The defense of local policies for the integration of migrants and refugees involving alliances between local authorities and civil society is part of the foundational principles of RSF. Since 2008, when the Second Forum of Local Authorities took place, within the scope of the World Social Forum on Migration in Madrid, Spain, and, since then, RSF has taken this issue to debate with Latin American social movements, especially in the Mercosur Social Summits – Southern Common Market.

An important point in this process took place in 2013, in São Paulo, with the beginning of the implementation of the first municipal migration policy on the continent, which was institutionalized in 2016 through Municipal Law nº 16.478/2016, sanctioned by Mayor Fernando Haddad, during the opening event of the VII World Social Forum on Migration, held at the Zumbi dos Palmares University, coordinated by RSF.

In 2015, Rede Sem Fronteiras joined the Organization for Universal Citizenship – O.C.U, an initiative involving European, African, Asian and Latin American networks,



which defends the free movement of people. In addition, it promotes an alternative model of migration governance with local governments and civil society at the forefront, based on the right to universal citizenship.

Based on this international initiative, RSF has been participating and promoting research activities and learning exchanges, in addition to strengthening the links between the diversity of actors in the territories.

It is important to understand the territory in the perspective presented by David Harvey<sup>1</sup>, who states that the right to the city is linked to the right to change oneself through the change of the city, surpassing individual interests and desires. The (re)construction of the city with guarantees of access to human rights, regardless of its place of origin, involves democratic administration and, above all, collective power towards change. The fight for universal cities to be conquered must be global, strengthening, integrating and directing the actions of civil society and local public authorities, as well as all the people who inhabit them, towards this common goal. The inspiration for the urban revolution comes from the French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, and RSF understands that this revolution permeates intercultural plurality.

Finally, it is also important to emphasize that this concept dialogues closely with the principles of the Migration Alliance, a dynamic between civil society organizations and local authorities from different regions of the world. Launched in 2019 by the National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories of France - ANVITA and the O.C.U, the initiative advocates, based on concrete experiences, the implementation of alternative policies of dignified reception, from the local to the global level.

In the last two years, the members of the Migration Alliance have been working to identify good practices both in Latin America and in Europe, and in this context the cities of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, in Argentina, and Cuiabá and Recife, both in Brazil, to integrate the Report of the Rede Sem Fronteiras.

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<sup>1</sup> HARVEY, David. O Direito à Cidade. *Lutas Sociais*, São Paulo, n.29, p.73-89, jul./dez. 2012.



## 2. Methodology

The research to prepare this Report of the Rede Sem Fronteiras was carried out from November/2021 to April/2022, totaling 6 months, and had three stages of data collection and obtaining information that made it possible to strategically read each city., as well as the integrated analysis of the three territories studied.

Initially, in the first stage, documental research and bibliographic review were carried out, mapping the political, economic, historical and sociocultural context of the three chosen cities, as well as their contemporary migratory processes. At that moment, the structures of public administration and the bodies involved in the consolidation and institutionalization of local migratory policies were identified, civil society organizations, study groups and academia, collectives and leaders that act in the defense of the human rights of migrants were also mapped. and refugees in each territory.

The second stage consisted of conducting in-depth interviews. To this end, semi-structured interview scripts were prepared considering the particularities and characteristics of each city studied. In all, 14 interviews were carried out, mainly in a virtual way, between representatives of public authorities, civil society and migrant leaders.

Based on the data and information obtained in these first two stages, the third was started, which consisted of the consolidation and, later, of new documentary research in search of inputs to complement the strategic reading and deepen the integrated analysis based on the four principles that guided the study.

In addition to collecting and operationalizing information and data for the production of this Report, the carrying out of interviews and documentary research aimed to prepare for a second phase of this project: the realization of a virtual working meeting with key representatives of public authorities, organizations civil society and migrant leaders, stimulating debate and joint reflection between the three cities.

It is important to mention that, as part of the process of dialogue and alignment with the work already carried out in European cities that composed the pilot experience of the reference project of the Migration Alliance, two meetings were held



during the study period, to exchange information and methodological experiences. between the RSF and O.C.U.

Throughout the study, there was technical follow-up, which took place systematically and periodically through weekly meetings between a representative of the RSF Technical Secretariat and the team of volunteers, which made it possible to monitor the internship and progress of actions in the three different territories and, sometimes, the redirection of strategies for completion of activities, according to the schedule stipulated at the beginning of the project.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the project also has the structure of a Participatory Methodology, valuing the collective construction of knowledge among the different actors in the territories, always maintaining, for this, its scientific rigor. The elaboration of this text includes, in addition to the research carried out by the volunteers, the textual and conceptual review of the RSF technical team and contributions from all those involved in the process. All actions were carried out by establishing dialogue and strengthening networks between what was called “solidarity cities”, so that scientific knowledge and practical experience of each municipality are combined.



### 3. San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, Catamarca, Argentina

San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca (SFVC), capital of the Argentine province of Catamarca, was founded on July 5, 1683. Located on the banks of the Rio del Valle and close to the Sierras de Ambato and Ancasti, it is more than 1000 km from the capital. Argentina, Buenos Aires. The province of Catamarca, located in the northwest of the country, borders the provinces of Salta, Tucumán, Santiago del Estero, Córdoba and La Rioja, and the Republic of Chile. The border between the two countries is formed by the Cordillera de los Andes, which gives the place unique geographical characteristics. The mountainous landscape and the fertile land area have guided economic activities towards agricultural production.

The region, colonized by the Spaniards in the mid-17th century, was until then inhabited by the native population, which means that, as in any other Latin American territory, San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca has its own history, with a cultural identity. previous to the one that was made official after the Spanish colonization.

The process that culminated in the foundation of the city is an important theme of the colonial period in Catamarca, since its foundation was directly linked to the movement of appropriation of lands of native peoples by the Spaniards<sup>2</sup>. It is important to mention that San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca was the last city founded in the prefecture of Tucumán, built in 1683, after failed attempts to found it in the west of the region due to tenacious resistance from indigenous peoples<sup>3</sup>.

According to the last population census, carried out in 2010, the city of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca had a total of 159,139 thousand inhabitants, which represents 43% of the entire Province of Catamarca. Of the almost 160 thousand

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<sup>2</sup> VARELA, Norha Alicia Trettel de, MORENO Alicia del Carmen, OVIEDO Marcelo Ariel Gershani. LA CIUDAD Y SU FUNDADOR San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca: La historia de una ciudad que nació con historia. Ediciones Municipales. Municipalidad de Catamarca, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> DE LA ORDEN, Gabriela. In: Folia Histórica del Nordeste. Instituto de Investigaciones Geohistóricas-Conicet; Instituto de Historia-Facultad de Humanidades-UNNE, 2020. Available 30th mar 2022 at: <<https://revistas.unne.edu.ar/index.php/fhn/article/view/4165/4027>>



inhabitants of the municipality, it is estimated that 3% are migrants, just over 4,700 people of different nationalities, expressing a great cultural diversity.

Currently, the city is a tourist center par excellence, with its colonial architecture being one of its attractions, such as its cathedrals, churches and museums. In addition, SFVC serves as a link to many regional tourist attractions, mainly mountainous natural landscapes and natural resorts with crystal clear waters, such as the tourist village Las Juntas. Still, it is an important religious center, with emphasis on one of its main events, which is the pilgrimage in which hundreds of pilgrims arrive in San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca to visit the Church of the Virgen del Valle (1694), where the venerated image of Our Lady of the Valley.

### 3.1. Migration characteristics

Despite its isolation from the administrative centers of Argentina, such as Buenos Aires, the city of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, mainly due to its geography, has always been host to migratory groups from neighboring cities and towns<sup>4</sup>, as well as people from other continents. The migratory profiles present in the municipality of SFVC do not differ much from those found in the Argentine national context<sup>5</sup>. Between the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the city was marked by European migrations, mainly of Italian, Spanish and French origin; in addition to migrations from the Asian continent, from countries such as Lebanon, Israel and Syria.

After the first half of the 20th century, it was the eastern migrations, especially the Japanese ones, that stood out among these migratory flows. Finally, since the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the presence of Latin American migration has been reinforced, especially in terms of flows from the closest

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<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Uma peculiaridade da cidade de San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca é a comunidade Amish, um grupo religioso cristão anabaptista dos Estados Unidos e Canadá. Os habitantes das zonas rurais, longe da cidade, preservam os seus próprios valores e formas de educar os seus filhos. Um dos seus costumes está relacionado com a restrição do uso de dispositivos electrónicos. Este auto-isolamento torna difícil o acesso e a recolha de dados sobre este grupo de migrantes.



countries, such as Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. Today, more than 30 different nationalities live in San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, as a result of two great migratory currents: the first, the oldest, from which most of the city's inhabitants descend, and the more recent, the migratory current mainly Latin-American.

### **3.2. Migration Law and Structures for Participation and Guarantee of Rights**

The current National Migration Law of Argentina, no. 25,871, was enacted on December 17, 2003 and regulated seven years later by Decree no. 616/2010. The amendment of the former migration law, also known as the "Law Videla", has given the country an example of human rights-oriented migration policy, both regionally and globally. It is important to note that Law No. 25,871 determines that migrants are guaranteed all social, cultural and economic rights; irrespective of your regular or irregular residency status.

However, even though it was considered a vanguard law at the time of its creation, migrant collectives highlight the lack of a gender perspective, especially in relation to the Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Transvestite, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other variations of sexuality population ( LGBTQIA+).

Policies on migration often ignore the gender dimension, avoiding situations of vulnerability that affect many migrants or victimizing them in such a way that they prevent their recognition as social actors (Martínez Pizarro 2003:19). (...) When we talk about gender empowerment, we are talking about something more than opening access to decision-making; It must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as having the capacity and the right to occupy that decision-making space or, in our case, to be aware of what corresponds to them<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> COHEN & MERA (2005) apud ESPERÓN; DANTUR & CARNERO (2012). In: *Migración, Género y Derechos. V Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población*, Montevidéu, Uruguay, 2012.



### **Public administration structure, bodies involved in the theme: National Aspect**

At the national level, the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for migration issues and has a specific decentralized body called the National Migration Directorate (DNM), created in 1949 during the government of Juan Domingo Perón. Linked to the DNM is also the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE), a body in charge of organizing, controlling, guiding and disseminating data and information on the situation of the refugee population.

In addition to CONARE, the DNM maintains the Migration Delegations in its structure. In September 2021, Governor Raúl Jalil announced the opening of a unit in Catamarca, which is essential to facilitate migratory regularization. Currently, migrants must travel to the province of La Rioja, located more than 150 km from San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, which represents a considerable expense in view of their already vulnerable social situation. In some cases, depending on the proximity of each municipality, migrants traveled to other provinces to regularize their procedures. The presence of this national agency makes it possible to control the migratory situation and also the social conditions of migrants, coordinating with other municipal and provincial agencies to guarantee their rights, avoiding situations of human trafficking and labor exploitation.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security of the Nation also deals with migration issues, through the Undersecretariat for Territorial Articulation and the Directorate of International Affairs. In this sense, in March 2021, the Manual for the Advisor on Migrant Issues was launched, used as a basis for training agents working in Territorial Agencies and Municipal Employment Offices. The document aimed to equip professionals in the identification, intervention and reorientation to other instances, such as situations of human trafficking, forced labor and child labor.

In cases where it is not possible to regularize your migratory status at first, it is recommended that you enter the country again by regular means. However, civil

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Available in:

[https://mininterior.gob.ar/asuntospoliticos/pdf/\\_seminario-migracion-genero-derechos.pdf](https://mininterior.gob.ar/asuntospoliticos/pdf/_seminario-migracion-genero-derechos.pdf)



servants are encouraged to work towards regularization. Finally, it is important to note that the Argentine Migration Law determines that even migrants who do not yet have a residence must be guaranteed all social, cultural and economic rights.

### **Identification of consolidated/under construction processes of institutionalization of local policies**

Firstly, it is necessary to emphasize that the structure of the Argentine State does not offer much autonomy for the creation of laws that respond to specific demands at the local level, which means that, in legislative matters, the city of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca follows the National Migration Law. However, in terms of consolidating local institutional structures, in 2020 the city created, through a *Ordenanza Municipal*<sup>7</sup>, the Municipal Immigration Council (CMI). This is one of the main landmarks of the local government of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, demonstrating its concern and commitment to the bodies that promote the participation and inclusion of the migrant population in political and social spaces.

