

# GETTING TO 2030: INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Commemorating the 20th anniversary  
of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and  
of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
18 October 2018, Domaine de Penthes, Geneva

## SUMMARY REPORT



2018 is the year of the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), established in 1998 as the world's authoritative source of data, research and analysis on internal displacement. To mark the occasion, IDMC convened an interdisciplinary conference that brought together researchers on human mobility, economics and sustainable development, humanitarian and development practitioners and policy makers.

With a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals and how they relate to internal displacement at the national level, the conference explored ways to integrate the concern for reducing internal displacement into national development and economic planning.

Over 100 participants from academia, national governments, civil society and intergovernmental organisations working on internal displacement and sustainable development gathered on October 18. This report summarises the day's discussions.



## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

---

Alexandra Bilak, Director of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, launched the event with a reflection upon the last 20 years of monitoring, analysing and reporting on internal displacement, progress achieved and yet to be achieved. Recent crises in Ethiopia, Syria, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and the Central African Republic are examples of the challenges posed to governments affected by the phenomenon. High-income countries, with the example of the recent floods in France, can also be impacted, but low and lower-middle income countries are often the ones that face the most severe consequences of internal displacement. Humanitarian action can no longer be considered sufficient to respond to displacement risk, political and development actors must also step in. IDMC's anniversary event is dedicated to looking at the multi-dimensional impacts of internal displacement and understanding how it affects the development trajectories of different countries.



## KEYNOTE SPEECH

---

Maria Luisa Silva, Director of the United Nations Development Programme's Office in Geneva, introduced the conference by reflecting on the complex humanitarian, political and development challenges posed by displacement. Leaving no one behind is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Although the Global Compact on Migration will refer to internal displacement, there is a need to strengthen responses – in particular since climate change threatens to multiply the incidence and intensity of disasters, increasing internal displacement. Alongside conflict and natural hazards, lack of political will and unsustainable development can also result in protracted displacement. There is a need to look beyond humanitarian assistance for effective actions. Building on the momentum of the New Way of Working, concerted efforts will be needed to bridge the humanitarian development nexus and support progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

# MULTI-DIMENSIONAL IMPACTS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT



Internal displacement's negative consequences in terms of people's wellbeing and human rights have been highlighted for decades, but its impacts on and relationship with socioeconomic development are not well understood. IDMC dedicated a research programme to this topic in 2017 and presented its first results on October 18. The impacts of internal displacement can be felt across a range of development dimensions, including labour (SDG 8), education (SDG 4), health (SDG 3), and the environment (SDGs 13, 14 and 15).



Christelle Cazabat, Researcher at IDMC, presented the objectives and initial findings of IDMC's research programme on the economic impacts of internal displacement. Internal displacement affects economies in many overlapping and interconnected ways. IDMC has started to measure impacts across seven interlinked dimensions, including health, education, livelihoods, housing, security, social life and the environment. The few quantitative assessments that have been undertaken focus on short-term, direct and tangible costs associated with new displacements, such as the cost of providing shelter, food and emergency healthcare

to IDPs. The longer-term, indirect and intangible costs associated with protracted displacement and everything in between have yet to be estimated. Uncovering the hidden cost of internal displacement will require new tools that will assess all these impacts comprehensively. IDMC and its partner IIASA started using system dynamics models, risk models, multidimensional cost estimates and other methods. Preliminary results show that the economic impact of internal displacement can amount to one to ten per cent of the GDP in countries affected by severe crises.



Priyadarshani Joshi, Research Officer for the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report at UNESCO then proceeded to discuss the specific challenges in education. Research shows that IDPs' educational outcomes are even worse than refugees', in particular for out-of-camp populations. This is often exacerbated by a shortage of teachers in displacement settings. IDP education is also poorly integrated into national education plans, and discussion of internal displacement in the education sector is limited. The 2020 GEM report will focus on inclusion and will push for better integration of IDPs into education systems.

