



Towards a Holistic Migration Research Strategic Agenda: Integration, Partnerships, and Impact



Prepared by the
London International Development Centre
Migration Leadership Team
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The London International Development Centre Migration Leadership Team is comprised of:



SOAS University of London
Thornhaugh Street
Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG
www.soas.ac.uk



Queen Mary University of London
Mile End Road
London E1 4NS
www.qmul.ac.uk



University College London Institute of Education
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT
www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe



London International Development Centre
20 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2NS
www.lidc.ac.uk

This report was written by Laura Hammond, Elaine Chase, Kavita Datta, Jennifer Allsopp, Louisa Brain and Heleen Tummers.

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Migration Leadership Team

Laura Hammond - SOAS (Principal Investigator)
Kavita Datta- QMUL (Co-Investigator)
Elaine Chase - UCL IOE (Co-Investigator)
Jennifer Allsopp - formerly SOAS (Post-Doctoral Research Fellow)
Louisa Brain-SOAS (Project Manager)
Heleen Tummers - SOAS (Research Assistant)

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Executive summary

The London International Development Centre Migration Leadership Team (LIDC-MLT) was commissioned by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), which are part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), to develop a shared interdisciplinary and participatory strategic agenda for supporting migration research. This document sets out proposals for ESRC/AHRC and wider UKRI-funded migration research for the next five years (2020-2025) making clear recommendations about future agenda-setting and work priorities.

The document seeks to inform the direction of migration-related research across the social sciences and the arts and humanities in the UK, Europe and other countries in the 'Global North' and the 'Global South'.¹ It includes an overview of research in relation to a range of themes and topics including, among others: the drivers of migration; the political economy of conflict-related migration and displacement; historical understandings of human mobility; humanitarian perspectives on displacement; labour migration; urbanisation; migration management and refugee protection policies; international refugee and migration law; social integration of migrant communities; education, health and wider social and cultural policies in the context of migration; and arts and expressive culture with respect to (im)migration, identity and creativity.

The strategic agenda was developed through close consultation with academics, policy makers, practitioners and migrant community organisations who participated in a series of Global Migration Conversations (see methodological approach, below) held on five continents. This was supplemented by a review of existing literature and other evidence around key topics and policy agendas. Building upon the strengths of the current portfolio supported by the councils, it highlights current gaps in migration-related research and areas of opportunity for new and impactful research. It also points to the need to find ways to integrate migration as a thread of enquiry into other areas of UKRI research. In terms of process and outcomes, the document outlines the factors required for building and sustaining meaningful and equitable partnerships through research practice and considers the potential to deliver greater impact from the existing portfolio of migration research.

The strategic agenda provides an overall framework for considering: 1) thematic priorities in migration research funding; 2) ways in which migration research funding can effectively promote more equitable and efficient research partnerships; and 3) pathways to effective impact, both for researchers engaging with UKRI-funded research as well as for UKRI to maximise the engagement with, and impact of, its migration research portfolio. Recommendations are provided throughout and are summarised in the final chapter.

¹ Despite the fact that we use the familiar terms Global South and Global North here, we take to heart Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley's (2019, p. 4) warning that very often the labels South and Global South constitute modes of negative framing that risk 'maintaining rather than disrupting the notion that power originates from and operates through a unidirectional and intentional historical entity.' We hope that our intention to challenge such unidirectionality of understandings of power is clear despite our use of these terms. See also Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley's *Handbook of South-South Relations* (2019).

