Living with climate change, conflict and displacement

Recognising agency, voice, mobility, language and linkages

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Introduction

Complexity and uncertainty characterise the relationship between climate change, conflict and displacement. The analytical enormity of climate change, conflict and displacement as individual challenges is further amplified when these are considered collectively. While progress has been made in narrowing the gaps between climate–conflict and climate–displacement, a disjointed approach marked by a lack of empirical research and data persists between the three (Peters et al., 2021).

In addition to being complex and uncertain, the relationship between climate change, conflict and displacement is also highly political. Political priorities and associated narratives (rather than independent and impartial evidence) determine how climate change, conflict and displacement are conceptualised and addressed. Despite being discredited by experts, 'big numbers and misleading statistics' are routinely used to describe climate displacement (Kjærum, 2023). A key reason why these alarmist narratives resurface in an 'echo chamber of headlines, press releases and funding campaigns' is that they reinforce the anti-immigration policy agendas of governments as well as the fundraising agendas of aid actors (Sturridge and Holloway, 2022: 4).

The challenges wrought by climate change, conflict and displacement are also increasingly protracted. Conflict (in places like Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Syria and Ukraine) has become more entrenched and complex (ICRC, 2016; Avis, 2019). The scale, speed and intensity of climate change are increasing, bringing new challenges and uncertainties (IPCC, 2021). These challenges diminish prospects for sustainable returns for displaced populations, at the same time as refugee resettlements have shrunk by half over the last decade (Solf and Rehberg, 2021). In this context, three quarters of refugees (UNHCR, 2021) and an unknown number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are having to simply 'get by' in protracted uncertainty for decades (Ferris, 2018).

Against this backdrop of complexity, politics and protractedness, ODI's Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) conducted a two-year qualitative research project in western Afghanistan and northern Mozambique (see Box 1). To get beyond the analytical enormity of climate change, conflict and displacement as a topic, the research narrowed the focus to how communities (both displaced and hosting) cope with and adapt to the combined pressures of climate change, conflict and displacement when these occur at the same time and in the same place. The research mapped the range of strategies people employ, and analysed the obstacles, challenges and opportunities that they present for their protection and wellbeing.

Box 1   Research approach and methodology

Following an in-depth review of the academic and grey literature on climate change, conflict and displacement, a qualitative approach was used to explore the following research questions:

- How do IDPs cope with and adapt to climate change, conflict and displacement?
- How do these coping and adaptive mechanisms impact the lives of IDPs and their hosts?
- What are the implications for aid actors, governments and policymakers?

In all, 111 semi-structured interviews were conducted with internally displaced people, host communities and key informants (government, civil society, United Nations (UN), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academia) in the towns of Herat in western Afghanistan and Pemba in northern Mozambique during 2022 (Holloway et al., 2022; Sturridge et al., 2022).

This policy brief is framed around five themes that emerged from our research: agency, voice, (im)mobility, language and linkages. The findings and recommendations of this paper also draw on three roundtables on climate change, conflict and displacement that were conducted in February and March 2023. Nearly 40 experts took part globally across policy, practice and academia. They included representatives from government donors, foundations, UN organisations and NGOs, as well as university lecturers, researchers, human rights activists, civil society actors, lawyers and journalists. Participants joined the roundtables from multiple locations, including Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, India, Mozambique, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (UK) and the US.[1]

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1   Representatives from the following organisations took part: Addis Ababa University, Citizens Organisation for Advocacy and Resilience (CoAR), British Red Cross, Danish Refugee Council, Devex, Eduardo Mondelane University, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, GLOW, the International Committee of the Red Cross, International Development Research Centre, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IKEA Foundation, Islamic Relief, Mercy Corps, Mishcon de Reya, Mixed Migration Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Plan International, Red Cross Climate Centre, Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab, SEEDS India, Tufts University, the UN Development Programme, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the US Institute of Peace, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank.

Agency

When climate change, conflict and displacement overlap, the strategies that people undertake for themselves are key to their survival and wellbeing, especially in places where assistance is limited and displacement is protracted. Our research revealed communities rebuilding lives and diversifying livelihoods through a mix of farming, fishing, business, trading and labour. Many are also adapting daily life and practice to meet the challenges of a changing climate – insulating homes, digging ditches and conserving precious resources.

