

**CRISIS-INDUCED MIGRATION:
PRIORITIES FOR RESEARCH AND ACTION**

Most of the current literature about crisis-induced migration could be described as situational rather than analytical, i.e., it describes the immediate status of groups in the process of migration or the circumstances in which they live. Most are written as treatises on race or cultural relations and many are focused on human rights concerns. The audience for most of the literature is a small community of academics, social service agencies and human rights organizations. With the notable exception of Latin American migration to the US, there is a dearth of materials aimed at political decision-makers, and especially a lack of information for politicians in the countries of origin or destination in the Third World.

Certain assumptions seem to prevail throughout the literature -- especially about the causes and triggers of crisis-induced migration. Most of these assumptions appear to be drawn from refugee theory and practice. For example, it is assumed that people in civil wars only flee when they are directly threatened by violence; in surveys carried out in Sudan and in El Salvador, it was found that most people fled as an indirect consequence of the conflict (usually the collapse of markets). Clearly, more information is needed about the triggers of sudden migration and the entire sequence of events that follow.

It is also clear that there is little information available about innovative approaches that governments and non-governmental agencies can take to assist those who are forced to migrate. Most of the literature deals with migrants after they have reached their destination; little is available to guide agencies in assisting people en route or near their original homes. Moreover, little is available to help governments stem migrations in a humane, culturally-sensitive manner; rather than offering workable alternatives, most writers simply deplore the tactics of governments once the migrants have arrived.

If we are going to come to grips with crisis-induced migrations, we must begin by expanding our knowledge about the entire process of forced migration. We need to understand the phenomenon from the very beginning, learning to identify the underlying causes, the displacement triggers, the sequence of migration, the survival tactics people use en route, and the strategies and means people use to cope once they have arrived at their destinations.

Next, we should catalogue and evaluate the strategies and programs available to assist the people who are forced to move and the governments faced with the forced migration. What are the

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legitimate approaches a poor country can take when faced with mass population movements, especially in view of the increased burden that it places on the country, its urban systems and its overall debt structure?

The following is a list of specific issues or areas of interest that require more investigation.

1. Underlying assumptions: We need to reexamine our underlying assumptions about the causes of migration in each of the major types of crisis-induced migration occurring today. We should begin by developing a taxonomy of these migrations, e.g., forced migrations executed by governments for economic reasons, famine-induced migrations across borders, persons displaced by internal conflicts, people forced to migrate because of catastrophic economic collapse, etc. For each of these types of migrations, we should carry out comparative longitudinal studies to identify, inter alia:
 - the economic and social circumstances of the people before their migration.
 - the triggers to migration/flight.
 - the sequence of departure (i.e., which groups within the community or which family members left first).
 - the migration sequence and routes followed, especially examining the "stepping stones" along the way, economic survival strategies en route, and how families that were separated remained in contact with those left behind.
 - strategies the migrants used to integrate into the society at their destination and the relative success of each strategy over time.
 - strategies people used to maintain their cultural identity in the new society and how they worked over time.
 - the impact of the migration on the host communities, examining closely the immediate and long-term economic impact, the state of race/cultural relations, the costs to governments of providing services, the impact on urban systems, and the impact on a country's overall development strategies and debt situation.
 - the impact of the migration on the communities of origin; issues such as the "brain drain", etc., must be addressed in light of the long-term consequences. The issue of conflict

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reduction as a consequence of migration should also be examined, e.g., did the flight of the people reduce the level of conflict in the society of origin or only shift the focus?

The objective of these studies should be to identify common patterns and trends that can help in planning strategies and programs to assist governments and others dealing with these problems.

2. The questions of a focal point: At present, there is no central point within the international community for dealing with non-refugee, crisis-induced migrations. Some advocate the creation of a UNHCR-like UN agency to deal with the internally-displaced persons; others feel that the terms of reference of an existing agency, such as ICM or UNDP, could be expanded; still others argue that creation of a focal point would be counterproductive. The discussion is scattered and could benefit from hard analysis and collective data.
3. Interventions: A series of analytic studies needs to be carried out to determine effective ways to assist people and governments during and after crisis-induced migrations. There are many approaches that have been used successfully but they are often buried in the internal reports of NGOs or other agencies. Work should be undertaken to identify and evaluate these programs and to extrapolate the lessons learned so that they can be applied to other similar situations.

