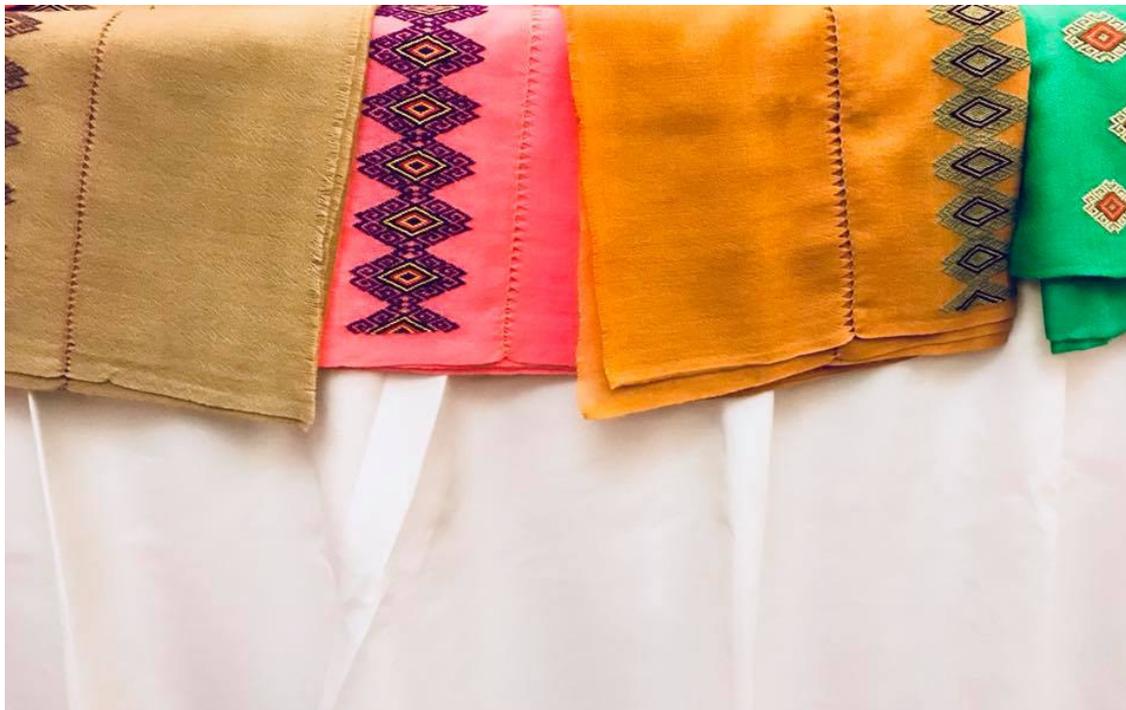


# Decentering the ‘Global’: A South Asian Migration Research Agenda

LIDC Migration Leadership Team  
Global Migration Conversation  
Delhi, 22-23 May 2018



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## Background

### *Delhi and the Global Migration Conversations*

The Delhi event was the first of a series of Global Migration Conversations organised by the London International Development Centre Migration Leadership Team (LIDC-MLT). This team has been formed to develop a shared strategy for supporting migration and displacement related research by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The Delhi Migration Conversation brought together 30 researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, migrant and refugee associations and arts organisations working in the South Asian region to identify priority areas for migration research; pathways to impact that have been, or are likely to be, promising; and platforms for communication and collaboration that could help to bridge research, policy, practice and public engagement in the future.

Participants at the Delhi event represented institutions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka and their activities spanned a range of disciplines and target populations. Research approaches presented at the event were wide-ranging, including, for example, both arts-based and qualitative participatory research with urban settled refugee populations (such as Somali refugees and stateless Chin migrants in Delhi); and quantitative data gathering (for example, various attempts to conduct regional censuses and the monitoring of South-to-South regional migration to the Gulf States and to parts of Africa).

While the findings presented in this report are not exhaustive, they seek to stimulate ongoing discussions among participants, feed into subsequent Global Migration Conversations (including in Nairobi, Brussels and Washington) and inform a broader 'global' migration research strategy to be published by the LIDC-MLT in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

## The South Asian Regional Context

### *Defining 'South Asia' as a Region*

Participants felt that, as with all epistemic labels, the South Asian region is difficult to define for the purpose of migration and displacement research. The following countries fit generally into a South Asian migration agenda as it is commonly understood: India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives (see Figure 1, below). Countries including Afghanistan are often excluded from the South Asian migration agenda and placed alternatively in the Central Asian region. This has important consequences for the funding of programmes, research and policy. As one Afghan researcher commented, 'we can fall through the gaps'. Other participants felt that the South Asian label could serve in some cases to stymie greater collaborations with countries further East. 'We are often very aware of what is happening in migration the in North, but not in the neighbouring region, such as in Malaysia and the Philippines', commented one non-governmental organisation (NGO) worker.

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<sup>1</sup>For more information on the LIDC-MLT team and our methodology, and to join the conversation, please see the project website ([www.soas.ac.uk/lidc-mlt](http://www.soas.ac.uk/lidc-mlt)).

In addition to nation states, a number of divisions split the South Asia region along ethnic and religious lines. Decolonising the migration research agenda in this context means working with populations across borders and paying attention to how they define the boundaries of their own communities. More research could be conducted, for example, on cross-national ethnic groups such as the Pashtun in Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as India's estimated 7% indigenous populations.



Figure 1: A typical model for defining the South Asian region in migration research

### *The Politics of Research Funding and Representation in South Asia*

Power imbalances exist at the domestic and regional level in migration related academia, policy and practice. Delhi (and to a lesser extent, Calcutta) and India more broadly were identified as the nuclei of migration policy and research. These cities have important research capacities and are regularly represented in global policy forums. Meanwhile, participants from Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, among other countries, lamented a lack of institutional capacity and feared that the research agenda was more imposed from the regional centre to the periphery.

Without a formal and democratic institutional regional structure (as, for example, with the European Union in the European region) the borders of the South Asian region are porous and particularly vulnerable to be influenced by politics. This includes, as discussed below, the political and economically neoliberal priorities of funding states and institutions both within the region and further afield. These top-down funding biases shape the thematic and geographic priorities of which migration research, policies and programmes are funded. In a vicious circle, these funding priorities have an ongoing knock-on effect on the conceptualisation of 'the region'.

Overall, participants agreed that regional labels were useful in identifying global power imbalances as well as in speaking to regional cross-border issues, for example commonalities experienced in disaster migration across regions, or the importance of developing regional responses to migration and displacement related to climate change. There is a need for regional definitions and conventions on refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), stateless persons and labour migrants, especially in the context of increasingly mixed migration flows. Better understanding mixed migration flows was identified as a global policy priority.

A regional approach has been successfully applied to impactful migration research in the past, for example, to understand the gender-specific experiences of displaced women working in agriculture. Because of language barriers and poor knowledge transfer, however, much of this research (which is grass-roots led) has not been accessible to wider scholarship (see below section on dissemination challenges).