But individual agency is constrained by underlying structure. Environmental pressures, economic decline, state corruption, poverty and the rising cost of living, ongoing conflict and gendered norms are just some of the factors that limit opportunities and squeeze capacities (Eriksen and Lind, 2009; Yates, 2012; Wrathall et al., 2014). Trauma from conflict also undermines agency by sapping energy, confidence and trust in others (Easton-Calabria, 2022). Under these circumstances, many in our research were pushed to extreme coping strategies – such as sex work, child labour, early marriage of girls and organ selling – by the combined pressures of climate change, conflict and displacement.

The 2016 Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and 2018 Global Compact on Refugees shone an important spotlight on resilience and self-reliance. Nevertheless, celebratory narratives of agency can downplay the risks and inequalities, shift responsibility for adaptation and development away from the state to individuals, and also be used to justify decreases in assistance to protracted refugee populations (Felli and Castree, 2012; Bettini and Gioli, 2016; Easton-Calabria and Omata, 2018). Pragmatic and realistic approaches are needed.

Rebuild and diversify livelihoods in protracted situations

Protracted situations of climate change, conflict and displacement are both a humanitarian and a development challenge. With most support continuing to address immediate needs, a shift in approach is required: from humanitarian relief to longer-term development that builds on people's agency and resilience (Hargrave et al., 2022). Supporting communities to rebuild and diversify their livelihoods is one way of bridging the humanitarian–development gap.

Supporting livelihoods can come at two key phases. Firstly, before a shock has occurred: through anticipatory action (including cash transfers, and community mitigation and readiness actions) to limit losses and damages, and subsequently increase people's capacity to cope and recover (Poole et al., 2022). The second phase comes after displacement has occurred. In Afghanistan and Mozambique, where displacement had become protracted, supporting livelihoods was a much-needed next step in the response. Aid actors needed to transition from initial emergency relief towards longer-term livelihoods support – for example, through training, equipment, transport and support in replacing lost documentation (Holloway et al., 2022; Sturridge et al., 2022).

Adopt pragmatic approaches to informality

People under pressure seek out options and opportunities wherever they may be, including activities labelled by aid actors as risky, illicit or dishonest (Mosberg and Eriksen, 2015). In the absence of more appropriate support, maximising humanitarian assistance was an important strategy practised to differing extents by many Afghans and Mozambicans in our research. Some split their household into smaller units or across multiple places to increase opportunities for registering for aid. Others trade the assistance they receive for more essential or desirable items, or sell it altogether to repay debts or generate small returns to invest in other ventures.

Such examples of agency and entrepreneurship (which are applauded in everyday society) are often interpreted by aid actors and local authorities as subversive, manipulative or ungrateful in displacement contexts. This reaction not only ignores the structural factors that compel displaced people to act in this way in the first place, but it also contributes to a hostile environment that exacerbates their trauma and suffering (Iazzolino, 2021).

Instead of penalising people for being strategic and resourceful, aid actors should consider how to adapt assistance so that it meets their needs. When aid does not include the kinds of goods and items that people need, it is not surprising that exchanges and trades are made. Under the right conditions, cash transfers can offer greater flexibility and autonomy than in-kind assistance or vouchers (High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, 2015).

Voice

Local voices and perspectives are routinely marginalised in conversations about climate change, conflict and displacement (Paton and Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2010). Policy decisions and funding allocations are typically driven by the political preoccupations of international actors rather than the priorities and preferences of affected communities. As a consequence, these decisions are 'not just about which population has the greatest need, but which populations are perceived as presenting the biggest threat' (Naylor, 2018).

A localised approach that amplifies local voices serves several purposes. Firstly, it builds on the expertise, knowledge and lived experiences of local groups. Secondly, it helps tailor policy and interventions to local needs and priorities, rather than to the assumptions and priorities of more powerful groups. Thirdly, a localised approach can discern difference between groups, thereby moving beyond homogenising analysis and universal 'truths'.

While the advantages of amplifying local voices are numerous, this shouldn't be romanticised. Local voices conceal underlying hierarchies, inequalities and exclusions. Balance is needed, and policy and programmes should build on international best-practice and evidence, as well as local perspectives and experiences. They should also situate localised, specific experiences within their broader structural context. Too much attention to the top risks marginalising local experiences and knowledge. Too much focus on the local risks missing the wider, structural, underlying factors that are instigated from above (Little, 1992: 12).