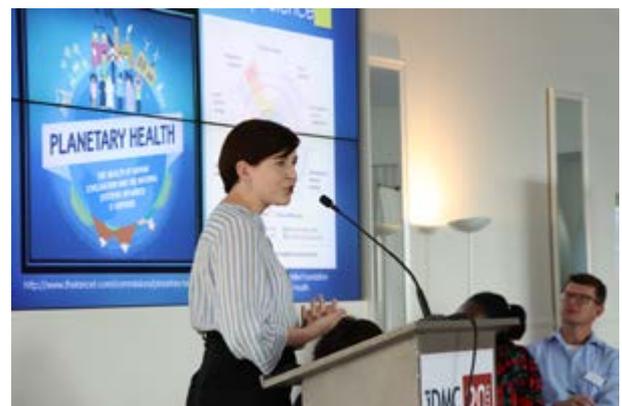


The discussion continued with a presentation of the socio-economic outcomes of displacement in post-socialist countries by Artjoms Ivlevs, Associate Professor of Economics at Bristol Business School, University of the West of England. His work draws upon nationally-representative surveys administered by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank. This research uncovered long-lasting disadvantages of displacement: over a decade later, IDPs are more likely to be unemployed, more likely to be working informally, and more likely to want further education or training. Women IDPs are particularly disadvantaged in terms of employment, and youth who were children during

displacement are especially eager for education. The analysis also found that IDPs are more likely to report dissatisfaction in terms of access to healthcare, and noted that eagerness to invest in education translated into increased complaints in cases of dissatisfaction with schooling.



Soazic Elise Wang Sonne from UC Berkeley/ UNU-MERIT similarly focused on the long-term impacts of displacement, this time on host populations. Her research examined the impact of large-scale, unexpected population shocks on the future children of women who were present in the host community at the time of the crisis. Her analysis focused on refugee return to Burundi in the mid-1990s. Findings reveal that, twenty years later, women who were in their early childhood or early adolescence at the time of the population shock are more likely to have children who suffer from stunting, suggesting that more support for host communities is needed in responses to internal displacement.



The discussion concluded with an introduction to planetary health by Rebecca Parrish, Postgraduate researcher at Brunel University London. Planetary health offers a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to health underpinned by the assumption that the health of a commu-

nity is co-dependent on the health of the environment within which it exists. According to this approach, sustainable development can only be achieved within planetary boundaries, many of which are currently being violated. Highlighting the multi-causality of displacement, the presentation argued that forced displacement is exacerbated by long-term trends resulting in the erosion of livelihoods, with climate change interacting with a number of socioeconomic factors. With displaced populations often moving to informal settlements in hazard prone areas, environmental challenges become both a cause and a consequence of displacement, increasing the risk of secondary displacement and resulting in cascading disadvantages for health. Planetary health calls for a more holistic response: in informal settlements, harvesting rain water or recycling waste water, for example, improves not only water quality

but also populations' mental health, and contributes to reduce vector-borne diseases.

Policies looking to address or prevent internal displacement should consider its linkages with socioeconomic development comprehensively. In order to mitigate the longer-term impacts of internal displacement, education, training and employment opportunities including children, youth and women affected by displacement should receive greater attention. Women suffer from disproportionate impacts, whether they are displaced themselves or in the host community. Planetary health can represent a significant resource to achieve sustainable development and avoid siloed thinking. This will require effective engagement with all appropriate actors, in particular at the local level, and the collection of more data on the multidimensional impacts of internal displacement.

## LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND – PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION FOR DEVELOPMENT

| The SDGs recognise that certain countries, communities and population groups are more vulnerable than others. The same is true for IDPs: older persons, persons with disabilities, girls, women and minorities require tailored solutions.



Veronique Barbelet, Research Fellow in the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute, spoke of three specifically vulnerable groups of IDPs that are often overlooked in crisis response: people

with disabilities, youth and older IDPs. Her presentation was informed by her own research, in addition to that of Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). IDPs with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and have problems accessing humanitarian assistance. HRW found that, days after a massacre in a hospital in the Central African Republic, a blind woman, a child with polio and an older disabled man had been left for dead. Youth are another category for which current needs and future aspirations must be considered. Their views are often not represented in programme design and consequently, responses tend to be out of touch with their realities. They are also more susceptible to joining armed groups or gangs. Older people are also affected by displacement in very particular ways. Displacement impacts their social standing within their communities, which means that traditional community safety nets are no longer available to them. In Ethiopia, drought displacement led to urban migration and older people were left behind. Blanket approaches to programming should be replaced with

more targeted interventions. Some governments are developing targeted policies to protect older people. Better data is needed on the specific needs of these populations to inform tailored responses.