In terms of government actions aimed at the migrant population, the municipality brings together national income and housing assistance programs, such as the Universal Child Aid Program (AUH), which guarantees monthly payments to families with children and adolescents up to the age of eighteen., or in the case of disability or incapacity, without age limit. In addition, migrants can have access to a Casa Hogar or Casa Niñez, a housing program that provides social assistance from the Argentine government to the entire population, regardless of their nationality.

As for the regularization of migration, the procedure can currently be done virtually. If in the first presentation everything is in agreement, the precarious residence is granted and a password for a second step, this time in person, in order to register the fingerprints and finish the process. The body responsible for the

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<sup>7</sup> Ordenanza Municipal, is a normative act through which the Deliberative Council expresses itself on topics of general and permanent interest to the population. Represents the highest-ranking Norm issued by the Council.



regularization of immigration is the DNM and the CMI provides the physical space for the territorial counseling approaches of the Delegation of Migration of La Rioja.

### **Municipal Council of Immigrants (CMI)**

Despite the social and demographic characteristics presented, the migratory agenda only took shape in the city's public agenda in recent years. In September 2020, at the initiative of the migrant population, represented by Ciro Daniel Yndigoyen (Peruvian Collective), Councilor Ivana Ibáñez presented the Municipal Immigrant Council (CMI), through Municipal Ordinance nº 7564/2020. Created during the administration of Mayor Gustavo Saadi and under the responsibility of the Secretariat of Government and Coordination, the CMI operates within the scope of the Multisectoral Councils, together with the Municipal Council for the Elderly and the Municipal Council for Persons with Disabilities<sup>8</sup>.

In October 2020, during the Social Forum of the Americas on Migration (FSAM), based in Uruguay and held in a virtual way, San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca presented the newly created CMI. In this way, it reinforced its objective of being a space for consultation, support, approximation and training in the protection and defense of the rights of migrants; promoting and expanding social participation and the role of its members as active subjects in the process of building public policies. In this participation, a horizontal dialogue was promoted between migrant communities, local authorities and the Rede Sem Fronteiras (RSF).

Working through an interdisciplinary approach with various professionals in the areas of law, migration and cultural diversity, social assistance and psychology, the CMI aims to guarantee access to universal rights as well as advise the migrant population to achieve them, thus strengthening their inter-institutional action and elaborating policies that promote collective development and the integration of the migrant population in society in an integral way. Among its functions and objectives, the following stand out:

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<sup>8</sup> 8 Municipal Catamarca Capital webiste, 2020



- i. To legitimize before society the relevance of migrant equity for the strengthening of democracy, through public policies that contribute to overcoming the various forms of discrimination against migrants and thus promote adequate social conditions to guarantee their rights.
- ii. Offer advice, attention, containment and training, diversity free of charge to all migrants who need the Council, as well as offering open workshops to schools, institutions, neighborhoods, health centers and social issues on related topics.
- iii. Offer legal advice, guide, inform and monitor the alternatives that exist to face their various judicial and administrative problems.
- iv. Strengthen inter-institutional articulation at the municipal, provincial and national levels through the Council.
- v. Reinforce constant citizen development at the social, labor, housing, educational, sporting and cultural levels.
- vi. Develop policies that promote the collective development of the city on the move, prioritizing the rights, guarantees and duties of all migrants residing in the municipality.

Regarding the services provided by the CMI, guidance is offered to the migrant population on documentation and migratory regularization, access and assistance with regard to information technology, since the request for documents is carried out mostly in a virtual way. The Council structure is participatory, inclusive and intercultural. It is composed of a multisectoral council, formed by representatives of migrant communities. The Council is administered by migrant representatives, who are elected by vote among the communities living in the city. In the first election, with an ad honorem term of one year, Miguel Miyashiro (Japan) was elected Executive Secretary, Wilson Pescador Arbeláez (Colombia) Deputy Executive Secretary, Víctor Fleitas (Cuba) Secretary of the Minutes, and Mauro de Souza (Brazil) Secretary Deputy Minute.



As not all nationalities are represented in the CMI yet, the expansion of its activities and the inclusive profile of the body are being worked on. Currently, the municipal administration is in direct contact with 12 nationalities of the CMI, and is continuing with actions to integrate two more recent migrations in the city, from Venezuela and Senegal. In any case, the Council represents a space for integration, dialogue and support, in the words of Cuban immigrant Víctor Fleitas.

The CMI is a symbol of respect and sends a clear message to Argentine society: that we are equal citizens, workers who deserve respect and dignity, human beings who carry cultural and historical roots, just like anyone else. When immigrants feel integrated, they are more eager to stay in this country, feel motivated and contribute to the betterment of the country.

Another point to consider is the fact that the migrant population is crossed by issues of gender, race, class and other vulnerability factors. The role of the Council in this regard is to articulate with the other Multisectoral Councils to respond to these intersectoral demands, which means acting beyond an emergency service perspective for migrants.

Adriana Fadel, ex-government advisor, finally adds that the Council also has strong importance in relation to the integration of the two migratory currents mentioned above. For this, cultural activities are carried out and proposed by the migrants themselves, fostering spaces for dialogue and intercultural relations, in addition to presenting the great cultural diversity present in the city. As the Minister of Security Gustavo Aguirre puts it, it is necessary to fundamentally support all the communities in the province, as well as integrate them and learn from the culture of each one of them.

### **Municipal Migrant Census**



Although there is no database that allows access to detailed information on migration in Argentina, it is important to mention that the first Municipal Census of Migrants is being prepared, in future coordination with other municipalities. Its objective is to provide information on the working and housing conditions of migrants in San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, as well as mapping the place where they live. As Adriana Fadel (former advisor to the Secretary of Government and Coordination) points out:

We are in the process of starting to write information about migrations in Catamarca. A few years ago, the issue of migration was not on the public agenda and that is why this council for migrants in the municipality of San Fernando del Valle Catamarca is important.

### **Migrant Vote**

It is essential to register the right to vote of migrants in San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca as a historic achievement, which means that this part of the population can vote at the municipal level. Today, migrants are pressing for this exercise of citizenship, the right to vote, to be extended to the provincial level, making it possible to elect a representative to the government.

### **Collective Fair**

In the first year of the creation of the CMI, the "Feria de las Colectividades" was held, in which several exhibitions were presented on the gastronomy and culture of migrant communities and their descendants, who live in SFVC. Typical dances and traditional dishes from their countries were presented in a day of great participation. The event was accompanied by municipal, provincial and national authorities. Adriana Fadel comments that the Council also plays an important role in the integration of migratory communities. For this, cultural activities proposed by migrants are organized,



promoting spaces for dialogue and intercultural relations, in addition to making visible the great cultural diversity present in the city.

Gustavo Aguirre, former Secretary of Government and Coordination of the Municipality and current Minister of Security of the province, says that it is necessary to fundamentally support all communities, as well as integrate them and learn from the culture of each one of them<sup>9</sup>.

### Challenges

Among the main challenges faced by the CMI is ensuring the participation of all nationalities present in SFVC, as well as ensuring that government authorities continue their commitment to the rights of migrants. In addition, to safeguard the continuity of financial support to continue holding dance and language classes, actions that allowed the integration between the communities, as well as symbolic and cultural festive events.

Currently, due to cases of labor exploitation and human trafficking, mainly in the agricultural sectors of the region, there is a proposal to create a Provincial Council of Migrants, since these cases would not reach the Municipal Council, as they go beyond the geographic limits of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca. For them, it is necessary to strengthen ties with governmental and non-governmental organizations, together with migrant communities in other departments of Catamarca.

### 3.3. Final considerations

San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca has, in recent years, achieved several advances in terms of the practice of welcoming the migrant population that guarantees access to human rights. Specifically, in relation to the four principles that guided this study, it is observed that they are fully met with the actions developed, especially those organized and articulated by the CMI.

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<sup>9</sup> Apertura de sesiones del Consejo Municipal de Inmigrante. Trabaja en el asesoramiento legal, psicológico y de ayuda social a los migrantes. Diario de Catamarca, published on 18th March 2022.



Interculturality can be seen in the organization and implementation of Collective Fairs, such as those organized by the CMI. It is also possible to mention the spaces for dialogue and articulation of actions promoted by migrants. The interdisciplinary service that involves several professionals from different directorates and municipal secretariats to guarantee the reception and monitoring of the migrant population shows, in turn, practices of Transversality and Intersectionality. At the national level, the Territorial Agency promotes insertion in the formal job market and other actions to strengthen the integrated action of the CMI and other municipalities.

The principle of Sustainability was observed in the joint work of the councilors of the SFVC Deliberative Council, for the establishment of a Municipal Ordenanza that established the creation of the CMI. This initiative also highlights the articulation with a Municipal Policy for the migrant population, demonstrating that these instances of participation can be implemented in the spheres of local power when there is political will, relying only on specific national legislation on the subject. In addition, this principle encompasses the migrants' right to vote, an exercise that represents the power to elect their representatives and the insertion of the population in political life as active subjects, which was implemented in the municipality of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca.

Finally, Migrant Protagonism (social participation) is verified in the active participation of migrant counselors and their inter-institutional action in the elaboration of public policies that promote collective development and the search for the integration of the migrant population in society in an integral way.

#### 4. Cuiabá, Mato Grosso, Brazil

Capital of the state of Mato Grosso, Cuiabá had, in the mid-eighteenth century, its territory occupied by pioneers from São Paulo in search of gold and precious stones. From the 19th century onwards, with the decline in mining activities, the economy of the entire region went through a period of decline. Even so, for the



Portuguese government, in the face of great tensions regarding land disputes with the Spanish empire, it was a strategic location for maintaining the frontier of Brazilian territory.

After the 1950s, the Brazilian government assumed the population and investments in the interior of the country as strategic. In this way, with the immense supply of land, the entire state of Mato Grosso gained a new population composed of national migrants who arrived with the objective of working in agricultural production, coming from the states of São Paulo, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), Cuiabá currently has an estimated population of 600,000 inhabitants, and the city's economy revolves around the service and agro-industry sectors - represented by direct or indirect activities related to agribusiness.

#### **4.1. Migration characteristics**

Being a large city, political and economic center of a state that borders Bolivia, the presence of migrants, national and non-national, is not new in the municipality. With regard to international migration, between 2012 and 2014, the great expression of the migratory flow towards the city of Cuiabá was formed by Haitian migrants. It was also possible to find the presence of migrants from Bolivia and Colombia, both, however, to a lesser extent.

Faced with the political, economic and social crisis amplified by the natural catastrophes that devastated Haiti in this period, the increase in job offers as a result of the 2014 World Cup works in Brazil, intensified the flow of migrants to the city of Cuiabá, having its peak entry this year.

(...) the state of Mato Grosso became a destination or transit point for Haitian immigrants as of 2012. In 2014, the state ranked fifth, totaling



910 Haitians with a formal employment contract, out of 23,017 registered throughout the country<sup>10</sup>.

Asked why he chose the city of Cuiabá, Clercius Monestine, president of the Association for the Defense of Haitian Immigrants and Migrants in Mato Grosso (ADHIMI-MT) reported that the possibility of employment was a decision-making milestone, in his words

To be honest, this question is a strange one to answer. It's not about being you. All migrants, any citizen who travels from one country to another country that is not their home country, does not know how to choose. You can read, do research that will indicate you, it's not 100% you answer the language and culture. So, I came to Cuiabá, not because I chose it, but because I had the possibility of a job. Only this.<sup>11</sup>.

From 2015 onwards, with the conclusion of the World Cup works and the consequent drop in the supply of jobs, the influx of Haitian migrants began to decrease, until, in 2016, a process of leaving these Haitians began. towards other countries, especially the United States.

Finally, the last major contemporary migratory flow in the city of Cuiabá began in 2018 with the Venezuelan population through the Interiorization Program of the Civil House of the Federal Government. The so-called "Operation Welcome" has the support of the United Nations Agency for Refugees (UNHCR) and aims to provide emergency assistance to Venezuelan migrants and refugees who enter Brazilian territory.

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<sup>10</sup> Cavalcanti L. Imigração e mercado de trabalho no Brasil: características e tendências. Cadernos Obmigra – Revista Migrações Internacionais 2015

<sup>11</sup> Entrevista concedida por Clercius Monestine. Entrevista I [dezembro de 2021]. Entrevistadora, Táli Pires de Almeida. São Paulo, 2021.



## 4.2. Migration Legislation and Structures for Participation and Guarantee of Rights

Despite the large flow of Haitian migrants present in the city since 2012, the structuring of the work to assist migrants by the Municipality of Cuiabá only started in 2018, due to the previously mentioned Interiorization Program. The current Municipal Secretary for Social Assistance, Human Rights and Persons with Disabilities, Hellen Ferreira, says that the migrants who participated in this Program were first directed to the social institutions that were willing to receive them, without any dialogue having been carried out directly with the municipal government.