Prioritise local partnerships

Indigenous groups with lived experience of climate change, conflict and displacement need to be at the table – not just to tell their side of the story, but also to influence and challenge strategic decisions and conversations. It is widely accepted that partnering with local actors is key for conducting research, delivering assistance and developing policy that reflects the experiences, preferences and aspirations of local communities. And yet, despite commitments by the humanitarian sector to be more people-centred, accountable and locally led, little has changed in practice (Saez and Bryant, 2023).

Local partnerships are also important for rebuilding trust in the humanitarian sector, which is fragile among many groups, but especially among displaced and migrant populations who fear detention and deportation (Cubas et al., 2023). Without trust, aid actors are less able to deliver assistance and support (ibid). Providing direct and reliable funding to local actors (including civil society organisations, community-based organisations and refugee-led organisations) is an important way of rebuilding trust, amplifying local voices and meeting community needs (Kara et al., 2022).

Extend assistance to host communities

The voices of host communities have also been sidelined and under-researched (George and Adelaja, 2021). The support (shelter, social networks, food, loans) they provide often far surpasses assistance from 'traditional' aid actors. More needs to be done to recognise their role in the humanitarian response, in particular including them in anticipatory action and development interventions.

Extending support to hosts becomes increasingly important as their ability and willingness to help comes under pressure in protracted displacement. Most Afghan hosts in Herat wanted displaced people to return home or move somewhere else as they increasingly saw their presence as a burden (Holloway et al., 2022; IOM DTM, 2022). Information about the impacts of hosting needs to be better circulated and understood. Hosts in Ethiopia and Djibouti routinely associated refugees with environmental resource depletion, even though remote-sensing data shows this is not the case (Smith et al., 2021). Aid actors should also be more transparent with hosts about how and why recipients of aid are selected, or that aid is only available because of the presence of displaced communities. These actions would help mitigate the social tensions that can arise between those who receive assistance and those who don't – particularly when hosts and refugees are similarly poor and vulnerable (Holloway and Sturridge, 2022).

(Im)mobility

In contexts of climate change and conflict, moving tends to be seen through two powerful and contrasting narratives: migration as crisis, and migration as adaptation (see Box 2).

Box 2   Two contrasting migration narratives

Migration as crisis: moving is unplanned and unwanted, occurring as a last resort in the face of insurmountable challenge (Burrows and Kinney, 2016). As climate change and conflict escalate and become protracted, a new and unprecedented chapter of displacement is looming on the horizon (Sturridge and Holloway, 2022).

Migration as adaptation: migration is (and always has been) an important strategy for adapting to pressures and challenges, particularly for communities with a history of and familiarity with migration (Black et al., 2011). Under many scenarios, moving can help to rebuild livelihoods threatened by conflict, climate change and displacement, and expand opportunities for durable solutions to protracted situations (Long, 2013).

While a more positive framing of migration is a welcome shift from the 'migration as crisis' narrative, both framings are overly simplistic. A more nuanced approach is needed that gets beyond the polarising narratives of crisis/adaptation and migration/displacement. These narratives overlook those who are forced to stay because of poverty, safety concerns or a lack of options, as well as those who choose to stay out of preference and acquiescence (Lubkemann, 2008; Black and Collyer, 2014; Mata-Codesal, 2018; Walker, 2021). While freedom to move should be recognised and promoted by aid actors, so too should freedom to stay (Farbotko, 2018). Most displaced Afghans, for example, preferred to stay in Herat rather than return to their places of origin, citing loss of assets and livelihoods due to conflict and climate change (Holloway et al., 2022). And there are also good reasons why most never move in the first place: attachment to community and land; a perceived absence of opportunities elsewhere; and optimism that things will get better (MMC, 2023).

Avoid polarising narratives of migration

In these scenarios, aid actors must navigate a careful path through polarising and politicised narratives of migration. This means resisting the widespread temptation to tap into the 'migration crisis' narrative to raise awareness and boost funding for their causes. While well intentioned, these fundraising campaigns build on inaccurate and alarmist figures that stoke panic and lend momentum to anti-immigration policy agendas (Farbotko et al., 2020). This ultimately contributes to the securitisation of migration and asylum, making life harder for those who seek protection elsewhere.

At the other end of the spectrum, celebratory narratives of migration as adaptation are also problematic when they gloss over the inequalities and diverging outcomes of migration, as well as the dangers and risks of moving in conflict settings. Displaced Mozambicans, for example, engage in seasonal back-and-forth mobility that enables them to sustain assets, livestock and farms back home and (to a lesser extent) seek new work and business opportunities elsewhere (Sturridge et al., 2022). But it also exposes them to significant risks of abuse, detention and death should their paths cross with armed actors (ibid.). Ultimately, the adaptive potential of migration will always be limited in places where it is dangerous or prohibited to move. This undermines migration's potential as an adaptive strategy for refugees residing in countries with encampment policies that restrict and even criminalise mobility.