Irina Kuznetsova, Birmingham Fellow at the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences in the University of Birmingham, spoke of the situation of IDPs in Ukraine, half of which are pensioners. In order for pensioners from the non-government controlled eastern provinces of Ukraine to receive their pensions, they had to register as IDPs and cross over into government-controlled areas to collect their money. It was important to de-link pensions to IDP status. After a four-year battle, the government changed this policy. However, the pensions are not sufficient to respond to the needs of IDPs. The lack of adequate and affordable housing for pensioners is of particular concern. This has been a driver of returns to the non-government-controlled areas where insecurity prevails.



Ellie Kemp, Head of Crisis Response at Translators without Borders, highlighted a particular vulnerability: that of linguistic minorities. Minority language speakers lack access to basic services and humanitarian assistance due to language barriers. In north-eastern Nigeria, where over 500 languages exist but only two are used by the humanitarian community to communicate with the population, this is a crucial issue. In addition, humanitarian jargon is not widely understood by the populations or even by local staff. This is problematic during data collection, when enumerators are speaking to people whose mother tongue is not one of the main languages about very particular concepts such as gender or protection, that may not be widely understood or easily translated into local languages. The quality of the data collected is affected by language issues, with repercussions on interventions that are planned using that data. Beneficiaries of humanitarian interventions also suffer from lack of access to information if it is not in their mother tongue. One study from Nigeria showed that 91% of women did not know what services were available to them.



Lack of quality data is a recurring theme: lack of data on the needs of vulnerable populations, lack of comprehensive data on IDPs in non-government-controlled areas and lack of data on languages spoken by IDPs. These data gaps mean that interventions are not targeting these highly vulnerable groups efficiently.

# DATA ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT – POSTER SESSION



| This interactive session provided the opportunity for attendees to exchange with experts on the collection and analysis of internal displacement data and discuss innovations in the field, the role of national statistical offices and humanitarian actors, and links to SDG progress monitoring (SDG 17).

The International Organisation for Migration’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), the tool used to track and monitor displacement and mobility across the world, was presented. Although a primarily humanitarian tool, DTM data can also support long term programming and development goals.

The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) works to advise and support governments and humanitarian actors through a collaborative, nationally-owned process to provide agreed upon, reliable data to facilitate evidence-based policy.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)’s Humanitarian Needs Overviews provide information about IDP vulnerabilities and key figures, to support planning for humanitarian responses in major crises.

REACH, a joint initiative of IMPACT, its sister-organisation ACTED and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), operates in 20 countries. A mapping of three months of displacement in different governorates of Idlib, Syria, was presented at the conference.

OCHA’s humanitarian data exchange (HDX) and centre for humanitarian data is an open platform where data can be found, used and shared. Currently, over 250 organisations share data with HDX, which enables visualisations combining data from different sources.

Aid Data is a research lab equipping policy makers with better evidence to incorporate vulnerable populations, such as children on the move, into the sustainable development agenda. Aid data strives to understand key issues and opportunities to improve data production, data use and data sharing to better inform decision-making.

IDMC presented how global estimates of the number of internal displacements and number of people internally displaced are consolidated. Information from different sources are triangulated to obtain reliable and comparable data. The latest figures are now available almost in real-time on IDMC’s website.



# INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN AZERBAIJAN AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES: A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



Dr Rahman Shahhuseynli, Founding Director of the Office of International Affairs at ADA University in Baku, Azerbaijan, shared his personal story as a refugee turned IDP. Ninety-seven years ago, the Zangazur area of Azerbaijan was administratively 'gifted' to Soviet Armenia. The whole population was ethnically and culturally Azerbaijani and continued to live there until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Dr Shahhuseynli was born there forty years ago in a family of farmers. There were no schools, no hospitals, but there was peace, and he had a happy childhood. For the first ten years of his life, he never met an Armenian.

After fleeing Zangazur, his family sought refuge with relatives in Nagorno-Karabakh. They had to flee again from Armenian troops and moved to the capital where the government had set up a camp. By 1994, guns were silenced and the economy was reviving. The government started investing in education with the revenues from oil and gas, and Dr Shahhuseynli received a scholarship to study abroad. Finally, a reward for all his hard work.

He got his first Master's degree in Turkey, then another Master's and a PhD in Japan.

Eventually, Dr Shahhuseynli decided to come back to his native land and help students to study abroad. But the experience of displacement stays with him: "Being an IDP or a refugee isn't a period of life but a life-sentence, which you carry with you until your death. Up until now there is no single property I can stick to and call home. Materially you can't afford it because you've lost everything twice. And even if in the future I can afford to buy a house, it's never going to be my home, it will only ever be a shelter. For me, for a shelter to be called a home, will be to return to the place where I was born, where I was raised, and where my ancestors and my mum are buried."

# UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND DISPLACEMENT



| Much internal displacement occurs in urban settings around the world, triggering specific challenges for urban planning that local authorities are often not well prepared for. Directly related to SDGs 9, 10 and 11, this session discussed urban displacement and the creation of displacement risk by development investments in cities, a growing research area and the focus of next year's Global Report on Internal Displacement.

Vicente Anzellini, Coordinator of IDMC's Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), introduced the discussion with an overview of the state of knowledge and key research questions on internal displacement in urban areas. Unprecedented urbanisation is shaping displacement patterns from, within, and towards cities. Urban sustainability is a critical enabler for achieving the global development agenda and curbing current displacement trends and future risks. Looking at the relationship between urban sustainability and forced displacement in cities is therefore necessary, and will be the focus of the 2019 GRID.

Ivana Hajžmanová, Monitoring Expert at IDMC, spoke of displacement in Mogadishu, Somalia. Patterns of displacement in Somalia are primarily rural to urban and

inter-urban. Almost 40 per cent of the displaced population in Somalia go to the capital, while most of the others go to other urban centres. Only a few stay in the countryside. Urban IDPs face specific vulnerabilities compared to other urban populations. The outskirts of Mogadishu are the most affected by evictions and 99 per cent of those evicted are IDPs. This year, forced evictions accounted for almost 200,000 new displacements,

which is almost 25 per cent of all new displacements in the country. Housing, land and property issues are key for peacebuilding in the country.

Nooreen Fatima, Project Associate in the Department of Urban Design of the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi, India, discussed the perspective of academia on relocated and displaced people. Academic literature considers relocated inhabitants of informal settlements differently from IDPs. People evicted from their homes are rarely considered to be IDPs. Yet relocating people to peripheral locations, away from services and jobs, is displacement. The presentation included three case studies in Chennai, where people have already been displaced, in Indore, where people live with the threat of displacement and in New Delhi, where there is risk of future displacement.

Urban growth and renewal can be used to justify evictions and further marginalise already marginal populations by pushing them to the periphery of cities. Displacement in such contexts often predicates further displacement as it renders those affected more vulnerable. Urban planning that takes a risk-sensitive approach to displacement can support not just the delivery of basic services in such contexts, but also reduce future levels of urban displacement.

# POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL COHESION



Displacement affects societies in multiple and overlapping ways as discussed in previous sessions, but also in the specific field of political participation (SDG 16). Presenters drew on their knowledge and experience of internal displacement in Uganda, Turkey, Syria, Colombia and Ukraine to unpack the complexity of this phenomenon.

for the Study of International Migration, Georgetown University, introduced his research on displacement as a wartime tactic rather than a by-product of war. Displacement as a wartime strategy can be divided into 'departure or destination'-oriented. Three main types are observed: cleansing (as with ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya population in Myanmar), depopulation (as in Chechnya in 2001) and forced relocation (as in Vietnam in 1963). Human (im)mobility is used by both sides of the conflict to infer people's loyalties. Examples from Uganda and Syria were presented. By triggering displacement, the army and non-state actors force people to send a "costly and easily observable signal of loyalty and affiliation, depending on their decision to leave or stay". Displacement serves as a mechanism to "sort" civilian populations. For example, in Uganda, the army would order people out of the mountains and into IDP camps and assume that anyone remaining in the mountain was a rebel to be shot on sight. The politics of wartime displacement also have implications for post-conflict peace and reconciliation.



Adam Lichtenheld, PhD Candidate at the University of California, Berkeley and Affiliated Scholar at the Institute



Hannah Roberts, Senior Adviser, and Tetyana Durnyeva, Executive Director of the Group of Influence at the International Foundation of Election Systems (IFES) in Ukraine presented their [recent publication](#) on IDPs' electoral participation. IDP participation in elections is perceived as politically sensitive in certain contexts as it could alter outcomes. IFES argues that governments should make a concerted effort to remove barriers to voting for IDPs, as they are citizens of the country and are therefore legally allowed to vote in and stand for elections, and that they should be allowed to vote in their place of origin or their place of displacement with no consequence to their status. Tetyana Durnyeva, an IDP herself, spoke of voting restrictions against IDPs in local elections. IDPs are able to vote for the president and members of parliament but not in local elections in their place of displacement.