### *South Asian Migration Research: The Current State of Play*

Different approaches to defining the South Asian region were reflected across academic disciplines, making certain types of comparative work especially difficult. Comparative work at the South Asian level – again unlike in Europe and Africa – is also negatively impacted by a relative lack of accepted common guidelines or protection standards – for IDPs, domestic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees (see above). There are guidelines and protection standards available, but the problem is that not all countries have accepted and implemented them.

Participants disagreed about the regional relevance of migration policy guidelines and standards that are available at the global level. Some professionals such as lawyers considering them more useful than others. Certain social scientists saw them as smokescreens for more complex dynamics that exist at regional and national levels.

Several countries in South Asia, including India, also lack a national protection framework for refugees or for migrant workers. This produces gross differences in the treatment of different populations of migrants in addition to fostering more general differences in the reception conditions and legal statuses available across national and city-level districts. Legal scholarship and well-resourced and evidence-based strategic litigation is fundamental to the pursuit of harmonising national and regional standards. At the Delhi Conversation, participants from India showcased how they had combined arts-based research with legal advocacy to advance the rights of refugees at the city level. More resources could be put into developing such tools both at the national and regional level.

### *Challenges to Conducting Migration Research Across the South Asian Region*

It was repeatedly stressed that a key challenge for the South Asian migration and displacement research agenda was that of unlocking the capacity of South Asian research institutions rather than constantly seeking to ‘build capacity’ from scratch. Participants also pointed to a paucity of funding for studies at the regional level – such as on the migration corridors between India and Bangladesh and India and Nepal.

Because of ongoing conflicts and instability and fears of corruption, countries such as Afghanistan and Sri Lanka struggle to acquire the requisite funding for high quality research. In a kind of ‘shock doctrine’ dynamic, following displacement caused by disasters, multiple participants expressed concern that often the first on-hand to conduct research are international research consultancies or

‘think tanks’ which lack the requisite expertise and on-the-ground knowledge. Funders need to be prepared for an element of risk in financing research in conflict zones and be willing to properly resource staff – including through providing research ethics and methodological training (see below) – rather than relying on second-rate, poor quality research which is often outsourced away from the region.

## Locating South Asia in the Global Migration Research Agenda

### *Interrogating the ‘Global’ as a Concept*

A key challenge in migration and displacement research generally, participants stressed, is that migration as a phenomenon is by its nature dynamic and yet scholars and practitioners try to capture it in a static frame. Within this context, the usefulness of the idea of a ‘global’ migration agenda must be questioned.

It was agreed that migration was global in the sense that it was a fact of human life and history. Moreover, to tackle global challenges such as climate change and in establishing the rights of refugees and IDPs, the idea of a global migration research agenda was viewed as politically strategic.

However, in Migration Studies as an academic discipline, it was felt that the ‘global’ should be understood not as a neutral geographical descriptor but as a power configuration that must be challenged. Our role as scholars, one participant from India stressed, is to challenge the status quo; to ‘disrupt’.

An alternative way of defining a region in migration research and practice, other than as a geographical descriptor, is to consider the region as a space of intersecting global supply chains of labour and resources. Different colonial and labour histories also make regions. ‘The political question’, commented one academic, ‘is what is the intellectual labour of making a “region”?’ We need to think about supply chains of allegiance, for example the place of China in South Asian analysis. ‘Europe is pushing against the fact that the Middle East wants to be part of Europe’, explained another scholar, drawing on a global parallel, ‘but the Middle East used to be Eurasia. This is written into the history of silk routes. Neoliberal governance policies cannot erase regional history.’ In other words – the constructions of ‘regions’ within the ‘global’ is inherently political and must be interrogated across geographic and academic disciplines.

### *A Multi-Scalar Approach*

For anybody trying to capture migration at the regional level in a way that does justice to the intersection of power and resources a global level, one academic from the political sciences observed, ‘scale is everything’. Yet at the same time the question of scale is often taken for granted in policy circles.

Participants discussed how the terminology of migration as a ‘global’ phenomenon is becoming more common in policy circles and among international NGOs. This is typified by the formulation of the first Global Compact on Migration and the establishment of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as the UN’s International Migration Agency. However, the question was raised about to what extent this Compact and global strategies to manage migration and counter forced displacement are regionally negotiated in practice rather than simply being imposed from above by the powers which conglomerate in the Global North? To what extent do they meet the multi-scalar imperative for migration governance and research?

The idea of a ‘global’ migration agenda, it was observed, frequently, serves to iron out important multi-scalar creases in power and resources across regions. In this context, it is difficult to form a genuinely collaborative agenda in which resources of knowledge creation are shared and evenly distributed. ‘Migration and Forced Migration Studies don’t yet have the necessary conceptual tools to be multi-scalar’, observed one scholar, ‘when you think of a global idea, you erase the important principle of simultaneity.’ A postcolonial, historical lens is key to developing new conceptual tools which can do justice to the principle of simultaneity without reducing the complexity of global and regional migration flows to a Western-centric, monolithic idea.

*‘It is so unusual even to have a conversation like this here [in the region] – why is it always us going out of our way to participate in so-called “global” conversations which seem to always happen “over there”?’*

*– Afghan scholar*

### *A Postcolonial, Historical Lens*

The post-colonial perspective that is taken as a starting point in much autochthonous South Asian scholarship on migration was felt by participants to often be lacking in the work of many of their Western peers. By way of example, one attendee pointed to the huge swathe of online material accumulated over 25 years by the Calcutta Research Group. The material is in English, but who, he asked, in the Global North is using it? ‘We need to help to distribute the capacity that is there in the Global South to the Global North as part of a process of *unlearning* as well as *learning*’, stressed one academic.

While it was stressed that each region has its own challenges and opportunities, several participants expressed the view that more could be done to learn from one another – both in terms of South-to-South exchanges and South-to-North. Much European scholarship, it was felt, tends to reinvent the wheel when responses to many contemporary migration and displacement dynamics occurring in the region could be informed by South Asia’s long history of scholarship on displacement and its medium term as well as historic effects. This includes in relation to topics such as smuggling and how to best integrate undocumented populations and refugees. 80% of refugees, one participant pointed out, live in the Global South. ‘In this context’, they continued, ‘we have much to teach the North...Syria is now a refugee producing country but it has a long history of welcoming refugees that we can also learn from’. There may be important historic parallels domestically and regionally, commented another participant, between the treatment of Partition refugees and, for example, the Tibetan refugees, or stateless Chin minority, many of whom have fled from Burma to India, of today.

*‘International migration research should aim, wherever possible, to ‘decentre the locus of knowledge production towards the margins’.*

*– Indian scholar*

Refugee and migrant voices should be central to this debate and it was stressed that the more abstract and global the agenda became, the less this was the case. This was cited as another reason for fostering dialogue at the regional level on an ongoing basis (see below section on Moving Forwards).