Tailor assistance to those who move as well as those who stay

Aid limits mobility by tying people to place. Many donors (including the UK, the European Union (EU) and US) link the aid they give with wider immigration goals, assuming that humanitarian and development improvements will weaken the root causes of out-migration from fragile regions and encourage would-be migrants to stay in place. While the overt intention of this programming is to reduce migration, its impacts on influencing migration patterns remain questionable, in spite of the huge sums invested (Clemens, 2014; Bakewell and Sturridge, 2019; Lucht et al., 2021).[2]

Similarly, the mechanisms for distributing aid often deter displaced people from moving, even if that is not their intended outcome. Formal assistance is often tied to camps, settlements or areas that are easier and cheaper for aid actors to reach (Etzold et al., 2022). Likewise, repeated in-person registrations require displaced people to be physically present on a regular basis, or risk being cut off from future distributions.

The kinds of assistance provided, and the mechanisms for delivering it, should be designed to support the needs of those who move – not only those who stay in designated areas. Examples could include: mobile cash transfers that can be received anywhere by phone; subsidised transport costs for those wanting to make back-and-forth visits to places left behind; and 'route-based approaches' that deliver assistance and protection to people as they move.[3]

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2   The EU, for example, has invested over €5 billion into a trust fund designed to address the 'root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration' (IDMC, 2022; UNHCR, 2022). Likewise, the Biden administration has committed $4 billion over four years to address the underlying causes of immigration in Central America (The White House, 2021).

3   The IFRC is an example of an organisation implementing route-based approaches. See: www.ifrc.org/our-work/disasters-climate-and-crises/migration-and-displacement/migration-our-programmes/global.

Language

Language matters when talking about climate change, conflict and displacement. The non-negotiable and self-evident tone of language in which academic knowledge – and climate evidence in particular – is routinely presented (as 'natural', 'objective', 'evidence-based', 'scientific' and 'impartial') can be difficult to challenge by less powerful and local groups (Hulme, 2008; Taylor, 2011; Arnall et al., 2014; Kothari, 2014). The language we use also sets the tone from the start, limiting the questions that are subsequently asked, the objects studied and the methodologies adopted (Bakewell, 2008; Hendrix-Jenkins, 2020). Indeed, studies show that the way that we present an issue or idea carries more weight on decision-making than facts and figures (Saez and Bryant, 2023).

The language that we use also reinforces particular narratives and worldviews – such as who displaced people are, what they look like, what they aspire to, and so on. Such imagery and discourse translate into policy and practice, with real-life implications for those affected by climate change, conflict and displacement. As the examples below reveal, language has repercussions for how people affected by climate change, conflict and displacement are treated, controlled and managed (Turton, 2003), in particular, what support is afforded to them, and the kinds of solutions that are prioritised (Johnson, 2011).

Put the language of politics back into climate change

Climate crises tend to be interpreted as natural and inevitable events – the outcome of the unstoppable force of climate change, rather than of social inequality and political will. This is illustrated by climate financing, which tends to narrowly focus on climate (rather than conflict), typically ignoring fragile and conflict-affected situations in favour of places with lower operational risks and challenges (Cao et al., 2021; ICG, 2022).[4] A 'climate change' framing can help focus international attention and funding, but it rarely reflects local perceptions and priorities. Most Mozambican respondents attributed their displacement to conflict rather than the recurring succession of cyclones that have devastated lives and livelihoods in the north of the country (Sturridge et al., 2022), while in Afghanistan, respondents pointed to a mix of conflict, poverty, livelihoods, floods, drought and extreme temperatures (Holloway et al., 2022).

Climate-centric approaches thus only tell part of the story, and should be embedded in the power relations, inequalities and historical injustices of everyday lives and livelihoods. Funding research and interventions that address politically uncomfortable topics of power relations, inequalities and historical injustices would help shift the narrative beyond superficial technical fixes towards a deeper debate about climate justice (Okereke, 2010; Sultana, 2022; Wilkens and Datchoua-Tirvaudey, 2022).

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4   Countries experiencing climate and conflict pressures receive a third less in climate financing than countries that are affected by climate change but not conflict (ICG, 2022).