When we found out they were going to arrive tomorrow. A plane with several people was already arriving and we were unable to organize ourselves to receive them. It was a philanthropic institution not linked to any secretariat, so it worked with the Catholic Church here in Cuiabá. We even had a meeting with the Pastoral do Migrante, with all the entities that needed to talk, but the Church, until that moment, didn't want to, said it didn't need support and so no kind of agreement was made, no partnership in that sense. . The municipality offered only the services that were already common: health, education and assistance.

Contrary to what happened in relation to the Haitian migratory flow, the prefecture started, after the arrival of these Venezuelan migrants, to exercise an active posture in relation to the needs of the migrant population. Challenges of a social nature, such as access to education and health, in addition to the difficulty of scheduling appointments with the Federal Police to regularize the documentation of this population, began to become part of the local public agenda. The municipality of Cuiabá then started to integrate some initiatives towards the construction of public policies that would serve the migrant population.



**Intersectoral Committee for Attention to the Immigrant Population - Municipal Decree No. 7,641**

In view of the above, a group led by the Public Ministry, formed by the Prosecutor's Office for Children and Youth of Cuiabá, with the participation of the Municipal Health, Education, Social Assistance and Council, met with the aim of debating emerging social problems., especially the condition of migrant families who found themselves in a situation of begging at traffic lights and roundabouts in the city. Although, according to Secretary Hellen Ferreira, awareness-raising work had already been carried out, there were still many families accompanied by their children carrying out such collection work.

Within this context, Municipal Decree No. 7,641 was instituted, on December 5, 2019, determining the creation of an Intersectoral Committee for Attention to the Immigrant Population in the Municipality of Cuiabá, composed of the Secretariats of Social Assistance, Education, Health, Culture , Sport and Tourism, Labor and Economic Development, in addition to the Housing and Land Regularization Secretariat and non-governmental representatives such as Pastoral da Terra, the Association for the Defense of Haitian Migrants of Mato Grosso, the Pastoral Center for Migrants, the Antônio Vieira Association among others. Decree nº 7.641/19 was then established to discuss and outline the principles and guidelines of a municipal policy, as described by the mayor of Cuiabá Emanuel Pinheiro

The main purpose is the elaboration of proposals that meet the demands of these communities, formed especially by Haitians and Venezuelans. Thus, objectives, guidelines and principles will be defined, with a view to meeting the specific needs of this social segment<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> MIRANDA, Carolina. "Prefeito cria Comitê Intersetorial de atenção à população imigrante na Capital". Prefeitura de Cuiabá, 22 de janeiro de 2020. Assistência social, direitos humanos / humanização. Available 10th March, 202 at: <https://www.cuiaba.mt.gov.br/assistencia-social-direitos-humanos/prefeito-cria-comite-intersetorial-de-atencao-a-populacao-imigrante-na-capital/21197>. Acesso em 10 de março de 2022.



**Law No. 6,668, of April 26, 2021**

According to Rafael Lira, activist and contributor to the Association for the Defense of Haitian Immigrants and Migrants in Mato Grosso (ADHIMI-MT), another point that resulted in concrete initiatives for the capital focused on the needs of the migrant population was the election of councilor Edna Sampaio

It was the first that really gave voice and brought about the inclusion of the immigrant population, which until then everyone knew was there, everyone saw it, but no one mobilized to create a policy, to do something concrete that was not welfare or something one-off

Through the councilor's mandate, which had the proposal to build a collective mandate and had the participation of people who already worked with the migrant population, a series of articulations were carried out so that, together with the various migrant leaders, it was created a Working Group to discuss the migratory experience in the city of Cuiabá. One of the results of this articulation was the institution of the Migrant Week, which is currently part of the Official Calendar of Events of the Municipality of Cuiabá through Law No.

We have several people who make up the collective mandate that supported the councilor in acting on this issue, both with the Catholic churches, with the Pastoral do Migrante (...) We also brought the representations of these migrant communities. We held a large meeting with more than 30 people at the time, including the Pastoral do Migrante participated with us, and from there a Working Group was established to discuss some forms of intervention. Then came the proposal of the Migrant Week, but not only the migrant week, the construction of a public policy.



## Cuiabá Migrant Week

One of the activities carried out by the Intersectoral Committee for Attention to the Immigrant Population was the Migrant Week, bringing in addition to cultural aspects, cuisine and exhibitions, lectures and conversation circles on the migrant theme.

Article 2 The Migrant Week of Cuiabá / MT: will be celebrated annually through meetings, face-to-face and online, where workshops, lectures, conversation circles, training, and other activities will take place that reinforce the importance of inclusion, reception and qualification of migrants in the municipality, as a way of guaranteeing their strengthening and independence<sup>13</sup>.

The activities in 2021 were organized by the Working Group on Policies for Migrants, composed of the Collective Mandate of Councilwoman Edna Sampaio in partnership with the Municipal Secretary of Social Assistance, Human Rights and Persons with Disabilities. The purpose of the meeting, in addition to discussing issues related to the human rights of the migrant population, was also to give visibility to their trajectories and culture.

We had photo exhibitions, we had conversation circles with the government. We meet each day with one sector, (for example) the urban mobility sector, to discuss the issue of access to public transport. There is often the issue of racism within public transport. There are a lot of complaints about it. Also the issue of public health, because many times they go to health centers and there is no correct referral about the case.

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<sup>13</sup> Lei nº 6.668, de 26 de abril de 2021.



Amid the pandemic, the event took place for seven days in June 2021 in a hybrid way, with in-person and virtual activities. According to the virtual page of the Municipality of Cuiabá, the program had an opening session, the ceremony in the auditorium of the Municipal Secretariat of Social Assistance, Human Rights and Persons with Disabilities (SADHPD), in a semi-presential way, with live broadcast through the social networks of the Municipality of Cuiabá and councilwoman Edna Sampaio. The cultural program included a variety of themes, as shown in the table below.

Day	Schedule
1	Roundtable on public policies for women and round of online roundtable on access to personal documentation for migrants
2	Round of conversations about the access of migrants to urban transport services, highlighting the racism experienced in these spaces
3	Web-meeting "The challenge of health care in immigrant populations" and conversation circle on health, education and housing
4	Online lecture "Assured rights of the migrant population in the Social Assistance policy" and ended with the Cultural and Gastronomic Fair, in person, in the alley of Candeeiro, central region of Cuiabá
5	Online lecture on the topic Assured Rights of the Migrant Population in the Social Assistance Policy
6	Solemn online session for Migrant Day, at Cuiabá City Council
7	Solemn online session for Migrant Day, at Cuiabá City Council

By encompassing migrants of different origins in the same event, articulating political and cultural debates, the Migrant Week was also an opportunity to expand the scope of popular participation in relation to the problems experienced in the city, as a



tool to bring the executive power and migrants closer together, so that their demands are heard, discussed and proposed in the form of public policies.

Topics such as racism, obstetric violence and violence against women are situations also experienced by Brazilian women who, when guided by the migrant population, broadened the debate and put pressure on the government to create alternatives to such problems. In this way, there was the opportunity to experience alterity, as we see in the following statement by the municipal secretary of Public Order, Coronel Ricardo Sales "I am a black man and I know what racial discrimination is, what it is to fight in a society that inferiorizes what she thinks is unequal"<sup>14</sup>.

The spaces for formal participation with the elaboration of proposals allow migrants to be recognized as subjects of rights, affirming their space of speaking and listening in the public space beyond the stereotype of a 'social problem', thus contributing to the society that welcome.

### **Public Hearing**

Another aspect resulting from the Working Group on Policies for Migrants, composed of the Collective Mandate of councilwoman Edna Sampaio, was the presentation of the request for holding a Public Hearing in order to debate the bill authored by the Executive Branch, which dealt with the institution of a municipal policy for the migrant population. The mobilization of the mandate around the theme was added to the initiative of the Municipal Secretary of Social Assistance, which also continued with the work with the Intersectoral Committee Attention to the Immigrant Population in the Municipality of Cuiabá.

Representatives of Haitian, Venezuelan and African migrant organizations were present at the hearing, as well as municipal and state secretariats, as well as the Institute of Collective Health of the UFMT (Federal University of Mato Grosso), and the human rights councils, the Ombudsman's Office Union, the State and Municipal

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<sup>14</sup> *Migrantes relatam situações de racismo*. Câmara Municipal de Cuiabá, 23 de junho de 2021. Available 14th March 2022 at: <http://www.camaracba.mt.gov.br/noticia.php?id=11991>.



Prosecutor's Office, the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), and social movements and institutions supporting the migrant population<sup>15</sup>. Several topics were discussed, such as the need for interpreters in public health and education services, the difficulties in migrating regularization and validation of diplomas, the precariousness of housing and especially situations of racism and xenophobia.

In this aspect, the actors present at the Public Hearing were able to put their main demands through the formulation of a public policy that would offer decent service to the migrant population and guarantee their rights. Among such demands, the creation of a Reference Center and a Municipal Migrant Council stands out.

### **Struggle of migrant organizations: we are here, we have rights in the creation of a municipal public policy**

Among the aspects already discussed, the mobilization of Haitian organizations in search of their rights can be considered the key element that boosted the creation of a local public policy, which had been demanded since 2012 with the arrival of Haitian migrants to the city.

Understanding that there were common basic needs related to social assistance services, migration regularization and work, migrants residing in Cuiabá sought, first, the support of the OAB of Mato Grosso to plead their rights. A partnership was then established in which the OAB-MT guided Haitian organizations in relation to their demands, which ended up encouraging the creation of the Support Organization for Migrant Activities in Brazil (OSAMB), implemented in May 2016, as can be verified in the following statement

The group sought the OAB-MT for support in this legal process of legal formalization of the entity. On that occasion, the Order proposed the creation of a support network for migrants. The idea is for the entity to

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<sup>15</sup> Comissão de Direitos Humanos ampliará prazo para análise de PL sobre migrantes. Câmara Municipal de Cuiabá, 26 de maio de 2021. Available 14th March 2022 at: <http://www.camaracba.mt.gov.br/noticia.php?id=11892>.



become a point of support for migrants throughout the State, offering various services in the areas of human rights, work, housing, security, health, education<sup>16</sup>.

When asked, during the interview, about the foundation of an organization for Duckson Jacques migrants, the president of OSAMB addressed the limits of legal action of some organizations

Pastoral Centers exist, but they have a limit, they are very restricted in terms of service. There are some things they don't do. They don't get into a legal fight over a person. Guidance in an educational way, they don't get into that fight. They participate in the agenda, but they do not enter deeply because it is a religious institution and there are things they don't do. It's not because they don't want to, but it's not part of their mission. So, we have to fight, for example, to have an institution like the Council (Municipal of Immigrants). We fought so hard (...) action, union and communication are necessary.

Thus, since 2016, together with the OAB-MT, Haitian migrant leaders, through OSAMB, began to meet with the municipal government to forward their demands, which focused both on the need to ensure greater social participation of migrants, as well as also promotion of emergency actions, such as in relation to insertion in the job market. The excerpt of the report below reports aspects of a meeting between the OAB, OSAMB and the Municipal Secretary of Social Assistance

During the meeting, emergency assistance actions for vulnerable migrants were discussed. According to the president of Osamb, Duckson Jacques, although most migrants who arrived here have

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<sup>16</sup> *Associação Mato-grossense do Migrante será ponto de apoio para haitianos*, OAB- MT, 05 de abril de 2016. Available 8th Feb 2022 at: <https://www.oabmt.org.br/noticia/12437/associacao-mato-grossense-do-migrante-sera-ponto-de-apoio-para-haitianos>.



higher education, the qualification is not recognized in Brazil, increasing the difficulty of entering the job market. Thus, many find themselves in difficulties, including for their own subsistence, especially with the growth of unemployment in the country. After the submission of the request, it was decided that the Municipal Secretariat of Social Assistance and Human Development (Smasdh), in partnership with Osamb, will carry out a registration of migrants living in the Capital. Ferreira (President of the OAB-MT) explains that, after this registration, the social assistance policy will be opened to migrants who have this right. According to him, services will be provided in the area of training, employability and food, according to the demand found.<sup>17</sup>.

However, there was still an assessment by the associations that the action of the local public power was limited to assistance actions, such as the distribution of basic food baskets, which generated the demand for a broader policy, aimed at guaranteeing the rights of the migrant population.