Attempts to decolonise global migration research networks such as IASFM (International Association for the Study of Forced Migration) were said to have shown some success in the past through a lot of hard work that was unsustainable. Meanwhile, other networks such as IMISCOE (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion) were perceived to be more exclusive and orientated towards Europe and America. Most participants agreed that the Global North still overwhelmingly dominates knowledge production, dissemination and access to migrant and refugee populations for the purposes of research and humanitarianism. There was a strong sense that the South Asian region and the Global South more broadly are too often side-lined.

One practical consideration is the dominance of English scholarship and academic journals hosted in European and American institutions. Because of the ubiquity of English spoken in academic institutions in India, this was less of a challenge for Indian scholars compared to those in other South Asian countries represented at the Conversation.

## Regional Migration Challenges in South Asia

Migration occurs into, out of and within the South Asian region, as part of individual and collective migration strategies and for short, medium and long term purposes. As mentioned above, while the international community has created a range of bureaucratic labels and rights frameworks for migrants and displaced persons, how these are applied varies at the regional and domestic level. The South Asian region is traversed by multiple fault lines of forced displacement, in addition to being host to both long-established and new channels for economic, family and labour migration.

*‘The neoliberal way of governing migration increasingly finds ways to bypass the 1951 Refugee Convention more and more effectively...New mixed migration frameworks mean we have to dismantle our knowledge framework in a big way and this includes dismantling the old governance framework, that is, old ideas of humanitarianism and neoliberal ways of governing the world. The 1951 Refugee Convention is of little help either to the Rohingya in South Asia or the mixed-flow Mediterranean refugees.’*

– Indian academic

### The Refugee Question

South Asia is host to millions of refugees forcibly displaced through conflict. These include, for example, stateless Rohingya populations displaced inside and outside of Bangladesh, and Afghan refugees who have settled in neighbouring states of Pakistan and Iran. They also include Tamil refugees in India, Tibetan refugees and South Bhutanese in Nepal, not to mention the historic ‘Partition refugees’ (people displaced by the partition of India and Pakistan who it was felt are often overlooked or strategically erased from forced displacement research).

## *Economic Migration*

At the economic level, the South Asian region is subject to a range of internal seasonal and migration patterns. These include internal rural to urban migration and regional and international migration.

As well as migration towards the Global North, there is a growing and well established pattern of South-to-South migration from South Asian countries (including Sri Lanka, Nepal and India) towards the Gulf States and to certain countries in Africa. This was identified by participants as an important gap in current research. South-to-North migrations receive more attention than South-to-South migrations.

The specificity of certain migration patterns within certain localities, states or regions inside individual countries is also notable. One example given is the high level of emigration out of the Indian southern state of Kerala to the Gulf States: 'there are more flights per day out of Kerala to the Gulf states than to the rest of India', explained an Indian demographer, 'migration and diasporas shape our local social reality in a profound way'.

## *IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)*

To date, migration research in South Asia has paid scant attention to the experience of internally displaced persons (IDPs), leaving this group especially vulnerable in terms of national and regional protection frameworks compared, for example, to refugees or international labour migrants. As one participant commented, while in Washington policymakers are discussing IDPs, in India the term is still barely in existence. In other words – again, the global policy agenda has not translated into to regional and local reality. How, another participant asked, can this general term cater to the specific needs of those affected by development-induced displacement and disaster-induced displacement when the two phenomena have different causal and experiential impacts?

## *Governance and the Disaster, Development and Displacement Nexus*

Migration in the South Asian region is commonly linked in policy discourses to disaster (for example, flooding in Bangladesh, the tsunami in Sri Lanka and earthquake in Nepal), and developmental responses at the international as well as at the regional level.

Economic investments and new infrastructure projects funded by domestic governments and established and emergent foreign actors (America and – increasingly – China in addition to transnational corporations) and the resulting impacts on the agricultural landscape and climate change represent a range of challenges to which solutions must be tailored to local, regional and global contexts.

One academic participant pointed out that with reference to the term 'climate refugees', global bureaucratic labels are wielded in the domestic and localised context not as sources of rights or as a way of helping affected populations, but rather as tools of neoliberal governance that can be dangerously and simplistically applied to justify people's primary or even secondary displacement. This is the case, for example, with the construction of certain infrastructure projects such as dams which are built without the consent of local peoples in the name of 'renewable energy' and 'combatting climate change'. Such projects may be dressed up as mitigating climate change and feeding into international development agendas when, in reality, they are disrupting existing agricultural populations and creating unknown havoc with ecosystems. 'We need to constantly keep

an ear to local knowledge, to the ground', stressed the participant.

'There are', it was stressed by one academic, 'parallels to be drawn across regions in terms of forced displacement and development governance'. He spoke of his positive experiences of collaborating on this topic with universities in the UK through the AHRC and ESRC. 'It is easier to do research working in collaboration with third parties on certain types of displacement', this person commented, 'since we cannot do research via national institutions.' Universities, in some countries, are overly governed by the state which can in cases restrict access and even censor research through subtle threats of institutional damage or disruption to academic departments or think tanks. This is especially difficult when the state itself is behind the urban infrastructure projects that are under scrutiny.

## Current Research Opportunities and Challenges

### *The Limits of Statistical Data*

Statistical data on immigration, emigration and displacement is scant in certain South Asian countries and more or less reliable depending on the region. In the Indian state of Kerala, for example, a population census had been so successful that it is being rolled out across India. But lack of funding and capacity is still an issue. Meanwhile in Afghanistan, the deteriorating security situation is just one factor that makes the gathering of such quantitative data near impossible.

Several participants also lamented the lack of available data on migration at the local administrative level. In this context, there is particular interest in increasing academics' access to new private sources of data. These include certain biometric databases and consumer data from the private sector, such as - in the context of migration - banks and airlines. As one participant commented, 'we know how many cars our particular area has exported, but not how many people!' How can we link public and private sources of data to think about data in its plurality of forms? And in this 'demographic knowledge deficit', how can we capture the experiences not just of those who are leaving but also those who are returning, such as the thousands of returned Sri Lankan refugees?

In India, collaborations along these lines between private bodies and research institutions are underway with big corporations such as Tata and some of the bigger banks. However, the key question remains how to get the 'buy in' from the local administrations. 'We have to show it is in their interest to collect the data in the first place', explained one demographer. There are obviously important ethical issues that arise with the sharing and even selling of both governmental and consumer data (see below section on Ethics and Politics).

Meanwhile, migration and displacement is a political issue – sources of data and their interpretation are commonly contested across the region. Both the demographic reality and the lived experiences of the displaced Rohingya populations in different southern Asian countries is a case in point which was raised several times during the Conversation.