Recognise the limitations of the IDP label

Labels – such as 'refugee', 'IDP', 'host', 'diaspora', 'forced migrant', 'returnee', 'asylum seeker' – are routinely used to differentiate between groups of displacement-affected people. The IDP label is particularly problematic for several reasons. Firstly, from an analytical perspective, the lines that separate so-called IDPs from internal rural–urban migrants or pastoralists are often blurred when it comes to the reasons for moving or subsequent humanitarian need – especially where the impacts of conflict and climate change are widespread.

Secondly, from a protection perspective, the IDP label can be a hindrance rather than a help. In Somalia, its use is discriminatory and even dangerous – marking people as outsiders with limited access to citizenship rights (Menkhaus, 2017; Sturridge et al., 2018). Under these circumstances, many choose not to self-identify as 'IDPs' at all. Or, after years of displacement, they may no longer feel displaced.

While labels such as IDP may play a necessary role in delivering assistance in a siloed world, more nuanced and context-specific interpretations of internal displacement should be built into policy and programmes. For example, area-based approaches that consider all population groups within a specific location (Schell et al., 2020).

Linkages

Deep-seated disconnects exist between sectors, disciplines and geographies involved in climate change, conflict and displacement. These can be seen between the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding sectors; between migration and displacement studies; between the social and natural sciences; between policy, practice and academia; between the different ministries of government; and between the Global South and the Global North.

This siloed way of working limits opportunities for disseminating and translating knowledge. Siloed funding mechanisms and structures also undermine the kinds of cross-cutting interventions that are needed to respond to the overlapping challenges of climate change, conflict and displacement. Bridging the divides between sectors, disciplines and geographies is critical (Ferris, 2011; Hynes and Yadav, 2020; Mawhorter, 2020; Zickgraf, 2021). Without this, analytical blind spots emerge, misconceptions go unchecked and opportunities are missed.

Reject siloed ways of working

A genuine willingness to work together across the climate change, conflict and displacement divides is key to improving the policy and operational response. This requires using simple and jargon-free language that everyone can understand and feel comfortable with. All actors must proactively look for connections and continuity across sectors and disciplines. And organisations must set clear criteria and even quotas for local representation in partner forums and networks. Donors should also use their unique leverage for driving more ambitious collaboration, for example, by making funding dependent on interdisciplinary research and programmes that are built on local partnerships.

As well as building trust and consensus, these steps would help to foster greater collaboration around generators of momentum, such as at the Global Refugee Forum, the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, the Conference of the Parties (COP), the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees – which represent important ongoing opportunities for driving change.

Acknowledge continuity in crises

Linkages with the past are also important. There is continuity in crisis: while opportunities and capacities may be constrained, people continue to seek out what they know and emulate past practices where they can by 'holding on as much as possible to their normal lifestyles' (Artur, 2011: 535). Viewed from this perspective, coping and adaptive strategies should not be seen 'in isolation from the ways that people continuously respond to a multitude of pressures, trends and "normal" seasonal changes' (Eriksen and Lind, 2009: 818).

Likewise, where environmental pressures are creeping or cyclical and where conflict has existed for generations, there is rarely one single moment of crisis that triggers the decision to move. Instead, studies from Afghanistan, Mozambique, Somalia and South Sudan show how people emulate generational practices of mobility within and across borders, even (and sometimes especially) in displacement (Manji, 2020; Holloway et al., 2022; Sturridge et al., 2022; REF and Samuel Hall, 2023).

Building on these examples, policy and programmes need to 'take history [more] seriously' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2021: 1). In practical terms, this means designing assistance that builds on people's prior experience – as well as the strategies and skills that they are already adopting or would like to adopt in the future – through flexible programming and meaningful participation in design and delivery. People should be understood in relation to others around them, as part of their local context, and as linked to their history and past practice.

Conclusion: challenging the status quo through localisation

While the relative weight of climate change, conflict or displacement may vary, some combination of all three coexist in many, if not most, crises: Afghanistan, Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mozambique, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Syria, to mention just a few. While a 'climate change, conflict and displacement' framing is thus sweeping and broad and not a clear marker of differentiation, it is nevertheless an important framing that increasingly characterises the complexity of contemporary crises. To balance the breadth of climate change, conflict and displacement with depth of analysis, our research in Afghanistan and Mozambique narrowed the focus to lived experience.