Deanna Alexandra Kolberg, PhD candidate at the University of Michigan, introduced her research on the voting pattern of IDPs in Colombia. IDPs can be categorized into three "typologies of departure" that will affect their voting patterns: leaving to seek protection in new areas (protection seekers), leaving anonymously and wishing to remain anonymous by settling in cities (anonymity seekers) and leaving in "clusters" as a whole community (cluster). The way IDPs depart influences their participation rates in elections. Based on the data analysed, protection seekers are more likely to vote after displacement, anonymity seekers are less likely to vote after displacement and cluster IDPs vote just as often before and after displacement.

The impact of internal displacement on participation in society, and in particular political processes such as elections has been consistently underestimated. These new studies show the importance of understanding the longer-term shifts in political demographics associated with large-scale and the discussion highlighted the need to link support to those displaced with peace-building efforts and investments in social cohesion.

## SOLUTIONS IN PRACTICE



Practical solutions to the different development challenges caused by internal displacement have been proposed and tested in various contexts. This closing panel discussed national and local approaches to integrating displacement concerns into policy and planning, implementation and monitoring.

Champa Patel, Head of Asia-Pacific Programme at Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs) analysed the challenges of implementing programmes in Afghanistan, a country that has endured conflict for the past four decades. Returns are currently being promoted, but a return to what, and are durable solutions really achievable without peace? Afghanistan has a dedicated IDP policy, but operationalising it when the government does not fully control all of its territory is difficult. Reaching a political solution means making trade-offs and working with potentially unpalatable actors. The humanitarian community needs to be realistic in terms of what could be achieved in the short and medium terms, with nuanced responses.

Andrea Wegner, MENA Project Management Unit Director at Chemonics International, spoke of her experience implementing development and stabilisation programmes in Iraq and Syria. These programmes were not humanitarian but were overtly political and depended on donor policies. The Trump administra-

tion's budget cuts to development programming has significantly impacted this work. Working in opposition-controlled areas of Syria proved challenging in a number of ways, notably picking the right partners and understanding the politics of who was supported.

Ana Mosneaga, Programme Coordinator for the Japan Platform, presented the example of a technological disaster. The Fukushima disaster tested the Japanese government's response mechanisms. At the peak of the displacement crisis, which was a year after the event, about 165,000 people were displaced. Now, seven years on, about 45,000 people officially remain displaced. The people who left areas that were not under direct government evacuation orders were called "voluntary evacuees". No data on their status exists. Terminology used (evacuees vs. displaced) is highly politicised and the response to the disaster uncovered inequalities at every step of the process.

The discussion revolved around the political economy of internal displacement response and risk reduction. Panellists and participants unpacked the range of interests and priorities at play that can compete with each other during the transition from immediate response to displacement crises to recovery and longer-term planning. In complex political environments, the international community and national governments need to manage own and external expectations, while investing more in building political capital and social coherence.

# CONCLUSION



Discussions throughout the day covered the range of dimensions impacted by internal displacement as a mirror of the Sustainable Development Goals: livelihoods (SDG 1), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), work (SDG 8), inequalities (SDG 10), urban sustainability (SDG 11), environmental sustainability (SDGs 13, 14 and 15), peace and political participation (SDG 16) and progress monitoring (SDG 17).

This variety and the complexity of the phenomenon, with many of these impacts rippling through to other dimensions, demonstrated the need to undertake interdisciplinary research and conduct more comprehensive, multidimensional studies. Initial findings from different presentations point to the need for more tailored solutions to internal displacement and the necessity to eliminate siloed analyses and policies.

Researchers, humanitarian and development organisations must engage in more constructive dialogues with governments affected by internal displacement to provide them with better tools and support integration in national strategies towards sustainable development. Collaboration will be the only way to overcome, after two decades of insufficient efforts, the increasingly complex and ever-growing global crisis of internal displacement.



The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the world's authoritative source of data and analysis on internal displacement. Since our establishment in 1998, as part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), we have offered a rigorous, independent and trusted service to the international community. Our work informs policy and operational decisions that improve the lives of the millions of people living in internal displacement, or at risk of becoming displaced in the future.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
3 rue de Varembé, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland  
+41 22 552 3600 | [info@idmc.ch](mailto:info@idmc.ch)

[www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

 [www.facebook.com/InternalDisplacement](https://www.facebook.com/InternalDisplacement)

 [www.twitter.com/IDMC\\_Geneva](https://www.twitter.com/IDMC_Geneva)