### *The Arts*

In contrast to the relative paucity of statistical data on migration compared to other regions, South Asia has an important history and popular memory and culture of migration which has been well documented through the arts. Moreover, the arts, through their emphasis on migratory cultures within India have been successful in some cases in moving beyond the idea of migration as a 'problem'. A key source of untapped potential repeatedly raised in this context was, what can a

'global' migration research agenda learn from history of hospitality and welcome in the South Asian region as well as from its history of conflicts and partitions?

Participants discussed several initiatives which have sought to capture local and regional oral cultures of migration, including, for example, the way migration is spoken about in traditional Pashtun songs in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the way oral histories of Partition are being shared and renegotiated across borders at a new Partition Museum in Amritsar. Physical spaces of documentation and relic acquisition such as museums and research archives continue to play an important role in documenting colonial legacies but struggle to attract funding (see below section on Moving Forwards). There was a clear view expressed that during periods of conflict, care must be given to preserve objects and relics for future research.

*'We need to pause sometimes to preserve things, to make art. Even though we are in the process of history, the process of documentation must continue'.  
– Museum Curator*

Storytelling through visual and other means is also being employed by several South Asian scholars and artists to map the impacts of shifting borders along ethnic and religious lines which are shaped by ongoing conflicts. These include, for example, the experiences of individuals in refugee camps in Jammu and Kashmir, and the region of Assam in India; and the persecution of the Hazara minority in Afghanistan and of the Rohingya across the region. There are numerous other areas where storytelling is being used to bridge political and demographically sensitive topics and issues in migration and displacement.

As well as being a source of data, arts are also used as a means of disseminating new knowledge and research in the region. One participant from India explained how they were using comics as a way of communicating practical knowledge to new migrant communities including, for example, how to access a bank, healthcare services or schools. The comics have a dual purpose as a kind of handbook and a vehicle for education and storytelling used in schools to sensitise youth against racism and prevent processes of othering. Such arts-based, grass-roots initiatives are important since, as one scholar remarked, as it stands 'this anonymous figure called the migrant has very little agency in terms of institutionally representing herself in the current framework of governance...'.

In a context dominated by the Western imaginary of migration, images and art from South Asia have the power to disrupt established narratives and destabilise norms in a way that words cannot. It is therefore important, participants agreed, that research outputs travel across borders. 'People think that the issue of undocumented populations is simply an issue in Europe and America', commented one NGO worker, 'but there are parallels in the coping strategies of undocumented people in urban Delhi, for example.'

Cultural traditions, once mapped, can also be channelled into livelihood opportunities, as was demonstrated through an enterprise in Delhi built around creating and promoting Afghan fashion in exile.

## Access

One barrier to migration research in India in particular is limited civil society funding for refugee and migrant support work. The politics of nationalism have made work on migration and refugee issues – as in Europe – a politically sensitive issue. This means most initiatives are restricted to the capital and there is huge regional disparity in terms of resourcing and impact. This has implications for access to migrant and refugee populations for both researchers and civil society - for example, in the politically sensitive region of Jammu. In many countries, it is also proving harder and harder for legal and other groups to access populations of Rohingya.

## Thematic Research Priorities in the South Asian Region

Decentering the global migration agenda, participants in Delhi agreed, requires identifying and addressing a range of new thematic priorities for the South Asian region. These include involving affected populations with a greater focus on youth, older people, gender and urban and rural communities of origin. They also include investing money in thematic and geographical areas that have long been ignored including historic and ongoing sites of Partition. Efforts should include collecting statistical data on population movements as well as analysing theoretically the complex politics of such a process; they include looking at the experiences of those who leave as well as those who stay, a challenge that requires a lot more resources for academic institutions in these regions of origin. Some of the thematic priorities identified in the Conversation are discussed below.

### *South-to-South Migration*

As discussed above, participants agreed that the connection between local, regional and international migration needs to be explored further. In particular, there is a need for more internal, inter-regional studies of migration in South Asia including studies of South-to-South migration corridors in the past and present.

Moreover, research should focus more on the plurality and multi-scalar elements of migration in the region. Funders in the Global North need to be less risk averse in supporting research in the Global South. The South Asian region does not lack capacity and, as the Conversation demonstrated, is rich in academic resources (see above). What is needed is the chance to be able to unlock these resources effectively and sustainably. In practice, this is likely to look different in different contexts. In Kabul, this may mean investing more in the safety and training of native field researchers. In Sri Lanka, it may mean incentivising scholars to stay in national universities and teach through enhanced access to prestigious grants which can be hosted in the region.

### *Development and Displacement*

The question of how governance of disasters interacts with development induced displacement was identified as an important gap in current research. This is partly because the topic is politically contentious, difficult to research and dominated by certain academic disciplines. Post-disaster or post-conflict reconstruction are often seen more as part of the International Development agenda rather than being critically interrogated with tools developed in the sister disciplines of Social Policy or Politics.

Participants concurred that more resources are needed to fund research that is critical of this development agenda and to explore in detail the lived experiences of affected communities, including minorities, women and youth (see below). Research also needs to focus on conflict-induced and disaster-induced displacement in the short, medium and long-term. For example, there

has been little research attention given to the conflict-displaced people in Jammu and Kashmir. Common lessons could be learnt through comparative work across the region whilst also mapping the important differences between sub-groups of IDPs (conflict, disaster and development induced) which are often ignored by the global agenda. Currently, funding for this work is scant. Meanwhile, political obstacles to such collaboration include, for example, access and visa issues for scholars working between India and Pakistan.

### *Demography and Mapping Internal, Regional and International Labour Migration*

A key issue discussed at the Delhi Conversation concerned how migrant producing countries in South Asia are responding to global demographic shifts. Changing skills are required to prepare migrants for emigration in the South Asian context. Opportunities abroad remain in fields such as healthcare because of aging populations; meanwhile there is increasing demand for technological skillsets.

The changing needs of global capitalism also create a population of ageing returned migrant workers which has consequences for public services in the sending country. One in nine men in Kerala, for example, will spend time as a migrant worker. And while there are economic and social remittances stemming from migration, there are also requirements for care and support with reintegration. In this context, regional mapping of occupational skill training and skills sets and how these fit into global labour trends could be useful. ‘India in particular’, said one academic, ‘is so big we have to think about using surplus labour through migration – we have to educate people for a global economy. Some Indians will have to leave and find opportunities elsewhere and we need to train them for this.’ Meanwhile the education market in India, observed one participant, is failing to respond to emerging needs, such as teaching Arabic or Mandarin instead of English language skills required for work in the Gulf States or China.