Addressing lived experience requires a localised approach that reflects many of the recommendations in this paper. The protractedness of climate change, conflict and displacement has reinforced the need to refocus on the resilience, livelihoods and agency of local communities. This means building policy and programmes up from below, rather than down from above. It also means prioritising local partnerships and indigenous voices, and taking inspiration from what people affected by climate change, conflict and displacement are already doing (or have done for generations) so that support and assistance is designed in ways that reflect their preferences, priorities and aspirations.

These kinds of recommendations should go without saying. They are familiar tropes that have resurfaced over decades, but without being meaningfully addressed. In spite of the rhetoric and commitment to doing localisation better, a 'business-as-usual' approach prevails. The compounding challenges of climate change, conflict and displacement demand more radical opposition to existing power structures – beyond superficial and technical fixes, towards a deeper debate about rights and justice. This entails a comprehensive collection of strategies and responses, many of which fall outside the usual funding streams, political priorities or comfort zones of traditional actors.

Going a step further, challenging the status quo entails localising approaches even (and especially) when these diverge from institutional goals and political priorities. This can include:

- Continuing to support communities even when they undertake activities deemed risky, illicit or dishonest. This entails putting moral judgements to one side, and working to reduce the risks of activities, rather than seeking to stop them altogether.
- Rethinking taken-for-granted language and labels, even when this complicates mechanisms for delivering assistance and protection; for example, by adopting more inclusive or area-based approaches that do not rely on rigid categories in the first place.

- Providing direct funding to local groups even when this is more expensive, time-consuming and difficult for aid actors to monitor. This means redesigning internal financial and auditing systems from below rather than from above so that they are fit for purpose for both small and large implementing entities.
- Resisting the temptation to tap into polarising migration narratives, even when this makes it harder to fundraise. Instead, adopt more collaborative approaches that build on upticks in momentum, such as at the Global Refugee Forum, the Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, COP, the Global Compact for Migration, and the Global Compact on Refugees.
- Providing communities with the kinds of assistance that they say they need and want, even when these are regarded as nonessential by aid actors. This entails a shift in humanitarian thinking: while these items may not be 'essential' for survival, they can play a key role in strengthening wellbeing by creating a sense of normality and dignity amid danger and volatility (Oka, 2014).
- Putting the politics back into climate responses even when this exposes uncomfortable legacies of colonialism, neoliberal economics and globalisation. This requires going beyond superficial or technical fixes towards a deeper debate about climate justice and its implications.

Summary of key recommendations

To recognise agency, policymakers and practitioners should:

1. Support communities in protracted situations to rebuild and diversify their livelihoods by combining humanitarian relief with anticipatory action (cash transfers, community mitigation and readiness actions) and long-term development assistance (training, equipment, transport and documentation).
2. Adopt pragmatic approaches to informality. Instead of penalising people under pressure for taking steps to maximise their access to assistance, provide them with the kinds of support (such as cash transfers) that offer greater flexibility and autonomy, and better meet their needs.

To amplify local voices, policymakers and practitioners should:

3. Prioritise local partnerships, for example with civil society organisations, community-based organisations and refugee-led organisations, through sustainable partnership models and direct and reliable funding.
4. Recognise host communities' role in humanitarian responses, as well as their vulnerabilities, by extending development assistance to them and ensuring that information about the impacts of hosting and aid distribution are better circulated and understood.

To take (im)mobility into account, policymakers and practitioners should:

5. Avoid polarising narratives of migration as either crisis or adaptation. The short-term gains for funding and awareness-raising are outweighed by the long-term risks to migrants' protection and wellbeing.
6. Tailor assistance to those who move as well as those who stay through mobile cash transfers, subsidised transport costs and route-based approaches.

To nuance language, policymakers and practitioners should:

7. Put the language of politics back into climate-centric approaches. Go beyond superficial or technical fixes by funding research and interventions that address power relations, socioeconomic inequalities and historical injustices.
8. Recognise the limitations of the IDP label. Use it only when necessary, mindful of its unintended impacts on people's identity, protection and wellbeing, as well as its limitations as a marker of humanitarian need.

To strengthen linkages, policymakers and practitioners should:

9. Reject siloed ways of working by using jargon-free language, co-producing knowledge and interventions, setting criteria and quotas for local representation, and making funding dependent on interdisciplinary analysis and programmes that build on local partnerships.
10. Acknowledge continuity in crisis by designing assistance with a historical lens that builds on the knowledge, skills and strategies that people already possess, or would like to in the future, through flexible programming and meaningful participation in design and delivery.

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