Finally, this entire process of articulation between public authorities, civil society associations and migrant leaders culminated, then, in the recently instituted Law No. Cuiabá. This articulation is highlighted by Rafael Lira

The law only came about because leaders like Clercius and Duckson were present in the dialogue. Although, in a way, they are somewhat hampered by a more effective, more participatory dialogue, but saying 'we are here, we exist, we want support from the public power'. So, if it weren't for the movement of these organizations, we wouldn't have a municipal law, a proposal for a council and a reference center. The councilor herself supported and included this migration agenda in her Bill, it was because there was an actively participatory migrant

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<sup>17</sup> Com apoio da OAB-MT, migrantes serão cadastrados na Capital, OAB- MT, 02 de junho de 2016.

Available 10th Feb 2022 at:

<https://www.oabmt.org.br/noticia/12652/com-apoio-da-oab-mt--migrantes-serao-cadastrados-na-capital>.



movement showing 'we are here, we have rights, we want to have access to these rights'. It was thanks to these movements, to this participation of the organizations themselves, that what little we have today became possible. It was the organizations themselves that took the initiative to establish support with the Public Defender's Office, with other institutions, and this expanded the contact network and even access. If today we have a municipal law, the day of the migrant, the CRAI, was only possible thanks to movements, organizations and the migrants themselves.

### **Municipal Council and the Reference Center for Assistance to Immigrants (CRAI)**

Law No. 6,691, on the Municipal Policy for Migrants in the Municipality of Cuiabá, also provides for some social facilities to be established, such as the Municipal Immigrant Council (CMI) and the Reference Center for Immigrant Assistance (CRAI). The draft creation for the Municipal Council was prepared jointly and discussed in the Intersectoral Committee, and is currently in the Chamber to be discussed and sent for sanction. Helen Ferreira comments that

In this process, we already have the space where the Council will be established, just waiting for this approval process in the City Council and the sanction by the mayor. But, we already have the space where the Migrant Council will be located. We have already outlined and talked with the institutions in the sense of later how this composition will be. And the other equipment is the CRAI, which we are in the phase of searching for a property to implement the CRAI. So, we have advanced a lot in the sense of public policies through this Committee that was established in the municipality.

The Secretary believes that the Municipal Immigrant Council will play a key role in the discussion of public policies, in addition to contributing to the dissemination and elaboration of informative booklets, in addition to establishing and improving the flow



of care, she emphasizes that “we have already seen examples of success in other regions, cases in Brazil such as São Paulo, which has a lot of experience in this regard and we have taken advantage of”.

Regarding the Immigrant Assistance Reference Center (CRAI), Hellen Ferreira reports that there is still no definition regarding the property and comments on the proposal to create the CRAI in a park

We are thinking of something sustainable, in which the space will be able to have environments for exhibitions, cultural fairs, health services to be added, with a walking trail, etc. Something where we can aggregate all the calls.

Such a proposal would aim to establish a space of reference for migrants, bringing cultural, culinary, tradition, music exhibitions, as well as being a space for integration with the local population.

Today we have a problem in Cuiabá, which is the immigrant being seen as the person who is at the roundabout, with the child, and we want to take that view away. We want to bring culture, history, bring their relevance (...), to be a reference space for the population to get to know them, to have a different look at the migrant population. (...) We want prejudice not to happen.

#### **Municipal Census and Project “I want to meet you immigrant”**

Another project, initiated by the Municipality of Cuiabá, is the implementation of a municipal census to identify and learn about the migrant population in the municipality. Since the main problems are the issue of identification and access to documentation, the “I want to know you immigrant” project was also created.



The Quero Te Knowing Imigrantes Project consists of continuous actions with a special approach, targeting foreigners who have come to Cuiabá in recent years, most of them Haitians and Venezuelans. Approaches are made by the social approach team, at traffic lights and roundabouts, in order to make people aware that children are not allowed to be exposed at work. The families found undergo a social interview to collect information such as personal data, address, contact telephone number, if they receive any social benefits and if they are being assisted by the Casa Pastoral do Migrante, known as a reference for this population. As it is a time to face the pandemic of the new coronavirus, guidelines on the main forms of prevention and care are passed on. Among the services offered after the action, there is an intermediary for their insertion in social assistance services, inclusion in the Single Registry for Social Programs, granting of eventual benefit of food and interstate tickets, inclusion in educational units, health services, among others<sup>18</sup>.

#### **Political Context: Processing the Approval of Law 6,691**

Regarding the processing and approval of Law nº 6.691/21 in the Municipality of Cuiabá, the Municipal Secretary Hellen Ferreira assumes that it was a process that did not present difficulties

The law was very well accepted, it passed very quickly in the City Council. (...) It was discussed earlier with everyone involved. It is a well-discussed draft and is in line with what the immigrant population expected from public policy. We believe that we will have no problems with this.

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<sup>18</sup> Prefeitura de Cuiabá estabelece Política Municipal do Imigrante. A Lei estabelece diretrizes para a política de imigrantes em âmbito municipal. Available at:  
<https://www.cuiaba.mt.gov.br/assistencia-social-direitos-humanos/prefeitura-de-cuiaba-estabelece-politica-municipal-do-imigrante/24804>



Despite the favorable scenario presented, Vera Araújo, parliamentary advisor to councilwoman Edna Sampaio, reports some challenges faced during the processing of the Law

It wasn't very peaceful. Even though the city hall took the initiative and sent it, we had to charge for the Bill to be voted on, and even because this issue of the Immigrant Municipal Council they were proposing that it be by decree, and the migrants did not want it, they wanted it to be by form of Law. So we made an amendment so that it was by law. It wasn't approved at first, but then we got it.

The advisor also highlights the participation of migrants themselves in this articulation

The Law is there, but we are facing what it takes to make it get off the ground. It is important to carry out all that we have conquered, it is an interesting law, but it needs to get off the ground. The migrants are participating, they are managing to participate in the articulation at this moment to put pressure on the councilors.

#### **Dialogue with national policies: Process of internalization of Venezuelans and action of local public authorities**

According to the Ministry of Social Development (MDS), 1326 Venezuelan migrants were relocated to Cuiabá until February 2022<sup>19</sup>. In this aspect, there is criticism by the local public authorities of the Federal Government due to the lack of dialogue and coordination with the municipality for the relocation and settlement of these migrants.

Since the process of internalization was carried out directly with social institutions, without any form of dialogue with the local government, the lack of

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<sup>19</sup> Available 7th March 2022 at: <http://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/snus/painel-interiorizacao/> Acesso



preparation in relation to the new demands was inevitable, as reported by the Municipal Secretary Hellen Ferreira.

How many of these families were coming, how many will need places in day care, school, health care, are they documented or not? Some were coming vaccinated and others were not. We had a very difficult time. A first Committee was then constituted, with the Public Ministry, the Defender's Office - we had several bodies involved in the State and in the Municipality to deal with these guidelines.

And complete

Gradually we managed to insert them, so much so that the children were all regularly enrolled, we made a joint effort at the Pastoral do Migrante de Saúde, assistance to be able to make the single registration, the referrals for the documentation process. We were very present, but after they arrived, we didn't have much time to plan their arrival.

The Secretary also reports that there was no assistance from the Federal Government regarding the structure, financial support or specific training offered to municipal servants. A single meeting was held by the Civil House when the migrants were already in the city, with the aim of opening more reception vacancies by the City Hall

The Government did not offer any type of training. What we had was internal: we have a permanent education plan for our employees and we include the migrant issue in our training. What each department did was to work the theme with its audience - Secretary of Education in the pedagogical week; Health in relation to care due to documentation that is differentiat



Due to the non-existence of a state or national policy that guides the elaboration of a basic municipal policy, the training and studies carried out by the civil servants have been the initiative of the City Hall itself.

We tried to bring several people to talk to us about it and we used this reference material to prepare ours. We have worked a lot with successful cases, such as the case of São Paulo, which is a reference in local migration governance

### **Local civil society**

As mentioned earlier, the reception work on the arrival of migrants is carried out mainly by the Pastoral do Migrante.

In Mato Grosso, the Pastoral Center for Migrants (...) is the main reception for these immigrants, an institution maintained by the Catholic Church and created to serve immigrants and immigrants, who seek the capital of Mato Grosso to establish themselves professionally. The average length of stay in the house is two months, during this period the sheltered person goes out looking for a job, and then leaves the house. The unit offers housing, meals and medical care, in addition to referring immigrants to other public policies such as work and health, and helping to regularize the permanence of immigrants in the country with the Federal Police.<sup>20</sup>.

Since the creation of the Pastoral in the 1980s, the service was primarily provided to Brazilians, it was only from 2012 that it began to serve more than 5,000 Haitians, and, from 2018, they began to welcome the majority of the Venezuelan community. . In this aspect, as reported by the migrants themselves, and also by the activist Rafael Lira during the interview, the perception is that there is a feeling of

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<sup>20</sup> MIRANDA, 2015 apud MOTIZUKI, 2017, pp. 14. In: Atenção à Saúde dos Migrantes Haitianos na Visão de Trabalhadores e Gestores em Cuiabá, Mato Grosso. Cuiabá, MT, 2017.



general acceptance in the city. However, even with a general effort to welcome, racism and xenophobia are manifested, even considering the history of exploitation and discrimination of the black population in the country.

In fact, the Cuiabano people are recognized as hospitable, of course there is a portion that is not the majority in which there is the issue of racism and xenophobia. But, for the most part, it is a very welcoming population. We have always received communities from other regions of Brazil, here there are many people from the south and northeast. We're used to it. Bolivians have always been in the interior of the state. With the Haitians this intensified. I think that the population, for the most part, provided a good welcome, we always hear one report or another about racism and xenophobia, that this is part of the social scenario in Brazil, unfortunately, it is something very strong in our culture. But what I noticed was the xenophobia towards Venezuelans, because they were arriving and many stayed on the streets and at traffic lights asking for money. This brought an estrangement to the population. So much so that we hear a comparison with the Haitians 'ah, Haitians are not like that, they don't ask for money'. I noticed that there was more estrangement and xenophobic reactions with the Venezuelan population.

The activist also highlighted other projects of action by local civil society, prior to the implementation of the Municipal Migration Law, such as an Educational project to assist migrants, implemented by institutions and social movements in partnership with the Municipal Council of Education. In addition, Rafael Lira highlighted the extension project developed by the collective health department of the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), which began in 2014. Among other initiatives mentioned, the one by the Federal Institute of Mato Grosso was highlighted, with the offer of Portuguese language courses. Started in 2018, three classes have already participated in this project, which currently, due to the pandemic, also has Distance Education modules (EAD).



Migrant associations would also have a strong role in actions involving social assistance and guaranteeing workers' rights in partnership with the Public Defender's Office, the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), the Federal Institute, and social movement institutions. Some projects of artistic and cultural manifestations are also developed by the associations.

Rafael Lira also reported that, since 2020, there has been intense work by migrant associations with regard to ensuring food security. Donations received are delivered to registered families. Currently, the association is also articulating actions for family reunions.

### 4.3. Relevant Considerations

In Cuiabá, initiatives that demonstrate convergence with the principles adopted in this study are also notable. With regard to Interculturality, spaces were identified for cultural and customs expression, as well as lectures and conversation circles that encourage the exchange of learning and bring different nationalities closer together. The Migrant Week, institutionalized in April 2021, is an example of these spaces, as are the projects for cultural and artistic events organized by migrant associations.

Transversality can be seen in the structuring of the Intersectoral Committee for Attention to the Immigrant Population in the Municipality of Cuiabá (CIAPIMC), which includes representatives of public authorities and civil society, as well as in the actions of the Policies for Migrants Working Group, composed mostly of people migrants.

Municipal Decree No. 7,641, of 2019, which established the CIAPIMC, Municipal Law No. 6,691, of 2021, which provides for the Municipal Migrant Policy in the Municipality of Cuiabá and the draft governing the creation for the Municipal Council are examples of initiatives that deal with the sustainability of practices that have been under development in the capital of Mato Grosso in recent years.



Finally, the fourth principle related to Migrant Protagonism is highlighted not only in the implementation of the Migrant Week, when, in addition to obtaining visibility for cultural practices and customs, it aims to use this space to promote dialogue about the problems experienced in the city, but it can also be seen in the active participation in the ways of putting pressure on the local legislature so that the draft dealing with the Municipal Council is approved.

## 5. Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil

The history of the constitution of the city of Recife dates back to the third decade of the 16th century. Due to its geography by the sea, it has become a natural port for the flow of wealth produced in Brazilian lands (IBGE, 2017). Due to its port characteristics, it quickly became a village, evolving into the category of Vila da Recife, officially established in 1537, with foundation dated March 12 (BRASIL, 2016).