Scholars are largely in agreement that South Asia will continue to be an important supplier of migration in the foreseeable future, however more research is needed to anticipate and prepare for these future trends. There is a perception, for example, that the spread of populism and right wing nationalistic politics and visa regimes in the Global North are having an impact on the mobility of elites, for example. Collaborations with the private sector could be key to sustainable migration which upholds the dignity of migrant workers while also providing new funding channels for research in developing states. It is important, however, to exercise caution in academic-private sector partnerships, stressed several participants: regional protection frameworks and law also have an ongoing role to play in, for example, protecting the rights of female migrant domestic workers both internally and externally. ‘Our role as academics who are opposed to racism and colonialism’, one Indian academic suggested, is to ‘challenge the neoliberal agenda not facilitate it’.

A research gap was also identified at the micro level in relation to migrant labour camps surrounding new development projects. It is common in cities across the South Asian region for informal migrant camps to grow up around new infrastructure projects such as malls. Here migration is linked to broader issues such as the provision of public health, urban planning and sanitation: ‘if the city doesn’t know you exist, how will it know to offer services like toilets to you?’, commented one participant. Several participants agreed that maps, or other innovative visual research methods, are crucial in such claims-making in the cityscape: ‘maps help in the creation of identity’.

### *Technology, Participation and Creative Research Methods*

It was stressed that much participatory and action research has emerged in the South Asian context and that more could be done to disseminate this learning to institutions across other Southern regions and in the Global North. Some best practice emerging in this area includes the development

of digital participatory methods and the use of mobile phone apps. In the digital age, we need to question how people interact with research as participants and as consumers and across the urban and rural divide. As one Indian participant commented ‘the connection between the rural and the urban and the centre and the periphery is primarily digital’. Increasingly, institutions in the Global North are drawing on participatory methods in research. However, there is extensive expertise of these methods in the South and more should be done to foster South-to-North as well as South-to-South collaborations, such as between South Asian institutions and those in Africa or Latin America.

New technologies are constantly providing new ways to overcome the constraints that geographic borders pose to certain research practice and thinking. These foster networking and collaboration. One example of this is the use of satellite images across countries to map disaster-induced displacement caused by flooding. In Afghanistan, satellite imagery maps have been used as an advocacy tool combined with qualitative research on the ground to demonstrate the damaging effects of the poppy trade and desertification on livelihoods and displacement; ‘images can speak to policy makers in a special way’, commented one Afghan researcher.

### *Public Attitudes to Migration*

More research is needed in the South Asian region on perceptions of migrations in media and culture; on the construction and contestation of the binary of ‘refugee’ versus ‘economic migrant’; and on traditions of welcoming the migrant in Southern political (and religious) theory.

A relatively new but important strand of migration research in this regard concerns storytelling and public attitudes – this is one example of a topic which could speak to academic disciplines across borders. Scholars need to embrace a range of formats to be able to present their work to different audiences. Inter-disciplinary partnerships and partners across NGOs, arts organisations and academia are key to this and an area where in many respects South Asian scholars have long been leading the way. Other regions can learn from this more organic synergy between the humanities and social sciences.

Meeting the needs of displaced populations is linked to their visibility. This can be ethically and methodologically problematic in migration research for stigmatised populations who prefer to remain undocumented and invisible (see below). One Indian academic stressed the need for an ethical and participatory approach to research that uses mapping technology to articulate and make demands related to the needs of vulnerable communities – such as migrants on the cities peripheries or in ‘slums’, while also maintaining their anonymity. At the city level, there is some promising practice in this area in terms of providing pragmatic support to new populations while also engaging host populations. One example given was of a participatory safety audit in New Delhi related to public health.

‘We need to also think about how communities are shaped demographically and culturally by migration’, stressed one civil society urban participant, referencing the potential usefulness of the ‘borrowed’ concept of ‘superdiversity’.

### *Race and ‘Othering’*

Several participants commented that while a ‘hostile environment’ is extended towards certain sub-groups of migrants in the South Asian region, questions of race and othering and community integration are often ignored in scholarship compared to in the West where such topics are more ubiquitous. Various participants also stressed the important normative and theoretical contributions

of South Asian scholarship to debates on hospitality and othering; many of these are rooted in regional philosophical traditions that the West could learn from: ‘Often changing minds and fostering inclusion at the local level is about uncovering those rich (shared) histories which are culturally specific’, an arts-based practitioner explained.

Race in particular has a particular place or ‘habitus’ in the South Asian context, one participant opined, because of the fault lines of class and religion – ‘race is not just about skin colour but about entitlements’. How, asked an Afghan participant, can we understand the situation of Afghan refugees in Iran or Pakistan through the lens of ‘race’ which has largely derived from the colonial ‘North’?

Examples of successful collaborative research in this area showcased during the Conversation included evidence-based strategic litigation to challenge mass expulsions against the Rohingya in India and efforts to promote tolerance of black migrants in urban areas of India through digital archives and storytelling. The point was raised that the securitisation of the Rohingya refugee issue in the South Asia region has some parallels with securitisation dynamics in the Global North, such as the way in which Muslim refugees have been denied protection in the United States.

Meanwhile, research on the experiences of black African migrant populations living in South Asia is scarce and concentrated in cities. The South Asian research agenda is yet to map, for example, the experiences of Ugandan, Nigerian or Cameroonian populations and how these experiences are shaped by particular racialized regional and historic configurations which differ from other regions with different histories of migration and forced displacement.

### *Minorities, Gender and Generation*

There are also important gender dimensions to the experiences of domestic and international migrants in India and other countries which are failing to receive sufficient scholarly attention. ‘There may be common learnings in terms of protecting domestic maids, for example’, commented one participant, ‘since their vulnerability stems from a common source which is their migration’. In many south Asian contexts, identity is place-based, so when you migrate there is a sense that you lose your identity. This leads to cultural displacement and challenges of reintegration that are influenced among other factors by age, gender and whether the individual is able-bodied.

A Delhi-based legal organisation highlighted the importance of seeing individuals beyond the refugee or economic migrant label, for example, securing rights on the bases of their position as survivors of gender based violence or as workers who should enjoy labour rights. This approach requires bottom up knowledge and experience and collaboration between legal practitioners, academics and civil society. Service-orientated learning was highlighted as a positive way of building capacity of civil society organisations and making sure that they were also beneficiaries of academic collaborations. Because of a general lack of funding for national civil society groups in the South Asian context, academic collaborators can be attractive partners.

One example of good practice given was a collaboration between a legal organisation in New Delhi, the ERSC and the University of York. The research was important in revealing significant gaps in how different displaced populations are treated in the same urban context – such as Sri Lankans, Afghans and Rohingya. ‘These differences are hard to unpick’, explained one lawyer, ‘and academia is yet to collect and collate this knowledge’.

### *Psycho-Social Impact on Communities of Origin and Return Migration*

The psycho-social as well as economic condition of those who stay – the communities left behind when others migrate, such as the wives of Nepali workers going to work in the Gulf – was highlighted as a further important gap in current research in which the focus is primarily on remittances and quantitative measures of GDP and household income.

