Addressing Inequalities: Building a Local Africa that Leaves No One Behind

The theme for this year’s European Development Days Conference #ThinkTwice focussed on addressing inequalities within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The partnership between UCLG Africa, Platforma, CEMR, AIMF, CLGF, and UCLG will, for the third year running, host a joint stand at The Global Village City Hall, representing local and regional governments at the European Development Days 2019 (EDD19).

As signatories of a Framework Partnership Agreement between the European Commission and UCLG Africa, we deliver actions in support of cities and local governments and represent the voice of local Africa. We provide support to national associations of local governments as well as African technical networks for local government officers who are supported to take ownership of Agenda 2030 as they move towards the localization of the sustainable development goals.

The Lab Debate at EDD, organized by UCLG Africa’s ALGA, presented how cities and local governments tackle inequalities, whilst promoting local democracy. The objectives of the debate were to discuss and exchange ideas that could pave the way for the creation of an “enabling environment” for local and regional governments in Africa to redress inequalities, and to take ownership of Agenda 2030 as they move towards the localization of the sustainable development goals.

The case study from Morocco focussed on how regionalization had exacerbated inequalities. Ms Aït Ben Lmadani Ghita highlighted 3 key policy solutions that could tackle issues around inequality:

1. Investment
2. Fair taxation and distribution of wealth
3. Gender issues empowering women at local, regional and national levels

Lmadani Ghita highlighted 3 key policy solutions that could tackle issues around inequality:

Addressing Inequalities:

The studies looked at divided cities, comparing affluent areas and municipalities like Ifrane, or Aït Izdeg in Morocco, fight against the issue of divided cities and the inequalities that exist between rich and poor neighbourhoods. The prevailing approach to these unplanned settlements is a tendency to focus on crime prevention and urban safety. Instead, a focus on engaging with key marginalised groups, such as women and youth in the development and planning process as a solution for reducing inequalities and creating catalysts for economic growth and poverty reduction, would ensure that no one is left behind.

The theme of this year’s EDD, “Addressing inequalities that leaves no one behind,” has been especially significant when capturing and hearing the voices of young people and women. Engaging and working with African Young Leaders is of great importance to UCLG Africa and we were honoured to have inspirational young leaders speaking on the panel for our Lab Debate.

One of our main advocacy messages for cities and municipalities across the continent, is to ensure the engagement of all community stakeholders and that, ‘Africa’s young leaders were given visibility at #EDD19 where we heard (sic) their views on inequalities and how the voices of youth can contribute to sustainable growth and development.”

For several years, EDD has advocated for the inclusion of youth in order to engage new voices and emerging actors in development, so during our Lab Debate we heard from two exceptional EDD Young Leaders, Ms Inota Cheta from Zambia and Mr. Aaron Atimpe from Ghana. They shared case studies from their cities and rural municipalities illustrating how development programs had addressed inequalities.

In addition, there was the sharing of best practice on working with local governments at the closest level to the people and its necessity for good governance. Other key issues discussed included the importance of decentralization, marginalised youth, and rapid urbanisation and the role of rural communities.

When you think of African leaders today, you would be forgiven if your first thoughts are of the “aging leaders that preside over the world’s youngest continent.”

Africa’s Young Leaders of Cities & Local Governments Shine at #EDD19

UCLG Africa will continue to amplify the voice of youth and women through its priority actions on Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 The Africa We Want, The New Urban Agenda, Migration and Climate Change, so follow us @UCLGAfrica on Twitter and Facebook or visit www.uclga.org to keep up to date with our current events and activities.