With European influence, both from Portuguese rule and from the period in which the Dutch occupied the region a century after its foundation, Recife, capital of the State of Pernambuco, is the largest metropolis in the northeast region of Brazil. Foreign trade drives the development of the city from the 18th century onwards and Dutch architecture blends with Portuguese urbanization, urban characteristics that remain to this day in the historic center of Recife<sup>21</sup>.

The population of Recife estimated for the year 2021 was 1,661,017 inhabitants, 17% of the total of 9,674,793 people estimated in the State of Pernambuco for the same year<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> RECIFEa. **História**. Available 24th Marc 2022 at: em: <http://www2.recife.pe.gov.br/pagina/historia>.

<sup>22</sup> IBGE. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. **Panorama de Recife**. 2021. Available 24th March 2022 at: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/pe/recife/panorama>. Acesso: 24/03/2022.



## 5.1. Migration characteristics

The migratory movement in the capital of Pernambuco is not something new, it carries in its history significant communities of Jews, Palestinians and Japanese. These displacements, in general, are related to economic and political issues, confirming the historical process of Recife. The Jewish population was received in the 16th century and is still recognized today as an important part of the city's development.

The great migratory flow of the Jewish community took place in the 17th century with people fleeing the Iberian Peninsula and the religious inquisition. The Japanese community arrived in Brazil after the Second World War and the extermination of Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused by the US nuclear bomb, which in the first week alone caused about 100,000 deaths and thousands more who had serious health problems because of the exposure to radiation. From 1950, an agreement was signed between the Brazilian and Japanese governments and the families that supported themselves from agriculture gained land, some of them in the state of Pernambuco.

The Palestinian community, in turn, which is currently called one of the largest in Brazil, arrived in Recife around the 19th century. Anthropologist Hissa Mussa Hazin, who is also a member of the Palestine Alliance of Recife, an association created in 2014 that brings together Pernambuco supporters of the Palestinian cause, whether descendants or not, traces an important historical context of this migration and its adaptation.

When these people came here from Palestine, they were not Palestinians because Palestine did not yet exist. Palestine began to exist in 1922, after World War I. So, they were Arabs who lived in the territory that today comprises Palestine, although it is dominated by Israel, but today is Palestine, says Hissa.

The main reason for immigration was financial. There was an intention to return to the territory of origin after earning some money, however, with the end of the First



World War and the victory of England against the Ottoman Empire, the return became increasingly dangerous and distant.

It was too risky. There was no way they could go back and live in peace. That's when the connection started: They had children here in Brazil, they started to live and live here. A process of Assimilation began, he explained.

For him, members of the Palestinian community in Recife have become Brazilians. "Assimilation is exactly that. You start to feel like a Brazilian and you no longer feel Palestinian. It is as if Palestine no longer concerns him. A large part of the community here in Recife has gone through this process."

According to Hazin, a determining factor for the integration of this community was religion, since this population from Belém was mostly Christian (and not Muslim, as in the case of migration to the south of the country in the 20th century). In addition, the Brazilian diet, the taste for local music, loss of musical roots and the almost zero contact with relatives in Palestine were also decisive in the cultural processes.

During the first three decades of the last century, Palestinians occupied dozens of small shops in the São José neighborhood, in downtown Recife. The neighborhood's municipal market – which to this day is the largest public market in the city – became the colony's meeting point. The place was a kind of shopping mall at the time, a favorite place for the local elite to buy spools of thread, cosmetics, fabrics, sophisticated spices, jewelry or perfumes. Finally, in the 2000s, the city began to arouse the interest of Chinese, mainly from Fujian, Guangdong, Zhejiang and Taiwan.

### **Features of contemporary migration**

Although with similar reasons, the arrival of Jews, Palestinians, Japanese and Chinese in the country took place in different economic and political contexts and, currently, it is already possible to see such migrants integrated into the city. More



recently, Recife started to receive different international flows. The city stands out today for being a great destination for people from African countries, mainly with Portuguese as an official language (PALOP) such as Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Cape Verde, among others. Such countries are still the majority when we talk about migrants who arrive in the city through university agreements.

The Ambassador of Cape Verde Daniel Pereira, at a conference held in Recife on May 26, 2011 entitled "New Partnerships for the Development of Africa" assured that, in the last decades of the 20th century, Africa and Brazil expanded bilateral cooperation agreements providing a constant flow of people with different interests. The largest African population in Brazil is linked to public and private educational institutions, while Africa imports from Brazil companies, factories and entrepreneurs from different business lines, as well as industrial and media products.<sup>23</sup>.

Another group of special importance in contemporary migrations in Recife are the Senegalese. In mid-2014, during a favorable economic moment, the community saw the country as a good destination to carry out the activities they traditionally carry out: commerce. In 2015, this community registered the largest number of requests for judgments of requests for asylum in the Brazilian Ministry of Justice, around 2,287 requests.

According to political scientist and specialist in International Relations Thales Castro, this attraction to Brazil is due to the political change and investments that the country has promoted in the last decade, mainly in the area of foreign relations. It is important to emphasize in this context that, as of 2003, the country as a whole showed an increase in the migratory flow from African countries. "In Dakar, the capital of Senegal, the reference they had of Brazil was the Lula government. So, an image of Brazil was created as a model to get out of poverty", comments Thales.

The Especial de Passagem project carried out an important journalistic work in 2016, drawing a map of the presence of Senegalese immigrants in Recife. Among the historical rescues carried out by Caique Batista and Eduarda Esteves, the reporters responsible for the project, the historical rescue is noteworthy. According to the

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<sup>23</sup> Cham, Ismael. A África fora de casa : sociabilidade, trânsito e conexões entre os estudantes africanos no Brasil. Page 19. Disponibilizado em <https://repositorio.ufpe.br/bitstream/123456789/11353/1/it.pdf>



research they carried out, Senegal's relationship with Pernambuco is not recent and has deeper roots than we suppose, not being restricted only to the economic aspect. Both the African country and the Brazilian state are located in coastal regions of Africa and South America. The president of the Association of Senegalese in the northeast, Amadou Touré, says that Pernambuco has always aroused interest among the Senegalese. Written records of the history of the great leaders of the Senegalese nation reveal that Pernambuco was already mentioned in the country's history at the end of the 19th century and is still a target of curiosity among the population.

Senegal has a great tradition in maintaining oral history, through the Griots, who are professionals trained across generations of families to become oral historians. For this reason, more than a century later, Amadou says that to this day, people there recognize the name "Pernambuco" and joke among themselves about a possible passage of the religious or the vessel through Pernambuco lands.

Although the converse is not necessarily true, cultural similarities were identified and valued by the government, leading to the signing of an agreement between Recife and Dakar in November 2012, transforming them into "sister cities". Senegal is the only country on the African continent that has a consulate in Pernambuco.

More recently, the capital of Pernambuco has become the destination of non-indigenous and indigenous Warao Venezuelans, substantially altering the entire configuration of public policies in the city. The non-indigenous population arrived in the city through the Federal Government and its Acolhida Project, at the end of 2018. The municipal government, together with the Cáritas organization, then rented temporary housing in addition to carrying out the necessary registrations for access to the social programs of the municipality. government.

Due to the good result of this reception, the city also became the target of Warao migrants, who began to arrive in large groups, in a disorderly way, in a demand called "spontaneous", causing the Public Power new challenges and difficulties that had not been experienced until then with groups of non-indigenous migrants.



According to councilor Ivan Moraes, the Waraos used strategies to be seen differently from people of other nationalities. While migrants from other countries, such as Senegal, sought to enter the informal labor market and, from there, be able to reproduce socially and economically, the Waraos sought visibility by occupying public spaces, such as streets and corners, with posters asking for donations and contributions. to survive, having their experience marked by begging, as expressed by the councilor

(...) before the quarantine, the Venezuelan migratory wave arrived in Recife. Thirty arrived, then 50 more, and the community has a few dozen, who came in a situation of begging and occupied public space in a visible way, by going to street corners with signs and drawing the attention of civil society in Recife.

## **5.2. Migration Legislation and Structures for Participation and Guarantee of Rights**

Prior to the large flow of Venezuelan migration, migrants recently arrived in Recife used to look for the Social Assistance Reference Center (CRAS) in the territory. According to the Human Rights Secretariat of Recife, Elizabete Godinho, there are currently around 100 people and 27 families being assisted, divided between the following nationalities: 79 Venezuelans, 9 Cubans, 4 Peruvians and 8 Brazilians from other regions.

These groups were then attended and monitored by the public network and, depending on their family demand, received access to social benefits so that they could achieve their autonomy. Due to the level of education they had, they were soon referred to vocational courses and employment agencies. Therefore, permanence in the assistance policy used to occur for a shorter time.



## **The process of welcoming migrants between 2016 and 2021 and the recognition of the need to structure a policy based on human rights**

According to the Municipal Human Rights Secretariat of Recife, the city was one of the main destinations of “Operação Acolhida”. In 2016, the Federal Government, through the Ministry of Social Development, convened a meeting in Brasília to discuss the process of internalization of these migrants across the country. Some municipalities were already receiving the refugee population, and the city of Recife, through the monitoring of Cáritas, would also become part of this project. Soon, the need to organize social policies was manifested.

The first referrals of migrants to Recife already indicated the need to create a working group that would involve the main public policies in health, education and social assistance, in order to better serve the migrant population. At the same time, the institutionalization of the State Committee that deals with the issues of stateless migrants and refugees (COMIGRAR) was started and brings together a set of institutions that involve civil society, public authorities and federated entities, which formed into blocks in the face of service issues. for interior projects.

Recife, not unlike other capitals, also has serious problems of social vulnerability. Although it is possible to identify some legal frameworks, the lack of a consolidated national policy means that numerous demands that should be met by federal or state public policies fall under the responsibility of the municipality, which in turn does not have the capacity or even legal or legal competence to resolve, especially with regard to documentary issues.

An example given by the Executive Secretary for Human Rights of the Municipality of Recife, Elizabete Godinho, concerns the first group received by the interiorization. Although, in their territory of origin, they work as liberal professionals or have an academic training, in Brazil, they were not allowed to work regularly, mainly due to the lack of validation of their diplomas, harming the economic insertion of these groups in the market. of work.



In this scenario, social assistance was involved in the rearguard of the interiorization project, since there was a guaranteed period of rent for some families, and even with the actions of Cáritas, which directed the resources received through an international call for projects to work with this population, it was known that at the end of this financial aid, this demand would fall under the social assistance of the municipality.

It was in 2018 that the first group for the interiorization was received: about 25 families, accounting for 117 people. The social assistance policy, in partnership with Cáritas, worked towards establishing its own team with two social workers and a psychologist, in order to accompany the newly arrived families. The houses rented through Cáritas were part of those in the political-administrative regions (RPA) 1 and 2. 1 being in the center and 2 in Campina do Barreto. These teams of assistants and a psychologist were assigned to the CRAS of RPA 2. In 2021, through a partnership between the Government of the State of Pernambuco and Cáritas, it was also possible to carry out other emergency actions.

An articulation to carry out the Single Registry (CadÚnico) was organized from the first internalized group, since for access to all public services, registration in the registry must be the first step. For this purpose, a joint effort was carried out, both for documentation and to explain what CadÚnico is about, its importance and how to use it. Referrals and registrations in relation to health and education were also carried out.

Migrants who possessed some type of technical qualification were referred to a labor agency for registration. There was also an action by the secretary of culture and leisure to present the city of Recife, indicating free attractions in the city. Families who were referred to homes provided by the municipality in partnership with Cáritas were visited weekly by the social assistance team for necessary follow-ups.

There was also special attention to Lesbians, Gays, Transgenders, Transvestites, Queers, Intersex, Asexuals and other variations of sexuality (LGBTQIA+) evidencing respect and autonomy for gender diversity and plurality. According to Rosângela Fontes, from SEDH, due to their schooling, the group managed to be included in some



professional courses in addition to being placed in the job market, facilitating the achievement of their autonomy.

Participants in the program received (and still receive) psychological, legal and other types of care at the Casa de Direitos. The migrant population reports that the search for a job was difficult. The difficulties encountered ranged from language, prejudice towards migrants, especially in the context of increasing Brazilian hostility towards Venezuelans, to the high unemployment rate in the capital of Pernambuco. According to the National Household Sample Survey (Pnad), released by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in November 2019, Pernambuco is the capital with the highest unemployment rate among the 27 in Brazil. Recife is home to 147,300 unemployed people. This number represents 17.4% of the economically active population.