Introduction

More than 1 billion people globally are estimated to be migrants, living either inside or outside their country of birth (IOM, 2020).² An estimated 70.8 million people are considered to be forcibly displaced, including 25.9 million refugees (UNHCR, 2019). Migration challenges currently feature centrally in electoral politics in the UK, as well as across Europe, North and South America, Africa and South Asia³. They underlie considerations about foreign policy, national and international security, community cohesion and integration, national social and cultural policies and international humanitarian and development aid. Understanding the drivers, dynamics and impacts of mobility and migration in the contemporary world requires a broad-based and interdisciplinary research approach which is cognisant of the increasingly complex and multi-scalar drivers and experiences of migration. Despite some notable and highly innovative research to date, which we highlight in this document, the study of migration has suffered from prolonged fragmentation with academics and policy makers often failing to step across disciplinary, theoretical, methodological and geographical boundaries to learn from one another. There is also a lack of systematic understanding of the ways in which migration-related research can effectively inform and shape relevant contemporary global policy frameworks including: [The Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#); [The Global Compact on Refugees](#); and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) – in particular (but not limited to) those relating to poverty (Goal 1); good health and wellbeing (Goal 3); quality education (Goal 4); gender equality (Goal 5); decent work and economic growth (Goal 8); reduced inequalities (Goal 10); and sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11).

Researchers, policy makers and practitioners face challenges in developing research tools and policy and practice instruments in a field whose central features (economic and political dynamics, migratory routes, costs of travel, policy and legal environments in transit and destination areas) are constantly shifting. Given the broad recognition in both academic and policy circles that ‘impact’ is a core component of ‘good’ research, there is a need to take stock of how it is best defined within migration contexts. This includes identifying and building upon effective and promising ways of generating impact through closer collaboration and communication between researchers, policy-makers, practitioners and migrant (as well as host) communities.

Our strategic framework is structured around three central questions that seek to address the above challenges:

- 1) What are the substantive thematic and topic areas of migration which are under-researched/understood to date?
- 2) What are the core principles and approaches required to enhance and build equitable and sustainable partnerships between all key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of migration-related research?
- 3) What types of research are likely to have the widest impact and reach in terms of influencing policy, practice and public debate with respect to migration, as well as supporting other global development agendas?

Following this line of questioning, this framework seeks to provide advice to the AHRC and

²According to the IOM 2020 World Migration Report, there are over 272 million international migrants and 740 million internal migrants. See:

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/wmr_2020.pdf, p. 2 and p. 19

³According to the Migration Policy Institute (amongst others), it is a big topic in the Top 10 Migration Issues 2019. See: migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2019

ESRC, and UKRI more widely, on the strategic direction of its migration-focused investments, identifying how they can make a distinctive contribution in this area.

How this document is organised

The document is organised into three parts, each responding to one of the questions above. First, an overview of AHRC and ESRC (and to a lesser extent wider UKRI) investments related to migration research is presented. This chapter draws on the LIDC-MLT's own mapping of the portfolios as well as information gathered during a series of 'Global Migration Conversations (see methodological approach, below) and a review of literature related to migration research and migration studies. It considers the contents of the portfolio, identifying the themes for which significant funding has been provided and the mechanisms for funding.

Second, the current situation with respect to research partnerships is described, including ways in which the current funding environment encourages, and in some cases, impedes equitable research partnerships and opportunities for enhanced work in this area.

Third, efforts to promote the impact of migration research and areas where there is potential to enhance impact-related work are presented. This section includes reflections on how researchers can maximise impact, as well as steps that UKRI can take to help promote engagement and impact of its funded migration-research projects.

Providing a road map to the logic and key recommendations of this document, a strategic framework (page 17) is provided. This sets out the identified thematic and methodological aspects of research which require further attention and suggests key activities, processes and outcomes required to develop an effective and comprehensive shared research strategic agenda for the AHRC and ESRC. The strategic framework also includes legacy activities which will transcend the initial lifespan of the five-year strategic agenda with a view to helping to ensure the sustained viability of the councils' migration portfolio. The framework is broken down graphically into its three key elements (research themes, partnerships, and impact) and presented in each of the relevant sections.

This document is not meant to be an encyclopaedia of all topics and themes related to migration and displacement studies. Rather, the areas we have focused on have been chosen in light of Migration Conversations held throughout the world, as well as the strategic landscape of UK and wider research funding. We recognise that there are other related research fields, such as diaspora studies and inter-cultural translation, which we have not been able to explore substantially here but which open up important further interdisciplinary insights and opportunities. We see this strategic agenda as a dynamic road map for ongoing research, providing a platform from which to identify and work with further research gaps, opportunities and priorities as they emerge.