More micro studies are needed to show what supports integration and reintegration into communities. Migration, it seems, can generate both esteem and, in other contexts, stigma. Stigma was said to be particularly experienced by women and young male deportees. Decentering the global migration agenda means starting with voices such as these which are most commonly marginalised and better understanding why people migrate or return or decide not to return.

Several participants spoke of the need to explore in more depth the ‘social costs’ of migration and the centrality of questions of dignity. Also of import were ideas of duty and religion: the moral, ethical and psycho-social aspects of migration and transnational family making and diasporas. It was felt that the so-called ‘financialisation’ of the diaspora by the policy community divorces them from their social reality. One academic explained that a research participant had explained that their primary means of staying in touch with their family of origin was through the ATM (i.e. through sending of remittances). Indeed, a key question for participants concerned how migration links to power – both at the micro level (for example how migration changes the power relations within a family) and also in terms of social mobility and demography.

### *Mental Health*

The question of mental health, several participants remarked, is also largely missing in the South Asian migration research agenda compared to other regions. Yet health issues are routinely being documented across populations. Arts-based projects from the Partition Museum show evidence, for example, of intergenerational transmission of trauma that has parallels with research findings from Jewish and Palestinian refugees, commented one participant.

### *Conceptualising the Sea in Migration Research*

There was an identified gap in how to conceptualise the sea in migration research both at the regional level and in terms of comparative global migration research (for example in relation to topics such as smuggling and humanitarian rescue). One example of potential for comparative learning in historic context given concerned analysing sea migration in the Mediterranean alongside that in the Bay of Bengal. Unsurprisingly, because of the dominance of Western scholarship, more attention is also accorded to the former and comparative work in relation to sea migration or global smuggling is rarely considered

*'One old lady in a house in Kerala named her three dogs after her sons. She cannot see Antony, he's in Toronto, so she names the dogs after family members abroad - and two cats named after daughters who are abroad. imagine the mental health of these people... We are creating a set of things for people who never move people affected by those who move'.  
- Indian academic.*

## Moving Forwards: New Forms of Funding, Collaboration and Partnership

The previous sections of this report have provided the context for and started to map research opportunities and gaps identified in the South Asian region. This section addresses the practical question of how to move the migration research agenda forwards in this environment.

### *Sharing Best Practice from South-to-North to Decolonise Research*

South Asia has a rich history of migration research across the arts and social sciences and more could be done to share this wealth of knowledge and experience with other regions. Some practical ways forward identified in this report include the following: more investment in archiving and access to data/data sharing across regions (see also below); and more egalitarian and more-long term and better resources collaboration between institutions (both among institutions in the Global South and in relation to those in the Global North).

Particular strengths of migration research in the South Asian research context that could be disseminated among the global academic community include: the development of sophisticated postcolonial perspectives, historical knowledge and experience, new theories of forced versus voluntary displacement, participatory methods and action learning; building successful and sustainable partnerships in response to the needs of affected communities; the building or teaching and research networks with scholars in the region and – to a lesser extent – with scholars in Africa and Latin America; and rapid response research in the context of disasters.

More resources should also be made available to assist in the translation of work from regional languages into English to help it reach an international audience and foster more comparative work and collaborations.

### *New Methodologies and Ethics*

More training is needed in certain parts of South Asia on innovative methods, especially quantitative methodologies as well as ethical research in the war-torn context of Afghanistan.

Is there a value, one participant also suggested, in adopting common ethical standards for migration research in the region and/or in specific contexts such as in disaster and conflict zones? Often the approach used on the ground is, in reality, one that is ad hoc; ‘methods of convenience’ imposed by limited resources. There is a need in certain contexts for more guidance and uniformity on how methods are used. Who would create and implement such guidelines? How can we theorise migration and mobility as a methodology as well as a modality and way of being in the world?

### *Knowledge Sharing Across the Region*

More funding is also an urgent pre-requisite for high quality *interregional* work. There is a need to support research in source and destination countries including multi-sited research and involving teams from different academic disciplines. Several examples were given during the Conversation of multi-sited ethnographies that had achieved such aims with rigorous data collection and analysis across sites and teams. Some of the most innovative research is coming out of multi-sited research and in unexpected disciplines which carry a broader impact. In the field of Linguistics, for example, this includes work in relation to new migrant language pidgins and creoles.

With more resources and attention, migration scholarship in South Asia will gain the recognition and esteem it deserves and come to play a more pivotal role in shaping the global research agenda. This said, there is also a need to break the nationalistic bias of some South Asian research networks and institutions and ensure parity in how research institutions from across the region are involved. To enable this to happen, there is a need for more interregional dialogue and new networking opportunities. Such an approach would serve the development of a more representative global migration picture whilst also ensuring the ongoing decolonisation of knowledge production.

It was recognised that good collaborative research projects are built on strong networks but that these networks can often be nepotistic. While avoiding nepotism, the importance of friendships for durable working relationships was also nevertheless stressed as important. There are no official guidelines for collaboration. More opportunities for networking should be available. Best practice in this regard concerned the forthcoming November Calcutta forum. It was stressed that efforts are nevertheless still ongoing to decolonise these international networks, as mentioned above.

A South Asian Migration Research Network could help to foster greater data sharing and collaboration to work towards such policy protection goals in the region.

*‘There are huge limitations linked to knowledge sharing between the Global North and South. Journals are the cornerstone of the critique of knowledge but there is a paywall between the Global North and South. Colleagues are always asking friends to download resources for them. There are good Southern journals but they have a low citation index and often scholars in the Global North do not see them – this restricts the cross-fertilization of ideas.’*

*– British academic based in India.*

### *Archiving and Data Sharing*

Several participants stressed the ongoing importance of history in migration research and, in this context, of the need to invest in proper archiving and access to past materials. One example given was a new research institute in Kabul which is collecting a new body of materials on displacement among a range of other issues. Meanwhile, in Amritsar, India, the first ever Partition Museum is concentrating not just on collecting data but thinking about innovative ways to ‘preserve and present this data so that it becomes more meaningful’. The aim, explained the curator, is to create a ‘people’s museum – a living archive’.

There are large reserves of online and offline data in poorly resourced museums and research institutes from Kabul to Kandi in the South Asian region which are left untouched because nobody is funding the work of archiving it and of committing it to research, participants explained. The Calcutta Research Group receives scant international funding, despite being recognised by groups such as the British Academy for its research excellence.

Meanwhile, scholars are leaning into new technologies and seeking to upload their resources online for future use and safeguarding. Such work is time consuming and expensive but it is relatively easy to do from the region.

### *Bridging the Arts and Social Sciences*

In the words of one participant, moving forwards, international migration research should aim, wherever possible, to ‘decentre the locus of knowledge production towards the margins’. This includes shifting the dominant focus of migration studies away from International Development and humanitarianism to a more interdisciplinary stage that spans the Arts and Social Sciences as a whole. It also means giving greater voice to migrant and refugee perspectives through a plurality of media.

