

MIGRATION: THE MISSING LINK

This briefing is derived from an expert panel, convened by Springer Nature and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) as part of their [Science for a Sustainable Future series](#).

Panel session speakers included:

- Mr. Nhial Deng, Refugee and Youth Advocate
- Dr. Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, University College London
- Dr. Magdalena Skipper, *Nature* (Moderator)
- Dr. Yvonne Su, York University
- Dr. Elkin Velásquez Monsalve, UN HABITAT



Migration is a complex phenomenon often portrayed through a crisis lens. However, this brief challenges that narrative. Current migration rates remain stable compared to historical rates, with most movement happening within migrants' regions of origin in the Global South.⁴ Furthermore, contrary to the typical narrative, post-climate disaster movement is shown to lead to economic improvement for displaced households, rather than loss or crisis, challenging the common narrative.

This brief argues for a shift towards a more nuanced, people-centered approach when discussing solutions for migration

A holistic approach is needed to understand and address migration dynamics effectively. By tackling root causes, promoting integration, and engaging diverse stakeholders, policymakers can develop more sustainable and inclusive migration policies that benefit both migrants and host communities.



Considering cities

Cities, in particular, are key to understanding migration patterns and promoting integration. By studying root causes, facilitating migrant-community interaction through infrastructure, and building integration capacity, cities can play a crucial role in reducing friction surrounding migration. Moreover, communities with robust socio-economic inclusion frameworks demonstrate greater integration capacity for newcomers.



⁴Schewel, K., Debray, A. (2024). [Global Trends in South-South Migration](#). In: Crawley, H., Teye, J.K. (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of South-South Migration and Inequality. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Prioritising a people-focused approach

Approaching the topic through lenses of compassion, inclusion, and localization is crucial in reframing the conversation. The voices of migrants and local actors, including community leaders and local authorities, need to be central to decision-making. These direct perspectives are currently overlooked, as the media often only focuses on migration from a governance perspective.



Acting in partnership

Collaboration between governments, civil society, academia, media, and the private sector is essential to changing the narrative and uncovering solutions. And by building on Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals, partnerships with civil society organizations, academia, media, and the private sector have the power to foster innovative solutions. One specific area for collaboration is media representation; changing the way refugees are portrayed in the media can significantly impact public perception.



Targeted interventions are needed to address climate-induced migration.

Leveraging green remittances from diaspora communities can fund climate change adaptation projects, bridging the gap in funding for adaptation efforts. Developing countries face a projected \$400 billion shortfall in climate disaster loss and damage funding, with wealthy nations only pledging a fraction of that amount.⁵ However, it's imperative to ensure that climate adaptation projects do not inadvertently displace vulnerable communities, particularly marginalized groups. For instance, while relocating coastal residents from danger zones for their own safety is necessary, replacing these communities with hotels and businesses is unacceptable. "No build zones" should not become "no dwelling zones" for these vulnerable populations.



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⁵"As climate impacts accelerate, finance gap for adaptation efforts at least 50% bigger than thought," UNEP, 3 November 2023,