

## **Frontiers Insights**

*Inclusive Prosperity and Wellbeing in the Context  
of Mass Displacement*



## **Frontiers Insights: Inclusive Prosperity and Wellbeing in the Context of Mass Displacement**

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### **1.1 Programme Information: *Frontiers of Development***

*Frontiers of Development* works to engage expertise from the four UK National Academies to hold two symposia a year in DAC list countries, bringing together participants from engineering, medical, social and science backgrounds across industry and academia to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration on global challenges with the SDGs at the heart. The themes of the events are designed to be broad enough for researchers and practitioners of all disciplines to engage with. The symposia bring together approximately 60 of the best early-to-mid-career researchers (5-20 years post-doc or industry equivalent) from the UK and across the globe, working in academia, industry, civil society, NGOs and government for multidisciplinary workshops that encourage them to think outside of their traditional disciplinary silos and to use their expertise to tackle development challenges in a holistic and truly interdisciplinary way. Each symposium will address a connected set of challenge-led themes, drawing upon the objectives set out in the [GCRF](#) strategy.

### **1.2 Report Summary**

The theme of the inaugural *Frontiers of Development Symposium* was *Inclusive Prosperity and Wellbeing in the Context of Mass Displacement*. Discussion centred on three themes: Drivers of Mass Displacement, Shared Spaces and Services and Enhancing Value. After two days of dialogue, the following areas arose as key arenas requiring action if we are to make meaningful progress towards creating inclusive prosperity for displaced individuals, and for the communities in which they reside: 1) Disaster Prevention; 2) Public Spaces & Community Building; 3) Understanding Climate Induced Displacement; 4) Sustainable & Inclusive Finance Models; 5) Provision of Essential Services. This report contains the *Insights* of the *Frontiers of Development* cohort on these focus areas: What must be changed, steps we can take and where our thinking must be grounded.

### **1.3 Session Format: *Frontiers Insights***

This session was designed to capture key messages and discussions from the event with a view to contributing to a report on the broader Inclusivity & Wellbeing series. Six flip charts were positioned around the room, each with a key question/challenge drawn from one of the themed sessions that had taken place during the event. Event Chairs and Session Chairs each led a discussion around an individual question, recording notes on the flip chart. We encouraged an open and collaborative debate, where all points of view were respected and listened to. The session operated under [Chatham House Rules](#) to encourage a free and honest discussion. Subsequently, each group worked together to craft two or three sentences in answer to the question/challenge before feeding back their findings to the cohort and taking questions/comments to give others a chance to input and further hone the insight.

## **2.1 Insight 1: Disaster prevention must be integral to future strategies to reduce mass displacement**

*Question: How can we prevent disasters so that mass displacement can be reduced?  
What are the global trends?*

### Starting Point

- The world is changing and we face many global challenges: urbanisation, climate change, poverty, inequality, conflict, mechanisation, technological change, population increase and political interactions (cross-border conflict and competition for natural resources). We must start by acknowledging that these global trends impact both incidence of disasters, their management and, thus, their prevention.

### Recommendations

- **Dedicate resources** to the provision of robust early-warning systems and associated infrastructure services to decrease vulnerability and reduce exposure to disasters
- **Mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policy at every level of government** from local to global, and integrate it into legal frameworks and governance structures where appropriate
- **Create new models of engagement** to incentivise the private sector to invest in resilience infrastructure and enable them to be part of disaster response strategies
- **Enforcement and advocacy of DRR policies** to promote accountability and transparency at every level of government and reduce corruption
- **Situate DRR as a core** part of any governance or implementation strategy which tackles global challenges

## **2.2 Insight 2: Public spaces should enable plurality within communities to thrive; 'A community is useless without public spaces which support it'**

*Question: How to create public spaces to promote community building and reconciliation in rural and marginalised communities affected by multiple disasters (both natural and human induced disasters)*

### Starting Point

- Communities are, by definition, imbued with connotations of sharing; sharing similar views or ideas; having a shared history or having had shared experiences. Whilst a community is a group brought together by a commonality, this should not take away from the potential of members' agency to be different. Communities are diverse spaces and we must not stereotype the needs of a single community as one, but aim to create public spaces which allow communities to thrive by catering for all members.