In addition to the Strategy, a 'Factbook' has been created by the LIDC-MLT, containing facts and figures on migration and case studies of relevant migration research funded by the ESRC and AHRC.

Methodological approach

The LIDC-MLT employed an inclusive, consultative approach to assessing the scope, achievements and challenges of the existing portfolio of ESRC, AHRC and other funded migration-related research. Further, it sought to identify strategic opportunities and priorities for further research and to highlight best practice in the area of impact. Key questions underpinning our inquiry and with which we engage in this strategic agenda include the

following:

- 1) How can migration and refugee studies more effectively benefit from each other's theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions?
- 2) How can research and policy better respond to the continued movement of people into and across the European Union, between Europe and the UK, as well as in and between other global regions where migration takes place on a large scale?
- 3) How can research be used to better understand migration and displacement dynamics related to political and economic crises in countries and regions of origin and how can this research inform policy and practice?
- 4) What does emerging evidence tell us about the effectiveness of migration management and development policy which increasingly focuses on regions of origin, particularly in the Global South?
- 5) What improvements and methodological innovations can be made in the collection and compiling of data about migration trends and demographics to improve the quality of information that drives migration and development policy?

The development of the strategic agenda combined a review of the existing ESRC and AHRC research portfolios on migration together with discussions with key informants at the research councils; a series of 13 Global Migration Conversations on migration; and a focused workshop on establishing core principles for equitable partnership working in migration research. In addition, the strategic agenda reflects literature on the state of migration policy and research, including gaps and areas for development identified by other scholars and practitioners in the field.

In total, more than 450 participants including academics, practitioners, policy makers and representatives of migrant and refugee communities participated in the Global Migration Conversations. Each conversation adopted an open agenda, allowing participants to highlight both innovative migration-related research currently being conducted in their region, as well as identify the gaps in academic and/or policy-focused research. Participants were also invited to reflect on the strengths and challenges of research collaborations and partnerships, and on their experiences in generating impact from research (see Appendix 1 for further details). Chatham House Rules were applied whereby anything said by participants was not directly



attributed to them. The format comprised a combination of discussion panels and facilitated workshops using small groups and plenary sessions. This helped increase participation of people from very diverse backgrounds.

Participants of the Global Migration Conversation in Beirut, Lebanon. Image credit: LIDC-MLT

A workshop aimed at developing principles for building and sustaining equitable partnerships in migration research was held in Johannesburg in June 2019 with supplementary funding from GCRF (through Queen Mary University of London’s GCRF Quality-Related ‘QR’ funds). Thirty stakeholders from across five continents took part, a number of whom had been previously involved in the Global Migration Conversations.

Finally, a draft version of this migration research strategic agenda was shared and discussed at a workshop comprising approximately 30 migration specialists who provided further comments and input which has shaped the final document. We also received detailed comments from several peer reviewers and from the AHRC Strategic Advisory Group.



The LIDC-MLT recognises that the global situation at the time of publication, due to Covid-19, will have substantial impact on many of the themes and dynamics discussed in this strategy.

Medellín, Colombia. Image credit: LIDC-MLT

Current research councils’ migration portfolios

To date, the research councils and the coordinated efforts of UKRI have funded a range of highly innovative and impactful migration-related research projects spanning a broad range of disciplinary perspectives. These include centres such as [COMPAS](#) (Centre on Migration, Policy and Society) based at Oxford University, multiple large-scale projects which seek to bring scholars together across disciplines and regions for comparative research on migration, as well as a number of smaller projects funded through Network Plus and other mechanisms. Broadly, the AHRC-ESRC portfolio reflects a diverse range of themes and disciplinary clusters. In addition to migration-specific calls and programmes, the wider portfolio of research includes many investments that have been funded through discovery or responsive (i.e. Open Call) grants. Such grants form a significant part of the overall migration research portfolio. Some key programmes funded by the AHRC, ESRC and/or GCRF are outlined below.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