In order to reduce the negative impact on refugees, an action was identified promoted by the Recife Secretariat for Social Development, Youth, Drug Policy and Human Rights, the Municipal Health Secretariat and the Secretariat for Sustainable Development and the Environment in relation to the assistance of representatives of 35 Venezuelan families at the House of Rights. There, immigrants were able to access essential guidelines such as access to the public health network and registration to receive social programs from the federal government, such as Bolsa Família, which stood out as one of the main aids for Venezuelans. interviewed.

The Venezuelan migrants who were welcomed by the transit houses, that is, they did not need to pay rent, obtained greater autonomy in the use of the money received by the Bolsa Família, which made it possible for them to send financial amounts to relatives in Venezuela or even to acquire materials to carry out autonomous work, such as a flash for a camera or hairdressing products.

However, according to an interview carried out with the Municipal Executive Secretariat for Human Rights, the context of Venezuelan migration in the city is not homogeneous, given that there are two different moments, which concern non-indigenous Venezuelans and indigenous people of the Warao ethnic group, that presented different problems and demanded different actions on the part of the public



power. While the first were received through the Federal Government's Operation Acolhida, the Waraos arrived in the city in a disorderly manner and, therefore, it took some time to be identified, since it was something very specific and a culture that they did not have. knowledge.

The Secretariat for Human Rights reported that in relation to these groups, which arrived in large numbers in the city, given that the families are large, the first effective measures were linked to social assistance and the request for reception. Therefore, it was implied to the municipality the need to organize actions with the objective of guaranteeing the effective attendance of this population.

Many of the Waraos were identified in the street, begging for money and with children. Later, it was discovered that they themselves had organized themselves to rent two houses, directly from the owners. The team that had been set up to deal with the group of internalized Venezuelans was then moved to provide care and follow-up for these people. All identification and documentation was done. As they were coming from other states, many already had the Cadastro Único, but it was necessary to update to Recife. There are also situations of children born during their pilgrimage to Recife, that is, many of them were not even registered. This also needed to be organized. Soon, there was an articulation with other bodies such as the Federal Police and the Public Defender's Office. The creation of this committee counted on the representation of all bodies, where the necessary solutions and referrals were discussed.

The secretary reports that it was not an easy situation. There was a lot of pressure from the City Hall and Civil Society to solve a situation that they were also learning about. It was not possible to give a quick answer as was being demanded. However, as a municipal secretariat, there has always been support from the Secretariat for Human Rights, health and education.

The construction of this reception policy took about a year, until in 2020 the pandemic came to add other layers of difficulties. Much of what had been done, especially in relation to education, was stopped. The children could not go to schools and it was necessary to carry out actions aimed at health, the issue of vaccination, skin



diseases, monitoring of the elderly and pregnant women. A whole job with the reference posts for the Unified Health System (SUS) cards.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the proposal of an institutional reception was carried out, going through the parameters of social assistance to attend those groups, taking into account anthropological and ancestry issues that, in a certain way, went against the bureaucratic formats of the state, the form of action of public policies. Health care, for example, is a very important piece of information because the Waraos have a form of health care, while the SUS has its own mechanisms and, therefore, it took some time to adapt and deepen this knowledge. anthropological and sociological aspects of these groups.

The establishment of links between agents of the local public power and the Venezuelans was an arduous task, both because of the difficulty of establishing communication due to language limitations, since agents of the municipal local government did not master the Spanish language, nor the Warao (spoken by indigenous ), as well as the distrust and uncertainty on the part of the Venezuelan population regarding the type of reception they would receive, as pointed out by councilor Ivan Moraes

We got involved with them due to the difficulty of the city hall to approach them, few people spoke Spanish. They were very afraid that the public power would remove them from the place they were in, they had great resistance to access by public management.

In order to reduce the impacts suffered by the migrant and refugee population, municipal action took place in an interdepartmental and intersectoral manner, involving the Municipal Secretariats of Social Development, Youth, Drug Policy and Human Rights of Recife, Health and Sustainable Development. and Environment.

In this context of action aimed at welcoming and attempting to socio-economic insertion of the migrant population in the current territory, the role of civil society in migratory issues in Recife, and also in the State of Pernambuco, deserves to be highlighted, as will be shown later. The initiatives carried out by non-governmental



organizations and institutions, in partnership or not with the government, represented access to basic rights such as housing, social and psychological care and qualification for income generation.

Cáritas, as already mentioned, in 2021, signed a collaboration agreement for the implementation of the Emergency Institutional Shelter Service with the Government of the State of Pernambuco. Residences were rented, located in the political and administrative regions 1 and 2 of Recife, the first region being located close to the city center, and the second, in Campina do Barreto.

The project provides for the rental of properties for migrants of the Warao ethnic group to live with their families. The residences should hold a maximum of ten people, with the exception of families with the largest number of members, as they should be kept in a single family nucleus. In addition, it should guarantee furniture and three meals a day, as well as respect for customs, beliefs and culture. The agreement with the government was already renewed in 2022, so, at least until the end of this year, housing is guaranteed.

### **Political organization civil society**

In relation to African groups, quite expressive in the region, it is possible to find a good degree of political organization. The Office of Assistance to African Citizenship in Pernambuco (Eacape), created in 2012, is a response to the growing concern regarding the proper treatment of immigrants. At the time of its creation, the office manager, Altino Mulungu, reported the gap between public policies to meet the demands of immigrants.

The Office of Assistance to African Citizenship in PE (EACAPE) has been working with immigration law in Pernambuco for ten years. We have two axes of African migration. The first is academic migration, made up of foreign students from African countries at UFPE, UFRPE and Unicap. The second axis is for economic immigrants, Senegalese and Angolans."

Altino Mulungu in an interview with Danielle Menezes



Regarding the partnerships made, it is possible to identify through the following message

Today, Wednesday, December 29, 2021, the Office of Assistance to African Citizenship in PE (EACAPE) completes (10) ten years in defending and promoting the fundamental rights of the economic and academic immigrant from PE. We appreciate the alignment and sharing in the provision of migratory demands to COMIGRAR, OAB/PE, DPU (PE), DPE, MPPE, Consular Society of PE, Secretary of Justice and Human Rights of PE, Executive Secretary of Human Rights of the City Hall of Recife, PE Legislative Assembly (International Affairs Commission), Recife City Council (Human Rights Commission), FPFS (Pernambucan Futsal Federation), Unicap (Dom Hélder Câmara and Neabi Chair), Faculdade Damas (Human Rights Clinic), UFPE (Neab and PEC-G - Student Graduation Agreement Program), Senegalese Association of the Northeast, GADE, NGO África do Coração (SP) and the Angolan Community of Recife.

Altino Mulungu also reinforced that “Pernambuco still does not have public policies aimed at immigrants, therefore, COMIGRAR (Committee to support immigrants and refugees) emerged to meet these migratory demands”.

Amadou Touré, in turn, reported that André Carneiro Leão, Public Defender of the Union, is the “main partner” of migrants

Dr André has already carried out a joint effort to regularize the Senegalese and in less than a month everyone received the documents. Everything we need he supports. He has also made available a public defender to take care of any questions, doubts and problems they may have.



In 2014, the Pernambuco Department of Justice and Human Rights announced the creation of a Reference Center for Immigrants, scheduled to open in 2015, but the actual creation was not identified in the research. The news reported that in 2018, the "House of Rights" was created, a partnership between Cáritas Brasileira Regional Nordeste 2 with Cáritas Switzerland, the United States Department of State (PRM) and the Humanitas Institute (IHU) of the University Catholic University of Pernambuco (Unicap) and which seems to have happened more because of the Venezuelan migratory issue.

**Interinstitutional Committee for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons in Refuge, Migration and Stateless Persons (COMIGRAR/PE)**

As previously mentioned, it was after Recife joined the Acolhida Program that the difficulties encountered by the Government in integrating the migrant population became more evident. Thus, a state committee was set up, the Interinstitutional Committee for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons in Refuge, Migration and Stateless Persons (COMIGRAR/PE), composed of a set of organizations and institutions from civil society, public authorities and federated entities that united to act on migratory issues. Officially, Recife has been part of COMIGRAR since October 15, 2019, through its Municipal Secretariats<sup>24</sup>. As mentioned by councilor Ivan Moraes and his parliamentary advisor Luana Varejão, in addition to the municipal secretariats and the Public Defender's Office of the State of Pernambuco, the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), Cáritas Arquidiocesana of Olinda and Recife, Catholic University of Pernambuco, Conectas and Visão Mundial, as representatives of civil society organizations and institutions. In addition to other institutions mentioned by the representative of Cáritas, namely: Aldeias Infantis SOS Brasil; Northeast Senegalese Association; Caritas Brazilian Northeast Regional 2; Collective of Women Defenders of Human Rights;

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<sup>24</sup> GRUPO JCPM. Poderes se unem para resolver situação dos venezuelanos no Recife. Available 24th March 2022 at:  
<https://jc.ne10.uol.com.br/canal/politica/pernambuco/noticia/2019/10/15/poderes-se-unem-para-resolver-situacao-dos-venezuelanos-no-recife-390609.php>.



Pernambuco Psychology Council – CRP -PE; Office of Assistance to African Citizenship in Pernambuco – EACAPE; Institute for Support to Development and Social Inclusion – IADIS (CECASIMI Project -PE); Instituto José Ricardo – for the sake of diversity; Ecumenical Service of Militancy in Prisons – SEMPRI; Pastoral Service for Migrants of the Northeast – SPM-NE; Catholic University of Pernambuco – UNICAP and Visão Mundial Brasil.

### **Political Context: Processing the Approval of Municipal Law 18,798**

It was in this context of the implementation of emergency actions, without a proper reference directing the action of the local public power, that the text of the Migratory Law Project approved in João Pessoa, capital of the State that borders with Pernambuco. Presented through a research anthropologist from the Federal University of Paraíba, it was understood that it was necessary to structure policies directed to the migratory issue also in Recife.

Likewise, the Social Assistance Secretariat sought support from the Committee to direct the first actions to welcome migrants in Recife. COMIGRAR/PE played an important role in the drafting process of Bill No. The PL "establishes the bases for the elaboration of the 'Municipal Policy for the Promotion of the Rights of Migrants and Refugees' in the municipality of Recife"<sup>25</sup>, which resulted in Municipal Law nº 18,798, of May 20, 2021<sup>26</sup>.

As Luana Varejão reports, the Committee was consulted in the construction of the text to be presented to the City Council

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<sup>25</sup> RECIFEb. Projeto de Lei Ordinária 198/2020. 2020. Available at: [https://sapl.recife.pe.leg.br/consultas/materia/materia\\_mostrar\\_proc?cod\\_materia=102360](https://sapl.recife.pe.leg.br/consultas/materia/materia_mostrar_proc?cod_materia=102360). Acesso: 24/03/2022.

<sup>26</sup> RECIFEc. Lei Municipal nº 18.798, de 20 de maio de 2021. Available at: <https://leismunicipais.com.br/a/pe/r/recife/lei-ordinaria/2021/1880/18798/lei-ordinaria-n-18798-2021-institui-as-bases-para-a-elaboracao-da-politica-municipal-de-promocao-dos-direitos-dos-migrantes-e-refugiados-no-municipio-do-recife>. Acesso: 24/03/2022.



We sent [the PL] to some comrades who are part of the committee, for them to analyze the bill, see if they would have any contribution, any modification to make from the proposal that had been made based on Emerson's text [ João Pessoa Law Project] and we had already made some adaptations and, from there, we made the project protocol.

However, the drafting process of the PL required certain readings for its drafting and approval. Considering the conservative configuration of Recife's political context, in which councilor Ivan Moraes is an opponent of the current administration, the strategy adopted for the approval of the presented text was to relativize, without making direct mention of obligations to the municipality. Thus, the guiding thread used in the writing was the use of a verb tense that approached in a suggestive and authoritative way, in the sense of pointing out what the municipality "could" develop and not what it "should" implement, as mentioned by Luana Varejão

The Recife City Council is very conservative in approving bills, [as well] as the legislation and justice commission and the chamber finance commission, it is very restricted in the proposals that the councilman [Ivan Moraes] can make. So there is not much room for approval. At that time, we had to change the way the law was written a little [Ordinary Law Project] to make it more authoritative, we had to change the verb tense. For example, instead of the city hall having to do such a thing, the city hall can... So, it became more suggestive, authoritative.