### Recommendations

- **Creation of mixed use spaces** which harness the limited space available, particularly in camp settings.
- **Human centred and environmental design** processes which support co-creation and co-maintenance of space by authorities and members
- **Address cultural identity needs through community engagement**, by creating public spaces that are 'people orientated' and encourage social interaction.
- **Provide a space for reconciliation/reflection** for the community to allow them to engage with each other, express their identity and create a sense of belonging
- **Ensure ease of access** to every member of the community so that it is an open, inclusive, and safe space

### **Insight 3: Strategies to tackle climate induced displacement must be truly interdisciplinary and involve all stakeholder levels**

*Question: How can we enable a fuller understanding of both the scale and impact of displacement due to different types of climate induced hazards?*

#### Starting point

- Climate change is a multifaceted problem and solving it requires interdisciplinary approaches. Understanding, and consequently tackling climate induced displacement, must start with an appreciation of the wider context of climate change and an acknowledgement of its global pertinence. At this point, contextual knowledge can be mobilised effectively in national and local strategies to prevent and mitigate climate induced displacement, mindful of their place in a broader global context.

#### Recommendations

- **Acknowledgement of the context** and of the specific issues countries and communities are facing
- **Harness local and indigenous knowledge** by engaging affected communities
- **In-country, qualitative research** is essential both as a partner to quantitative studies and as a method of engaging affected communities and contextualising data.
- **Continual monitoring** and frequent consultations to discuss new findings to ensure policymakers and innovators are armed with up to date information to inform investment and reconstruction policy
- **Removing barriers to information access** to empower all people, whether they be local or international to have access to information which is necessary to change perceptions and attitudes

### **Insight 4: Access to finance and fintech is a key step in empowering women in conflict-affected communities, though it must be community centred and integrated**

*What financing models can we use to enable female-headed households in conflict affected areas to move towards sustainable livelihoods?*

#### Starting Point

- A lack of finance and access to financial education is a shackle on gender equality, and this is particularly acute in conflict-affected communities. Providing a mechanism to allow women a financial foothold would significantly increase their capacity to innovate, thrive and participate in the local economy whilst also greatly benefiting the wider community

#### Recommendations

- **Understand gender issues** of the specific context, while being sensitive to different cultural norms
- **Easy, equal access to finance systems and knowledge allows scale up** of informal businesses
- **Providing a system for saving enables financial security** which is essential to ensure a relationship of aid dependency is not created within conflict affected communities
- **Community centred, co-operative style approaches** where all members contribute some money to a community savings pot, from which all can subsequently borrow, giving the potential to provide access to larger capital when needed

**Insight 5: 'People on the move are not a burden' – they must be at centre of holistic approaches to broaden the reach of essential services**

*What are the steps which we need to take to enhance/ embed health/ education interventions for displaced people into national policy and strategy?*

Starting Point

- People on the move, and displaced communities, must be viewed and treated as members of society, rather than as a separate 'other' in a space of exception. Provision of central services, such as health and education, is the cornerstone of supporting displaced communities and individuals to ensure they can thrive and contribute fully to the community in which they have sought refuge

Recommendations

- **To use a holistic approach** to policymaking which should include human rights perspectives, legal and political contexts
- **Engaging with local communities and refugees** to map skills, evaluate capacity and encourage leadership and ownership
- **Participatory approaches** must be central to implementation of solutions and must be supported by the continual gathering of feedback and evidence

**Conclusion**

This short report details key elements of the discussion arising from the first *Frontiers of Development* meeting. Displacement is a truly global issue; according to the UN, 1/122 humans being either a refugee, internally displaced or seeking asylum. With this statistic ever-present, the cohort identified key action areas to address this global challenge: 1) Disaster Prevention; 2) Public Spaces & Community Building; 3) Understanding Climate Induced Displacement; 4) Sustainable & Inclusive Finance Models; 5) Provision of Essential Services. The insights in this report recommend a direction of travel for future work through a combination of prevention, adaptation and mitigation. Underlying all recommendations is the acknowledgement of the need for a paradigm shift; displaced persons are part of our global society and part of the global economy. Recognition, and accommodation, of this is overdue, and is at the heart of the challenge to ensure prosperity and wellbeing for all.