The AHRC has funded a range of disciplinary-specific projects related to migration, primarily in the fields of history, languages and literature, law, visual arts, media and music. The AHRC has also funded or co-funded a series of larger interdisciplinary strategic programmes and projects including:

- [The Diasporas, Migration and Identities Programme](#) (2005-2010; £6 million invested in large and small research, network and workshop grants and other postgraduate activities).
- [Translating Cultures Programme](#) (2016-2018; £1.5m on 'Researching Multilingualism at the Borders of Language, the Body, Law and the State').
- Open Call/ Responsive Grants, such as '[Reckoning with Refugeedom 1919-75: Refugee Voices in Modern History](#)' (PI Peter Gatrell, University of Manchester).

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

Since 2014, the ESRC and AHRC have invested over £250,000,000 in migration research (the ESRC invested £191,808,989 and the AHRC £63,647,667). The portfolio of funded research is extremely diverse in terms of scale, scope and thematic foci. Some examples of strategic programmes and projects include:

- [The Dynamics of Migration across the Mediterranean](#) Research Programme (2015-2016; £1 million, 8 projects).
- [Forced Displacement](#) (2016-2018; £3.5 million, 13 projects) (administered jointly with AHRC).
- [NORFORSK Migration and Integration](#) Programme (2019- ; £1 million contribution to a total £6 million portfolio).
- [PaCCS](#) (Partnerships for Conflict, Crime and Security Research) ESRC led, with AHRC (2008- ; £2.4m on displacement-related grants).
- Open Call/Responsive Grants, such as '[Brexit and UK and EU Immigration Policy](#)' (PI Jonathan Portes, Kings College London)

Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), established in 2010 with an initial 5-year budget of £1.5 billion to support research that addresses major development challenges in developing countries, also invests significantly in migration-related research. Refugees and Displacement (together with Security and Protracted Conflict) is one of the six challenge areas prioritised by the GCRF. Challenge Leaders actively promote opportunities for generating new research on displacement as well as for consolidating the work of individual research on these themes to maximise impact. GCRF has launched major calls for research on Protracted Displacement, Humanitarian Protection, and Conflict and Emergencies. The GCRF has also funded an £18.7 million research hub on South-South Migration and Inequalities, the largest migration research investment ever made globally (see Case Study 1 below).⁴

Working through the UKRI councils and academies as delivery partners, GCRF aims to address global challenges through disciplinary and interdisciplinary research; strengthen capability for research and innovation within the Global South and the UK; and provide an agile response to emergencies and opportunities. Throughout the Global Migration Conversations, participants highlighted the important role of the GCRF in providing new funding opportunities for investigators outside the UK, particularly in Africa and the Middle East and creating opportunities for new international and interdisciplinary research collaborations.

⁴ Case studies have been chosen to be illustrative of recent investments, particular kinds of engagement (UK-based, international, small or large-scale, networks) and partnerships. The selected cases are by no means a comprehensive list of impactful and/policy-relevant funded research but rather examples of the types and scale of investment by the research councils.

- [Migration for Development and Equality Research Hub](#) (£18.7 million) represents the UKRI's largest single investment in research funding (See Case Study 1)
- Protracted Displacement call (approximately £12.5 million)
- [RELIEF](#) Centre (2017- 2021; £4.5 million) (See Case Study 2)
- Humanitarian Protection Network Plus and Grant Scheme (£6 million from GCRF, £9 million from DFID)

Case Study 1. Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ)

The **Migration for Development and Equality Research Hub** is a five-year research initiative launched in 2019 which examines the dynamics of South-South Migration through six different corridors spanning 12 countries (Burkina Faso-Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana-China, Ethiopia-South Africa, Egypt-Jordan, Haiti-Brazil, Nepal-Malaysia). MIDEQ's aim is to ensure that countries and communities in the Global South benefit fully from South-South Migration and to find mechanisms for addressing inequalities that cause or result from such migration. It focuses on three main areas in addressing global inequalities: **reducing income inequalities, closing gaps in education and health** and **tackling South-South Migration related discrimination**. MIDEQ includes researchers from more than 15 universities and research centres on 5 continents, and collaboration from five UN organisations and the OECD. It involves 11 interrelated work packages across four thematic programmes: axes of inequality, South-South migration processes and outcomes; policies and interventions; and monitoring and evaluation outcomes. Particular attention is afforded to gender and the experiences of child migrants, as well as on integrating the arts into research processes.