Our current language and lexicon constrain how we think about migration – in this context, the arts and humanities can contribute much to research’s ‘disruptive’ and ‘corrective’ role. Scholarship needs to link across fault-lines of politics, culture, law and language, promoting interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral perspectives. We need to think differently about how we understand migration data and make space for the repository of objects, archives as well as ideas.

Of central importance to questions of representation through the arts is giving voice to migrant and refugee populations. At the same time, participants should have the right to be invisible. As one participant commented, ‘collecting data when it comes to the Rohingya is linked strongly to policing’. Sometimes artistic representations allow space for protecting the anonymity of the research subjects which is especially important in parts of the region.

### *Collaborative Investment from North-to-South*

Countries such as Sri Lanka and Afghanistan currently experience an academic ‘brain drain’ where many scholars go to study abroad and stay there because of a lack of opportunities to conduct high quality, well-funded research in their region. Funding high quality research within the region is required to ensure that it investigates the questions which are most relevant and most urgent as well as maximising the skills, potential and career opportunities within the region. This inevitably requires funders to take an element of risk and to reconsider existing funding arrangements and partnerships with academics in the South.

Some positive examples were given where collaborative projects between institutions in the Global North and the Global South and between Southern institutions had borne positive research outputs.

These included collaborations with UK universities and institutions in Afghanistan, India and Sri Lanka. However, because of the so-called 'projectisation' of migration research (see above), such partnerships are often short-term and funding is not available for them to develop to fruition. Grants are also difficult to obtain and often power imbalances written into the global funding landscape are replicated in such international research projects. An important case in point are finance management arrangements which are usually held in the Global North because of under-resourced grant management capacity at the southern university level. These tend to limit the leadership, vision and creativity of South Asian academics.

One positive example in this regard given was the Global Challenges Research Fund which is championing global researchers in the Global South and questions were asked whether there are ways to replicate this model beyond the UK Research Councils. Participants also called for more funding for the development of early career researchers in South Asia and to move beyond a 'top down' model of project management by investing more in building the capacities of students through, for example, online educational portals. UNHCR'S efforts to develop a regional study group to aid scholars, not with a specific project purpose, was seen as good practice in this regard.

Scholars from the Global North could be encouraged to spend more time as part of exchanges in institutions in the Global South and vice versa. This is beneficial for both parties. It can serve to reassure funders that a project is being managed by a scholar with past experience of international grants (for example stemming from a US or European institution) whilst also supporting the development of new synergies and learning between scholars globally.

### *Funding as Collaboration*

At the practical level, global power imbalances shape what funding is available for migration research in South Asia. It was felt that more needed to be done to shape the relationships between funders and research institutions so that more collaborative, rather than funder-donor, type partnerships were established. There are also problems stemming from the so-called 'projectisation' of migration which means funding is often response-based and short-term, not giving academics the necessary freedom to pursue new pathways for knowledge and impact.

In South Asia, national and regional governments are often not willing to fund research, leading to a huge deficit in the quality of academic research and institutional capacity. As a result, academic institutions are frequently reliant on international grants. These global funding arrangements come to dominate research values, prioritising certain issues of interest to the Global North, for example fighting violent extremism and preventing migration from Afghanistan. These arrangements ignore research needs on the ground, such as the collection of data about internal migration dynamics and the needs of certain vulnerable groups who stay, including women, older people and youth. 'Early warning signs are often ignored because there is nobody with an ear to the ground', commented one participant from Afghanistan.

*"There are problems stemming from the "projectisation" of migration challenges which translate into problems of funding because of an over reliance on project-based migration research. When the project ends, the conversation ends. This approach is short-sighted and antithetical to knowledge production in forced migration where processes are constantly changing and relationships are crucial to develop to understanding of experiences over time. We need to invest more in future leaders!"*

*– British academic based in India*

One delegate from India stressed that the discursive twinning of migration and security in policy was permeating academia as a ‘deadly combination’. The twinning of migration with prevention of terrorism was largely seen by participants as a European and North American paradigm imposed upon the South. It is important, in the context of the securitisation-migration nexus, participants agreed, to engage policy makers at all stages of the research, including setting the framework for terminology, discourse and analysis. Meanwhile it was stressed that Northern states could learn from the South Asian region among others in terms of how to respond to displacement in a humane way without falling into securitisation. One example given was the humane reception of many Tamil refugees in India from Sri Lanka whilst simultaneously employing robust screening procedures to preventing terrorists from entering the country.

### *The Role of National Governments in Facilitating (or Obstructing) Research*

Participants also questioned the role of government in facilitating (and also of not obstructing) migration and migration research. The current Indian government, with its nationalist politics, for example, is not forthcoming in funding migration research. The lack of international funding is therefore experienced as an existential challenge for the research collective and its particular strand of postcolonial thought. Researchers in Sri Lanka face similar challenges in obtaining national funding for migration research. Similarly, certain foreign-funded NGOs are stigmatised in government rhetoric and practice and this limits what they can do within certain contexts. Without this research being properly funded in the region, scholarship globally is missing out on the postcolonial perspective.

Where is the space for critical research on migration governance and what is the role of foreign governments and diplomacy in this regard? In certain contexts, such research may be impossible to conduct in-country and will require the ability for scholars to work in exile from academic institutions abroad. More such opportunities for this should be made available. One example given was the UK-based CARA (Council for Assisting Refugee Academics).

### *Academic Mobility*

In this context, being able to cross borders is important for migration researchers. It is also important for the documentation of phenomena which are shifting over time. This important academic mobility must be preserved in a climate of increasing nationalism and new borders. At the Delhi Conversation, the example of photography was used to show – through art – the different experiences of displaced Rohingya refugees in the South Asian region and beyond. Migration scholars, activists and NGOs also experience mobility differently which poses a challenge to regional and global collaboration.

## Working with NGOs

*'There is not a dichotomy between academic research versus NGO research; there is only good and bad research'.*

*– Indian scholar*

In post-conflict states and unstable regions, collaboration between NGOs and academics was highlighted as especially crucial to high quality research. There was a sense from participants at the Delhi Conversation that such partnerships are nevertheless often perceived as compromising of the quality and integrity of the data by academic institutions in the Global North. This has ethical and practical implications for migration research in the South Asian region.

Decolonising research practices also means recognizing that the most authoritative sources of knowledge are drawn from the people affected by migration. Some of the best research in the region, it was repeatedly stressed, involves collaborations between NGOs supporting refugee and migrant communities and academics. While it was recognised that this could lead to bias in the research and was generally perceived as less impactful and more poorly regarded in Northern scholarship, it was stressed that it is also a practical necessity born out of access issues and a lack of funding from international or outside sources. There is not a dichotomy between academic research versus NGO research', commented one Indian academic, 'there is only good and bad research'.