These studies should be focused on assistance to people in the earliest stages of displacement, during their migrations and in the transitional period at their destinations. In the longer term, assistance strategies that promote durable solutions should be studied.

Specific issues that need to be examined are:

- programs and approaches for assisting people involved in mass migrations, e.g., during famines, internal conflicts, etc.
- assistance to migrants moving en masse to urban areas. Since many migrants move to capitals or other urban zones, assistance must often address complex urban development issues as well as humanitarian needs.
- assistance to impacted communities. Mass migrations can have a major impact on the host community. In Sudan, for example, the size of Khartoum increased in four years by over 40%. Most of the migrants moved into existing slum neighborhoods where it was difficult to provide assistance to the migrants without offering similar levels of assistance to the people already there, many of whom were also malnourished, underemployed, etc. Options for helping a country deal with this situation must be fully explored.

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- alternative interventions for governments. Governments have often reacted to an influx of migrants by taking rather draconian steps. Migrants have been forcibly relocated, denied basic services, and subjected to many restrictions.

Few of these approaches have yielded the results that governments anticipate. For governments imposing these restrictions there are many costs, most of which are not evident to the decision-makers at the time. Often these decisions are made in the absence of information about the experiences of other countries faced with similar problems and the lack of alternative approaches to consider; there is not a wealth of information available to give decision-makers to help guide their thinking. One of the most important items on the research agenda must be to thoroughly review the common approaches governments take in these situations, define the costs -- both social and economic -- and, where necessary, develop practical alternatives.

4. Humanitarian issues: Mass migrations are often a result of many interrelated factors, but an underlying cause in most is injustice and, ultimately, human rights abuses. In order to deal with the causes and consequences of mass migration, we must expand the body of international law and principles that apply to this phenomenon. Further elaboration of these principles should be the grounding for all strategies and programs developed to assist the migrants.
5. Permanent solutions: In refugee practice, we consider three durable solutions to a refugee situation: repatriation, local integration, and resettlement to a third country. We should recognize that those same solutions, in slightly different form, apply to people who have migrated under stress. The parameters surrounding these solutions must be more fully understood and strategies for providing assistance in each need to be more fully developed.
6. Predictive studies: Just as early warning can be used to monitor events that precipitate refugee migrations, so can we often predict where mass migrations are likely to occur under certain social or economic circumstances. Areas where catastrophic economic collapse is occurring, areas where colonial-era transigrations occurred (such as the Indians in Fiji, east Africa and Sri Lanka), and areas where the national population is becoming a minority due to an influx of economic migrants, are all potential trouble spots. Predictive studies need to be carried out and, where necessary, a "watch" established to more closely monitor events so that timely, preemptive actions could be taken as necessary.
7. Coordination between ICN and the UNDP TOKTEN Programme: The Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals, the TOKTEN

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Programme, may offer an avenue for increased cooperation between UNDP and ICM, especially during repatriation and reconstruction programs. A study should be undertaken to develop strategies for closer cooperation between the two agencies using this program for a vehicle.

Ultimately, these works should lead to the development of practical guides for those who must deal with mass migrations. These are the governments of the countries involved, especially those of the Third World, and the NGOs and international organizations that provide assistance.

A Framework for Action:

The studies mentioned above should form the core of a series of activities designed to draw attention to international migration issues. To carry out each set of activities, task forces could be formed to initiate and guide the research and the subsequent reports.

To launch the effort, a commission of distinguished persons, not unlike the Brandt Commission, should be assembled to prepare a worldwide report on the current status of migration and to highlight the work that is being carried on. The report would be published in a technical edition with case studies, etc., while simultaneously, a popular book would be condensed from the findings, similar to the books produced by Sadruddin Aga Khan's International Commission on Humanitarian Issues.

Ultimately, the work should lead up to an international event designed to draw attention to the issues and stimulate more work in the field. This could be a major international conference or perhaps an international year similar to the International Year for Refugees.