The Hub represents a significant investment which has brought together researchers from the Global South and the Global North.

University of Coventry, PI: Professor Heaven Crawley

Case Study 2. Refugees, Education, Learning, Information Technology, and Entrepreneurship for the Future (RELIEF Centre)

The **RELIEF Centre** is a five-year GCRF-funded transdisciplinary research collaboration based in Lebanon which focuses on how to build a prosperous and inclusive future for communities affected by mass displacement. The centre is a partnership between UCL's Institute for Global Prosperity (and other UCL departments), the American University of Beirut, the Centre for Lebanese Studies and a wide range of NGO and civil society organisations. The centre focuses on four intersecting research themes: (1) **The Vital City** looking at infrastructure and services; how spaces and access to services are negotiated; and the complexities of local governance; (2) **Creating Value** developing new models for assessing community-driven projects for job creation, health and wellbeing; bringing innovations in methodologies and data metrics to strengthen evidence to inform policy; (3) **Future Education** concerned with co-designing appropriate education and learning opportunities for communities impacted by mass displacement; and (4) **Prosperity Gains and Inclusive Growth** exploring what inclusive prosperity means for people in Lebanon and how it can be achieved in the context of large-scale displacement. From an interdisciplinary perspective, the centre combines perspectives, insights and expertise from academics and practitioners from fields as diverse as architecture, urban design, development planning, engineering, education, health, development studies, economics, sociology and anthropology.

Through building international collaboration and local partnerships in Lebanon, the project is working towards a better understanding of how displaced communities adapt in various environments within one host country, as well as the challenges emerging in those areas. This knowledge will facilitate design interventions with the best impact for all within local communities. The project's education team has developed a free massive open online course or 'collaboration' (MOOC) connecting professionals and researchers working in communities in challenging circumstances; particularly migration and refugee populations and their host communities.

The RELIEF project is developing a model of indicators responding to the challenges relevant to Lebanon (Lebanon Prosperity Index). This will allow academics, NGOs and policymakers to measure levels of prosperity and quality of life in areas throughout the country, maximising the impact of local investment for development and enhanced quality of life.

University College London, PI: Professor Henrietta Moore

Other UKRI- administered schemes/UK-international collaborative research funding initiatives that have funded migration-related projects include:

- [Newton Fund](#) - a matching fund which aims to support science and innovation partnerships that promote economic development and welfare of developing countries. An example of this is the Indian Council for Historical research call- Cultural Heritage, Migration and Indian Diasporas.
- [ESRC - DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research](#) (accompanied since 2015 by The Impact Initiative).
- [Future Research Leaders Programme](#) - funding early career leaders in research and innovation through an open call (any discipline or research area).
- Open Call Response Mode funding of projects ranging from £500,000-2 million.

Non-UKRI funded research and collaborations on migration

While it is beyond the scope of this document to map all research initiatives and collaborations on migration, the LIDC-MLT has identified several examples of non-UKRI funded initiatives that have academic and practice relevance to the migration research landscape in the UK.



These include the Research Platform on Cities, Migration and Membership Collaborative, convened by the [Zolberg Institute](#) on Migration and Mobility at The New School in New York which unites research institutions across five continents. A range of other regional initiatives also exist which are well placed to inform migration research more broadly. Examples include the [RESAMA](#) network on environmental migration in Latin America and the [ReSOMA](#) network on migration and asylum research in Europe, based in Brussels and funded by the European Commission. Further engagement with these networks may prove useful for UKRI.