The objective of presenting a text that relativizes possible obligations of the municipality in the PL was to guarantee the institutionalization of the migratory issue, inserting the agenda in the municipal legislative sphere so that, later, from its approval, it could be used as a control and collection mechanism. , as complemented by Luana Varejão



(...) then we could raise this debate on the possibility, on the question of the importance of the municipal policy for refugee immigrants, in approving a law that would later also be a mechanism for charging.

Even so, in view of a critical look at the political context and with a more subjective writing strategy, the Municipal Law was approved with a veto of the only article that attributed some responsibilities to the municipality. This is the sixth article, the text of which can be seen in the table below.

Vetoed article of Municipal Law No. 18,798, of May 20, 2021, which establishes the bases for the elaboration of the 'Municipal Policy for the Promotion of the Rights of Migrants and Refugees' in the municipality of Recife.

Art. 6 The Municipal Government, in order to ensure qualified care for migrants and refugees within the scope of municipal public services, may carry out the following administrative actions, in addition to others it deems appropriate:

I - training of Public Agents aimed at:

a) raising awareness of the reality of migration in Recife, with guidance on human rights and the rights of migrants and refugees in accordance with the relevant legislation; and

b) interculturality of languages, with emphasis on facilities that provide the greatest number of services to migrants and refugees.

II - training of Guardianship Councilors for the protection of migrant and refugee children and adolescents and their descendants born in Brazil;

III - training of the Municipal Education Network to assist children, adolescents, young people and adults migrants and refugees according to their ethnic-cultural identities;

IV - designation of cultural mediators in public facilities with the greatest influx of migrants and refugees to aid in communication between professionals and users;

V - training of professionals from the Social Assistance Reference Centers on legislation concerning the rights of migrants and refugees;



VI - installation of specific Reference Centers for the care of migrants and refugees, or adaptation of the already existing Reference Centers, so that they can develop, in special wings, the services referred to in the caput, intended to provide social reception services and articulation access to other public services; and

VII - establishment of partnerships with Bodies and/or Entities from other federative spheres to promote the inclusion of migrants and refugees, as well as to speed up the issuance of documents.

However, if, on the one hand, there is criticism that the Municipal Law on the migration issue does not cover concrete responsibilities, on the other hand, its approval is considered an achievement. Based on it, it is possible to move towards the advancement of local institutionalization, reception and recognition of migrants in Recife. Thus, the next step to be conquered, according to councilor Ivan Moraes, is the regulation of the Municipal Policy to guide the migratory issue in Recife.

### **Actions of Civil Society in the migrant cause in Recife**

It is possible to perceive that in Recife the role of civil society in the migratory issue is diverse and acts on different fronts of action, as will be presented below.

### **CECASIMI Project: the work of the Apolônio Salles Foundation for Educational Development - FADURPE**

The CECASIMI Project, promoted by the Antônio Salles Foundation for Educational Development (FADURPE), an entity that supports the Federal Rural



University of Pernambuco - UFRPE, seeks the social, labor and productive insertion of migrants residing in Recife and the metropolitan region.<sup>27</sup>.

The actions offered by the CECASIMI Project are aimed at migrants, refugees and stateless people who are victims of racism or any type of discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, religion or origin, who are exposed to various situations of vulnerability. The objective is to promote human, social and professional development through training for interactive and positive daily coexistence, through the instrumentalization of interpersonal communication, Portuguese language learning course, local socio-cultural insertion in Recife and Pernambuco; in addition to social practices, historical context and notions about Brazilian legislation, covering rights and duties. The Project also provides support for students to enter the social and health protection network<sup>28</sup>.

Another form of action of the Project is related to the contribution to the structuring of public policies aimed at migrants, refugees and stateless people, since the statistical data of the migrant population that participate in the Project are shared and may subsidize the consolidation of assertive public policies<sup>29</sup>.

### **The House of Rights in Recife: joint action between government and civil society in humanitarian assistance to migrants and refugees**

The Casa de Direitos<sup>30</sup> is a reference center for migrants of any local nationality that allows coexistence, promotes training, psychosocial assistance and legal advice and training. The team that works is composed of psychologists, social workers, social educators, in addition to legal advisors.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> FADURPE. Fundação Apolônio Salles de Desenvolvimento Educacional. **Projeto CECASIMI ganha versão EAD.** 2020. Disponível em: <http://www.fadurpe.com.br/noticias/74/projeto-cecasimi-ganha-versao-ead>. Acesso: 27/03/2022.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> A Casa de Direitos está localizada, além de Recife, em outras seis capitais brasileiras, são elas: Boa Vista, Porto Velho, Brasília, São Paulo, Curitiba e Florianópolis (DPU, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> CÁRITASa. **Programa Pana para atuação com migrantes e refugiados.** 2022. Available 27th March 2022 at: <https://caritas.org.br/projeto/3>.



In Recife, Casa de Direitos was inaugurated in December 2018 through an agreement between Cáritas Brasileira Regional Nordeste 2 and the Catholic University of Pernambuco (Unicap). The public authorities were active partners during the first year of implementation of the House, they currently receive referrals made by the Cáritas team and carry out their demands to the public served.

Since its opening, a series of actions have been developed by the Casa de Direitos and important partnerships have been established. The actions involved the mobilization and awareness of donations by the Publicity and Communication sector; psychological duty and support from the Biological Sciences and Health Sector at IHU/Unicap. Also noteworthy are the partnerships with the Company-School Integration Center (CIEE), with training for the job market; and with the IHU/Unicap, which offered a course on legal issues; Brazilian legislation and international law; Portuguese; and industrial design<sup>32</sup>.

#### **Sister Adélia Migrant House: a local civil society initiative to welcome migrants and refugees from Venezuela**

Inspired by the trajectory of Sister Adélia, the Casa da Migrante Sister Adélia was inaugurated in September 2021. Located in Vila Santa Luzia, Bairro da Torre, in Recife, the space was donated by the Instituto das Religiosas da Instrução Cristã, through the Dom João Costa Social Center.<sup>33</sup>.

The initiative is aimed at assisting people and families from Venezuela and its actions are developed in partnership with the Institute of Religious Women for Christian Instruction and the Northeast Migrant Pastoral Service (SPMNE) and with Rede Damas Educacional. In addition, they receive support from the Conference of

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<sup>32</sup> CÁRITASb. **Resposta à Crise Humanitária Brasil – Venezuela.** Available 27th March 2022 at: <https://escola.mpu.mp.br/h/rede-de-capacitacao-a-refugiados-e-migrantes/atividade-em-recife/apresentacoes/experiencia-no-acolhimento-da-casa-de-direito-do-programa-pana-caritas-unicap.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> RDE. Rede Damas Educacional. **Casa da Migrante Irmã Adélia é inaugurada no Recife.** Available 27th March 2022 at: <https://rededamas.com.br/noticias/casa-da-migrante-irma-adelia-e-inaugurada-no-recife>.



Religious in Brazil (CRB), from the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples and Organizations from the Northeast, Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo and from Cáritas Brasileira<sup>34</sup>.

The actions developed involve welcoming families to the shelter and offering Portuguese language courses and handicraft workshops. Children have the opportunity to attend music classes taught by educators from the Dom João Costa Social Center, which, in turn, is part of the Damas Educacional Network.<sup>35</sup>.

#### **Additional actions by Caritas in the reception process**

In addition to renting houses for Venezuelans and Waraos, carried out through Cáritas and the government, the entity also sought to act in different ways in order to promote the integration of the migrant population. The availability of a telephone line for psychosocial care provided to Venezuelan migrants and refugees residing in the metropolitan region of Recife was identified, with the aim of offering support at a time of vulnerability aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The line offers qualified listening, referrals to public policies, reception of demands, family conflicts, and emergencies.

#### **Serviço Pastoral dos Migrantes (SPM)**

Added to these initiatives, the “Projeto Taller” developed by the Pastoral dos Migrantes, which refers to a handicraft workshop with the perspective of generating income for the families. The handicrafts produced can be exhibited at two handicraft fairs, the National Handicraft Business Fair (Fenearte), promoted by the state public initiative, and the Classic Hall Handicraft Fair (Fenahall).

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<sup>34</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>35</sup> RDE. Rede Damas Educacional. **Casa da Migrante Irmã Adélia é inaugurada no Recife**. Available 23th March 2022 at:  
<https://rededamas.com.br/noticias/casa-da-migrante-irma-adelia-e-inaugurada-no-recife>.



The SPM also tried to organize Portuguese courses for the Warao population, however, due to financial difficulties to guarantee the displacement of students to the classroom, the project had to be interrupted.

### **Other initiatives**

Regarding actions aimed at non-indigenous migrants, the IHU initiative was mapped, which aims to promote entrepreneurship through the “Reconstruir Project” aimed at migrants arriving in Recife. However, migrants come up against bureaucratic issues that prevent the formalization of a legal figure, such as the impossibility of constituting themselves as Individual Microentrepreneurs (MEI) for not having a Brazilian voter title.

In addition to the actions of Cáritas, IHU and FADURPE, the OAB-PE, through the Subcommittee on Refugee Rights, made a proposal to create the “Migrant Friend” seal. The proposal became a project in the Legislative Assembly of Pernambuco (Alepe), with the institution of the “Amigo do Migrante Award”, intended for those who, within the State of Pernambuco, carry out activities to welcome, and protect and defend the rights of migrants., refugees and stateless persons.

### **The self-organization of communities of different nationalities for cultural visibility and expression**

The cultural plurality shared in Recife is expressed by several parties, fairs and festivals. In the district of Boa Vista, central region of the city, there is the Islamic Center where the Association of Senegalese from the Northeast also works, founded in 2015 and commanded by Amadou Touré, who arrived in Brazil in 2001, through an invitation from his brother who was a student in the capital of Pernambuco.

According to Amadou, there is a partnership between the association and the consular community of the northeast, the IMIP hospital for health care, Cáritas, the public defender's office in relation to the regularization of Senegalese, the human



rights secretariat of the state and the city of Recife, in addition to of the state culture department, which guarantee participation in fairs such as Fenearte. Relationships are also maintained with other groups of migrants such as Angolans and Venezuelans (although they are not such close communities).

Regarding the reception by the population of Pernambuco, Amadou says that “there is prejudice, but they do not care because it is ignorance”. When they arrived in the region, traders viewed them with suspicion, believing that they would steal Brazilians' jobs and clientele. However, little by little they came to realize that the trade and way of working of the Senegalese is different. The relationship with merchants from Recife, as long as it does not refer to the same products, is reported as “quiet”.

Still on the subject of integration with the local population, it was reported that, to facilitate integration in the city, many migrants chose to change their names Papa Saliou, for example, became Pablo.

We know that in the case of African immigrants, in addition to racism, there are also other prejudices, such as the idea that they will take jobs, which is not the case. We have already had cases of discrimination at UFPE, but the NEAB (Núcleo de Estudos Afro-Brasileiros UFPE) is very active and has greatly reduced the issue of racism. Altino Soares also for Marco Zero.

The mingling with the neighborhood can be noticed in the realization of typical Muslim festivals such as Ramadan and the feast of the sacrifice of the sheep. It is common for Brazilians to be invited by them to events that take place in the Islamic center or in the neighborhood of Boa Vista.

Festivities of other nationalities also take place in the capital of Pernambuco. The Japanese Fair is held annually, which in 2019 had its 23rd edition in celebration of the Ages of Japan. The streets of Recife Antigo received elaborate decoration with bamboo and colorful flags, another attraction for the more than 40 thousand people



expected<sup>36</sup>. Due to the pandemic context, the following editions (24th and 25th) were held virtually<sup>37</sup>.

The Chinese New Year is also an annual event that spreads through the streets and buildings of Recife. With a lunisolar calendar, Chinese culture considers the phases of the moon and the position of the sun to count the year. Also, the zodiac cycle lasts twelve years, which is related to the dozen animals that were turned into zodiac signs by the Buddha because they were the only ones who answered his call for a meeting. According to this culture, the year 2022 refers to the Year of the Tiger.

The presentations of the last party took place on January 30th and 31st, 2022, with presentations at Marco Zero in the city, reddish lighting at the Geraldo Magalhães Sports Gym, known as Geraldão, in the Imbiribeira neighborhood, as well as lights representing China projected on the municipal equipment<sup>38</sup>.

The importance of Chinese culture for the municipality is recognized by Ana Paula Vilaça, Chief of Staff of the Center of Recife, in a publication about the commemoration on the municipality's website, she states that

The Chinese community is a strategic actor for the center of our city. We have more than 5,000 Chinese people in the historic center area who are fundamental and who work, produce, live and live in the center. They are very engaged with the Recentro Program and with the new City Hall projects for this area<sup>39</sup>.