In certain contexts, working globally with stakeholders outside the region can do much to build research capacity in the region. In the context of India and Pakistan, for example, involving a third party in research projects could serve to help mitigate some of the political issues inherent in bilateral collaboration. More attention should be given to strengthening collaborations between academic institutions in the Global South.

## Conclusions

This paper has provided a provisional outline of the context for migration and displacement related research in the South Asian region. Drawing on discussion at the Delhi Migration Conversation, it has identified avenues and pathways for future research and identified some existing gaps and challenges on the scene.

It has argued that migration researchers and practitioners face challenges in developing research tools and policy instruments that reflect a field in which the central features (economic and political dynamics, migratory routes, costs of travel, policy and legal environments in transit and destination areas) are all constantly shifting. Yet participants at the first Migration Conversation agreed that regional differences in terms of migration trends were too important not to be articulated into some kind of strategic framework. Rather than seeing this as a global migration agenda imposed from above, participants were keen to see the emergence of a new plurality in migration policy and research that accounted for differences while also seeking to share capacity and resources. Rather than constantly trying to synthesise all phenomena into global frameworks, there is a need, participants stressed, to reflect plurality and also think about migration as a regional and local phenomenon.

Understanding the drivers, dynamics and impacts of migration in the contemporary world requires a broad-based and interdisciplinary approach which is cognizant of the increasingly complex and multi-scalar drivers and experiences of migration. Despite this, Migration Studies has suffered from a prolonged Balkanisation with academic and policy makers largely failing to step across disciplinary, theoretical, methodological and geographical divides to learn from one another.

Importantly, participants stressed that funders of migration research and policy makers should move beyond the idea of capacity building as a North-to-South phenomenon and also recognise the myriad ways that Northern scholarship and Southern migration scholarship can learn from the South Asia's rich history of migration and its related documentation. It is, said one participant, about 'capacity mapping, not capacity building'.

In this context, as this report has suggested, enhancing capacity for migration research may include overcoming structural obstacles, ensuring longevity of research projects, addressing power imbalances in collaborative research and, for example, moving beyond the bias of the English language. Various other practical considerations are given throughout this report.

Research should be mindful of policy and speak to it but it is also imperative to create funding spaces for independent and theoretical research. Scholars agreed that where resources are limited, too often they are constrained by the funding criteria which prevent them from embarking on their primary goal of thinking and 'disrupting' what we think we know. Researchers must also remember the importance of disseminating their findings to the community through education. This is especially necessary as migration becomes more of a political issue.

This report has highlighted just some of the areas for future development. More detailed suggestions will be given in a strategy to be published in 2019.

*Report written by Jennifer Allsopp, June 2018*

# Global Migration Conversation Delhi, India Programme

22-23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018  
Maple Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC)  
Lodhi Road  
New Delhi - 110003

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## Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

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### **9.30-10.30: Registration and Coffee**

### **10.30-11.00: Introducing the Global Migration Conversations**

This introductory session will set the scene and explain the aims and purpose of the GMCs and how they fit together.

### **11.00-12.30: Panel 1: South Asian Migration Research in Global Context: Bridging Research from the Global North and South**

This panel will explore what we know of the current state of play of global migration research and will stimulate discussion through the presentation of examples of cutting-edge projects past and present. Panellists will also be asked to address the future of migration research and address questions including: How does South Asian research fit into a global, collaborative migration research agenda? How can research address power imbalances between the global south and north? Each panellist will speak for 10 minutes followed by the respondent's comments. The chair will then facilitate an interactive Q&A discussion engaging the audience.

### **12.30-13.15: Lunch**

### **13.15 - 14.45: Panel 2: Interdisciplinary and Cross-Sectoral Perspectives**

This panel will discuss the challenges and opportunities of working in partnership across academic institutions and with NGOs, arts, legal and other organisations locally, regionally and at the international level. Speakers will also share their experiences of working across disciplines including law, humanities and gender studies. Each panellist will speak for 10 minutes followed by the respondent's comments. The chair will then facilitate an interactive Q&A discussion engaging the audience.

### **14.45-15.00: Break**

### **15.00-16.30: Salon 1: Mapping Innovative Practices and Partnerships**

This salon seeks to map innovative practices in migration research with a specific focus on effective partnerships and collaboration. In the first hour, participants will split into 4 groups to discuss 3 of the following 4 topics for 20 minutes each. In the last 30 minutes, the convener of each group (one of the four of the MLT team) will present findings (5 minutes each) and lead a group discussion (15 minutes).

1. How do you get people to work together effectively?/ What makes a good partnership?
2. How can the linkages between research, policy and practice be strengthened?
3. How can we navigate power relations in global partnerships in migration research? What other challenges are there to forging innovative practices and partnerships?
4. What are the gaps in current migration research in the region and how could these be addressed?

### **16.30-17.00: Break**

### **17.00 - 18.00: Showcasing the Art of Migration**

In this session, two artists and a museum curator will present their work on the topic of migration. They will present their work for 10-15 minutes each followed by a Q&A discussion with the audience.

### **18.00-18.15: Closing of the first day**

A summary of the day's events and information for the evening and second day.

### **18.15-19.00: Drinks reception**

### **19.00-21.00: Conference dinner**

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## **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May**

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### **9.30-10.30: Registration and Coffee**

### **10.30-10.45: Summary of Yesterday's Discussion**

Summary of key points from day 1 of the conversation and set the aims and objectives for day 2.

### **10.45 - 12.15: Panel 3: Highlighting Innovative Methods and Impact**

This panel discussion will give examples of how innovative visual, oral and quantitative methods have been used to communicate messages from research as well as being used as a research tool, methodology and source of research data. Examples discussed will include arts-based methods, participatory methods and

quantitative mapping. Participants will also consider how to reach different audiences and stakeholders with migration research, ranging from cultural bodies to financial institutions.

### **12.15-13.00 Lunch**

### **13.00-14.45: Salon 2: Creating a Collaborative Agenda for Migration Research**

This salon will focus on how to practically address some of the challenges identified in yesterday's panel and move forwards towards a new agenda in migration and displacement research. In the first hour, participants will split into 4 groups to discuss the 3 of the following 4 topics for 20 minutes each. In the last 30 minutes, the convener of each group (one of the four of the MLT team) will present findings (5 minutes each) and lead a group discussion (15 minutes).

1. What are the most effective ways of networking and building partnerships going forwards?
2. How can we research new audiences with our research e.g. in arts and policy sphere
3. What do the funders need to hear?/ What is the research that would love to see funded?
4. What are the priorities of a global research agenda going forwards?/Who sets this agenda and what are the regional gaps?

### **14.45-15.00: Moving Forwards: Next steps**

A summary of the day's events and information regarding dissemination of workshop findings and the evolution of the MLT network going forwards.