Migration memory mapping exercise in Medellín, Colombia. Image credit: LIDC-MLT

Where we are now: Overview of key strengths and areas for development of research portfolios

This section provides an overview of the key strengths and areas for development which emerged throughout the consultative global migration conversations. These insights have, alongside the review of research councils' portfolios, helped to inform the proposed migration research funding strategic agenda.

Strengths of the current research portfolio

At all of the Global Migration Conversations, UKRI was noted to be one of the world's most important funders of migration-related research. Moreover, the thematic scope of investments was recognised for being wide-ranging, as was the diversity of funding routes and mechanisms. Key strengths of the UKRI portfolio and funding methods identified included:

- UKRI was commended in particular for its recent efforts to make funding available for partners in other countries, especially in the Global South, and supporting networking and dissemination activities.
- The relative independence of UKRI's investments, the scale of grants offered and the wide range of ambitious and cutting-edge projects.
- The impact of UKRI-funded research on policy in the UK, Europe and globally.

A number of research programmes in particular were highlighted during the Global conversations as examples of good research practice with respect to their innovation, impact, or research approach. Research councils were commended for funding research that critiques and problematises existing policy frameworks and which, as well as having academic value, help shape policy debates. Much of the GCRF research fits this category.

Some key recognised strengths of AHRC-funded projects on migration included demonstrating the power and added value of the arts in understanding migration patterns and motivations, providing insight into people's lived migration experiences and in critically engaging with 'alarmist' and 'crisis-driven' policy and public discourses on migration. The importance of not just starting with English-language terms and concepts but consulting communities about the words and practices they use to engage with migration and related phenomena (such as 'hostility' and 'welcome') was mentioned repeatedly across our consultations.

Some successful examples of policy-relevant research are given below.

Case Study 3. Policy-relevant research examples

[Disparities in UK Asylum Appeals](#): This ESRC-funded study explored asylum-appeal adjudication procedures in the UK. It revealed important inconsistencies across British asylum tribunals and within individual courts. As well as having a significant academic impact in bringing the lens of geography to study law, the project contributed to the creation of a range of new guidelines for tribunals, including the creation of a [new film](#) to better explain the process to appellants. This study highlights the importance of bridging different academic disciplines (geography and law), as well as academics with the arts (by creating the film). *University of Exeter, PI: Nick Gill*

[Refugee Hosts](#) (ESRC-AHRC funded, via PaCCS): This project explores the opportunities and challenges for refugees and host communities experiencing large-scale displacement in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The project distinguishes itself by using both an interdisciplinary and participatory research approach to establish a creative archive of work by refugee and host community artists. *University College London, PI: Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh*

[The Global Governed? Refugees as Providers of Protection and Assistance](#) (ESRC-AHRC funded): This project explored refugee-to-refugee assistance, thus unsettling ideas about key actors in the provision of humanitarian assistance. The project provides a good example of fairly remunerating artistic collaborators, including poets, for their time and contribution to the study. Such practice was said to contrast with many collaborations between the social sciences and arts and humanities in which artists are often not provided with payment or recognition commensurate with their contribution. *University of Oxford, PI: Alexander Betts*

[Representation of transnational human trafficking in present day new media, true crime and fiction](#) (ESRC-funded): This project sought to monitor and critically assess media and literary narratives around human trafficking. The researchers observed in a study of some 80,000 media stories that terminology around trafficking and slavery are often blurred in ways which foster a crisis mentality, instil fear and propagate inaccurate gendered assumptions. This project is an example of the value of the arts in critically unpacking alarmist policy frames and findings have influenced media debates on this topical issue. *University of Leeds, PI: Christiana Gregoriou*