Chanukah, also known as the Festival of Lights, is also a long-standing tradition in Recife. Of Jewish origin, the event lasts for eight days and revolves around the

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<sup>36</sup> CBNRECIFE. **23ª Feira Japonesa acontece no Recife antigo neste domingo.** Available 27th March 2022 at:<https://www.cbnrecife.com/artigo/23-feira-japonesa-acontece-no-recife-antigo-neste-domingo>.

<sup>37</sup> ACJR. **Associação Cultural Japonesa do Recife. Canal do Youtube.** Available 27th March 2022 at:<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEMo3XpLmT3XFBZeQZyEqIg>.

<sup>38</sup> RECIFEd. **Comemoração do Ano Novo chinês movimenta o Marco Zero e empolga público.** 2022. Available 27th March 2022 at:<https://www2.recife.pe.gov.br/noticias/31/01/2022/comemoracao-do-ano-novo-chines-movimenta-o-marco-zero-e-empolga-publico>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.



miracle of the oil that is represented by a candelabrum of the feast that has eight provisions for candles that are lit each day that the feast takes place. The tradition of this Festival is told by Jáder Tachlitsky, communication coordinator of the Israeli Federation of Pernambuco (Fipe) in an interview given to the Diário de Pernambuco on 12/22/2019<sup>40</sup>

The story is told that there was a gold menorah (Jewish candelabrum with seven candles) inside the temple, which had to be lit all the time, and for that it needed oil. There, they found a quantity of oil that would only allow them to keep lit for one day. And then comes the miracle. This oil kept the flame burning for eight days, until a new oil was made. That's why Hanukkah has eight candles, each lit on a feast day.

In the same interview Jáder Tachlitsky highlights the importance of this festival for Jewish religious identity and memory, as explained below

The party celebrates your right to have your own religious identity, not to bow down to those who want to impose things on you. The feast recalls the struggle of the Jews to free the Jews from the Seleucids.

Another traditional event organized annually by Fipe is the Festival of Jewish Culture, which occupied the streets of Recife before the pandemic. With COVID-19, the 29th edition, in 2020, was held virtually, with live broadcast on the youtube channel of the Israeli Federation of Pernambuco. The centenary of the birth of the writer Clarice

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<sup>40</sup> DP. Diário de Pernambuco. **Comunidade judaica celebra Chanuká no Recife Antigo.** 2019. Available 27th March 2022 at: <https://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/noticia/vidaurbana/2019/12/comunidade-judaica-celebra-chanuka-no-recife-antigo.html>.



Lispector, patron of literature from Pernambuco, was the inspiration for the theme of this edition “Clarice – from Recife to the world”<sup>41</sup>.

Arab culture gains visibility through the South American Festival of Arab Culture (FSACA). An event that also takes place annually and in several Brazilian cities to commemorate the Arab Community Day in Brazil, celebrated on March 25, and aims to promote “respect for cultural diversity and bringing people together, through activities such as exhibitions; film screenings; conversation circles and storytelling”<sup>42</sup>.

The seventh edition of the FSACA was held at the Luiz Freire Culture Center (CCLF) which is a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded as a resistance to the period of military dictatorship and a redemocratization strategy in 1972. Its struggle for human rights has been going on for 50 years. years and its performance nowadays is directed towards “defense and promotion of the Rights to Education, Communication and Culture” and “in the strengthening of subjects from urban peripheries and Traditional Communities, especially the Quilombos of the State of Pernambuco, in the struggle for enforcement of rights”<sup>43</sup>.

Finally, film productions are also the means of expression of African culture. The second edition of Baobácine – Mostra de Cinema Africano do Recife took place in December 2021 and the theme was “Between territories and cinematographic crossings”, mixing classic and contemporary films produced on the African continent, as well as by black people outside the territory. . The country highlighted was Sudan for the representation of recent political disruptive processes<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> FOLHAPE. Folha de Pernambuco. **Festival Judaico homenageia o centenário da escritora Clarice Lispector. O evento este ano terá como tema “Clarice – de Recife para o mundo – e irá reverenciar o universo da patrona da literatura de Pernambuco.** 2020. Available 27th March 2022 at: <https://www.folhape.com.br/cultura/festival-judaico-homenageia-o-centenario-da-escritora-clarice/165205/>.

<sup>42</sup> FEPEC. Federação Pernambucana de Cineclubs. **CCLF recebe VII Festival Sul-Americano de Cultura Árabe.** Available 27th March 2022 at: <https://fepec.wordpress.com/2016/03/22/cclf-recebe-vii-festival-sul-americano-de-cultura-arabe/>.

<sup>43</sup> CCFL. **Centro de Cultura Luiz Freire.** 2022. Available 29th March 2022 at: <http://cclf.org.br/>.

<sup>44</sup> JC. Jornal Digital; Bruno Vinícius. **Confira a programação completa do Baobácine, Mostra de Cinema Africano do Recife.** Esta é a segunda edição do festival, que neste ano tem como tema "Entre territórios e travessias cinematográficas". 2021. Available 27th March 2022 at:



### 5.3. Relevant Considerations

In Recife it is possible to observe the efforts to build a structured and institutionalized local migration policy, bearing in mind the principles of interculturality, transversality and migrant protagonism. Interculturality can be perceived in the movement of parties, fairs and festivals that take place in the capital of Pernambuco throughout the year, rescuing from historical religious traditions, such as Hanukkah, the Japanese Fair and the Chinese New Year, to productions of resistance such as African cinema. It is also promoted when means are articulated and offered for migrants to participate in craft fairs, Fenearte and Fenahall, moments in which it is possible to obtain visibility of the art, culture and customs of different countries, such as Brazil and Venezuela.

Transversality, on the other hand, can be verified in the interdepartmental and intersectoral action of municipal secretariats, as well as the involvement of civil society, in reducing the challenges faced by migrants arriving in Recife. Added to this are the actions carried out for inclusion in health services, education and respect for the LGBTQIA+ population, represented in the lease of a specific property for these people.

With regard to Migrant Protagonism, initiatives by associations of different migrant nationalities in organizing fairs, festivals and meetings to celebrate and culturally manifest religious practices or film productions stand out. These self-organized practices by migrant communities occupy public spaces and allow greater visibility of the cultural plurality that cohabits in Recife.

As for aspects related to Sustainability, these can be achieved as the institutionalization of a municipal policy progresses, which will lead the municipality, civil society and migrant population to materialize a political debate towards the guarantee of rights. Furthermore, it is imperative that migrants have their basic needs guaranteed. In order to have an effective migrant role, it is necessary that they have

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<https://jc.ne10.uol.com.br/cultura/2021/12/14917287-confira-a-programacao-completa-do-baobacine-mostra-de-cinema-africano-do-recife.html>.



social and financial autonomy and access to housing. Thus, it is understood that the regulation of the Municipal Policy for Migrants, a step desired by councilor Ivan Moraes, will contribute to the scope and effectiveness of these two principles.

Finally, racism and xenophobia are expressed in the prejudices suffered by the migrant population that seeks the opportunity to enter the formal job market. This theme may be the subject of campaigns and joint actions between local government and civil society so that universal citizenship is recognized and respected in Recife.

## 6. Comparative Analysis between Solidarity Cities

It is possible to observe in the three cities studied elements about the importance of collective and articulated action between local government, civil society and migrant associations in the search for a more humanitarian welcome, guided by universal access to rights and respect for plurality and interculturality. Although each city has faced different challenges, it can be affirmed that there are three converging aspects in the territories studied that allow us to glimpse the real probability of consolidation of reception practices with guarantees of rights.

It is possible to understand, therefore, that the presence of a space for the realization and expansion of local experiences of an alternative model of migratory policy depends on the multiplication and consolidation of these initiatives, thus enabling a network action to be capillarized in several countries and continents.

The first of these aspects is the importance of integrated action between civil society organizations that defend the right to migration, migrant associations that fight for the guarantee and practice of their rights, and local public authorities that seek to institutionalize practices of reception and insertion of the international population. in its urban space. This integration is most evident in the cities of Cuiabá and Recife which, despite having received migratory movements in the past, had to structure



themselves to welcome and offer decent conditions for the Venezuelan migrant population.

In these two Brazilian cities, intersectoral and interdepartmental committees were established, with representatives from several municipal secretariats and different civil society organizations and migrant associations, directing actions and decisions on the migration issue. In Recife, particularly, the institutionalization of the Municipal Law that provides guidelines for a Municipal Migration Policy was carried out with the support of COMIGRAR/PE, as well as the definitions and divisions of responsibilities for welcoming the migrant population, with emphasis on the role of Cáritas in this process. In Cuiabá, the Working Group on Policies for Migrants, formed by a collective mandate with the participation of migrant associations, presented a Bill that culminated in the institutionalization of the Migrant Week. Currently, this same Working Group articulates in the local Chamber the approval of the basic text for the constitution of the CMI.

Another convergent aspect identified is related to the need to have structuring and sustainable guidelines that guarantee due access to rights - not only the right to health, education and social assistance - but also labor inclusion and maintenance and autonomy of life.

Recife makes this need evident, when the actions took place in an emergency and welfare way, which also occurred in Cuiabá. This assistentialist practice was questioned by the international migrant population who claimed instrumentalization and insertion in the labor market. Here, too, the importance of civil society in offering vocational and local language courses to qualify migrants for work is highlighted. However, even with this qualification, other impediments emerged, such as the lack of documentation to comply with the bureaucratic issues of registration of the national legal entity registry.

Still in this context, in addition to having a law enacted, public agents must be prepared to receive, understand and respect the cultural diversities that are manifested in different nationalities. In this sense, in San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, the process of training public agents based on the Manual para el



Orientador en Temas Migrantes, which was created to provide assistance to migrants in federal and municipal public departments, deserves to be highlighted.

The third, and last, aspect is the visibility strategy through cultural and gastronomic manifestations as an instrument of approximation, integration and minimization of nationalist beliefs and discourses. In the three cities, fairs and festivals were organized, some based on historical and religious events, and hundreds and thousands of people gathered to celebrate together, such as the Chinese New Year party and the Festival of Lights - Chanuká, in Recife or the Week of the Migrante, in Cuiabá, and the Fair of Collectivities, in San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca.

Another form of visibility used is film festivals that bring the local audience closer to films produced on other continents, allowing access to other ways of understanding and representing the world and everyday life. This practice was noticed in Recife, which hosts African and Arab film festivals. The three aspects described demonstrate that it is possible to produce a new way of living the city, based on an integrated and collective action aimed at building a more humane, diverse, inclusive and borderless world, guided by social justice, respect and freedom. access to territories.

This world that represents collective interests is possible through the strengthening of local practices and the establishment of an intercontinental network that encourages other welcoming cities to replicate joint and balanced initiatives between civil society, migrant communities and local public authorities. Just as it is possible to carry out the intercultural revolution through an intercontinental welcoming network guided by a new policy of local migratory governance that (re)signifies spaces of inclusion and autonomy for the migrant population.

## 7. Conclusions and Final Remarks

The idea of an intercontinental welcoming network is being structured from the deepening and sharing of local initiatives distributed in different continents. The



practices condensed in this study demonstrate that some common steps were taken towards the inclusion and insertion of the migrant population in the territory, which circumscribe the importance of the collective action of the different actors to institutionalize and conquer spaces.

The challenge that presents itself, however, is related to the question of how to go beyond the exchange of lessons learned from good practices to concrete commitments of solidarity between different territories. A step towards intercontinental capillarization and strengthening of structuring actions and alliances that permeate the principles of Interculturality, Transversality, Sustainability and Migrant Protagonism.

How to jump from the discourse of what was accomplished to a joint action with initiatives between territories? How to expand operations beyond geopolitical and administrative borders and borders? How to face prejudice, racism and xenophobia towards migrants? How to promote and guarantee a full social, cultural and economic insertion? These are themes that could be developed in joint actions involving the diversity of actors.

A first step can be taken in scheduling periodic meetings between cities for analysis and joint planning, listing confrontations, possibilities and alternatives for action, sharing the difficulties in finding collective solutions. Extending the study to other experiences is also a possible step. Deepening the reality and comparing it with the history of operations of these three cities can result in a more detailed diagnosis with the identification of new converging points and similarities of initiatives.

In summary, it is understood that the construction of the joint agenda of periodic meetings and the expansion of the study will contribute to reducing the distance between the world we live in and the one we wish to build, more just and humanitarian. Dialogue with inter-institutional bodies, promoting inclusion in networks, city forums and exchange spaces such as the Migration Alliance is not only a challenge posed, but also an invitation and a commitment based on this experience.