[Missing Migrants and Deaths at the EU's Mediterranean Border](#) (ESRC-funded): This project aimed to inform more systematic approaches to the gathering of information on migrant bodies found in the Mediterranean Sea and inform policy around the identification of bodies and the notification of families. The work involved interviews with authorities, civil society organisations and others in Lesbos (Greece) and Sicily (Italy). The researchers found that the investigation of deaths is inadequate and characterised by a policy vacuum. Many agencies with overlapping mandates lack coordination to deal with this issue. Data gathered can help improve national and pan-European collaborations for sharing data about dead and missing migrants, and for developing better systems for identifying the dead and informing families. This project set itself apart with its distinct focus and impact. It helped the Greek and Italian authorities to better understand flaws in their approach to managing migrant bodies. The project received substantive media coverage and the recommendations were taken into account by the Greek and Italian authorities, as well as a range of international organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). *University of York, PI: Simon Robins*

[Optimising refugee resettlement in the UK](#) (ESRC-funded): This project aimed to contribute to improving the resettlement experience for refugees in the UK and beyond and was the largest longitudinal study of refugee settlement ever to be undertaken in the UK. The research investigated the experiences of wellbeing and integration of resettled refugees who arrived in the UK in 2010 or earlier through the UK settlement programme. It was conducted across four cities at three points in time using a combination of quantitative survey research, focus group discussions and individual interviews. This approach enabled an exploration into the longer-term dynamics of

integration processes. This project is noteworthy because of its longitudinal approach and impact on different levels. The research has been influential on the national level, in informing discussions around the new UK Integration Strategy for refugees. It has had both local and international impact through the briefing of local government authorities on employment, housing and wellbeing of refugees and through providing advice to the European Resettlement Network. *University of Sussex, PI: Michael Collyer*

[Anti-Smuggling Policies and their Intersection with Humanitarian Assistance and Trust](#) (ESRC-funded): This project explored the phenomenon of migrant smuggling and the ways in which EU policies aim to counter it. It examined the effects of EU policy and law in anti-migrant smuggling actions in Italy, Greece, Hungary and the UK. A particular focus was on policies put into practice after the ‘European refugee crisis’ of 2015. The findings demonstrated how the EU and national policies have led to cases where civil society actors have been prosecuted or penalised when assisting irregular migrants and asylum seekers. The study concluded that anti-smuggling policies can negatively affect the work of civil society actors. The project was featured in an independently-made documentary - [Humanity on Trial](#) about the arrest of a civil society actor on Lesbos Island. The findings have impacted discussions among EU level decisions makers and fed into two additional research projects addressing EU policy. *Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), PI: Sergio Carrera*

[Our Migration Story: The Making of Britain](#) (AHRC-funded): This project is a collaboration between the Runnymede Trust and academics based at the universities of Cambridge and Manchester. Drawing on the words and research of over 60 historians based in universities and historical institutions – including the National Archives, the Imperial War Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Royal Historical Society – the project website presents the often untold stories of generations of migrants who came to and shaped the British Isles over the past 2,000 years. *University of Manchester, PI: Professor Claire Alexander*



Image credit: Professor Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Refugee Hosts Project

Our mapping of the current UKRI research portfolios demonstrates a broad scope of research funding across the globe with clear geographic concentrations of funding to certain countries within regions (such as South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, India, China, Brazil and Colombia). The GCRF is well known globally and investment in migration research centres in the Global South, such as the Africa Centre for Migration and Society at Witwatersrand University (part of the African Research Universities Alliance), was welcomed. There is, however, an evident need to strengthen migration-related research in certain countries within regions. For example, given the scale of developmental crises in Latin America (e.g. current displacement from Venezuela), more funding could be directed for research in this region. This is especially significant given the reduction in levels of North American funding for this region.

The Strategic Agenda Framework

The strategic agenda framework below sets out the main recommended elements of a strategy towards generating effective migration-related research, ensuring more equitable and effective research partnerships, and generating significant impact. The chart reads from the bottom up. Recommended activities (the orange boxes) related to each of these three themes are highlighted, together with process-oriented considerations (the green boxes) aimed at ensuring that the activities are appropriately targeted and engage the necessary stakeholders to ensure their success. Cross-cutting process considerations are highlighted in light blue boxes that transect the three areas (Substance, Partnerships, and Impact). The final outcomes (the blue boxes) represent the desired state of affairs which, if achieved, would be indicative of a successful migration research strategy.

Given that the components of substance, partnerships and impact are discussed in detail below, here we wish to briefly highlight the pertinence of the cross-cutting and legacy issues in the strategic framework. The intention is that these cross-cutting themes permeate all aspects of migration research moving forward. They include the **continued bridging of the arts and social sciences**; **building partnerships across projects** to consolidate thematic and geographic expertise and to enhance impact activities; **supporting a balance of academic, policy and practice oriented research**; **strengthening South-to-South partnerships**; **building nodes of knowledge, expertise and resource bases**; **maintaining a commitment to ethical practice** particularly in recognition of the likely vulnerabilities related to migration; and **encouraging a commitment by research and other institutions to environmentally sustainable practices** in research.



Group discussion at the Global Migration Conversation in Medellín, Colombia. Image credit: LIDC-MLT

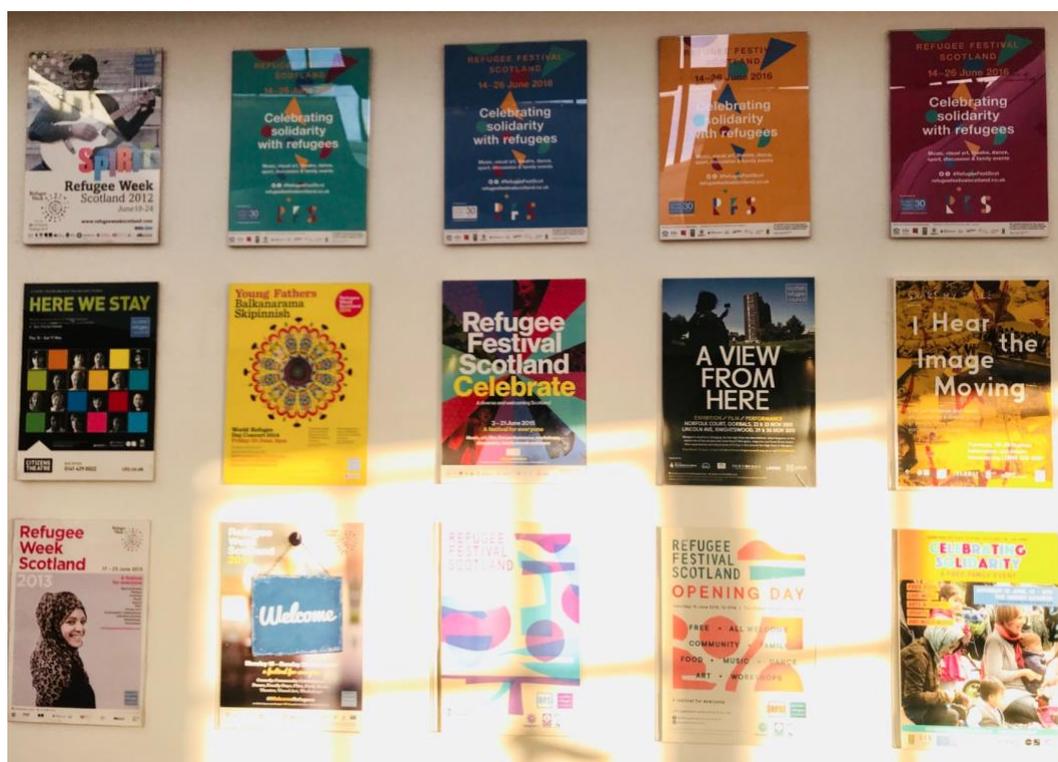
Several legacy issues were highlighted as being vital to sustaining the scope and quality of UKRI's important research on migration. These include the **continued presence of a migration specialist** within each of the relevant councils in order to support the portfolio; **continued emphasis on data archiving and curation** (including making additional resources available to support curation); and a proposed **Network Plus type grant to sustain the regional and global networks** of migration scholars, practitioners, policy makers and artists generated through the work of the LIDC-MLT.

Structure of the framework

The strategic agenda framework is structured around three foci:

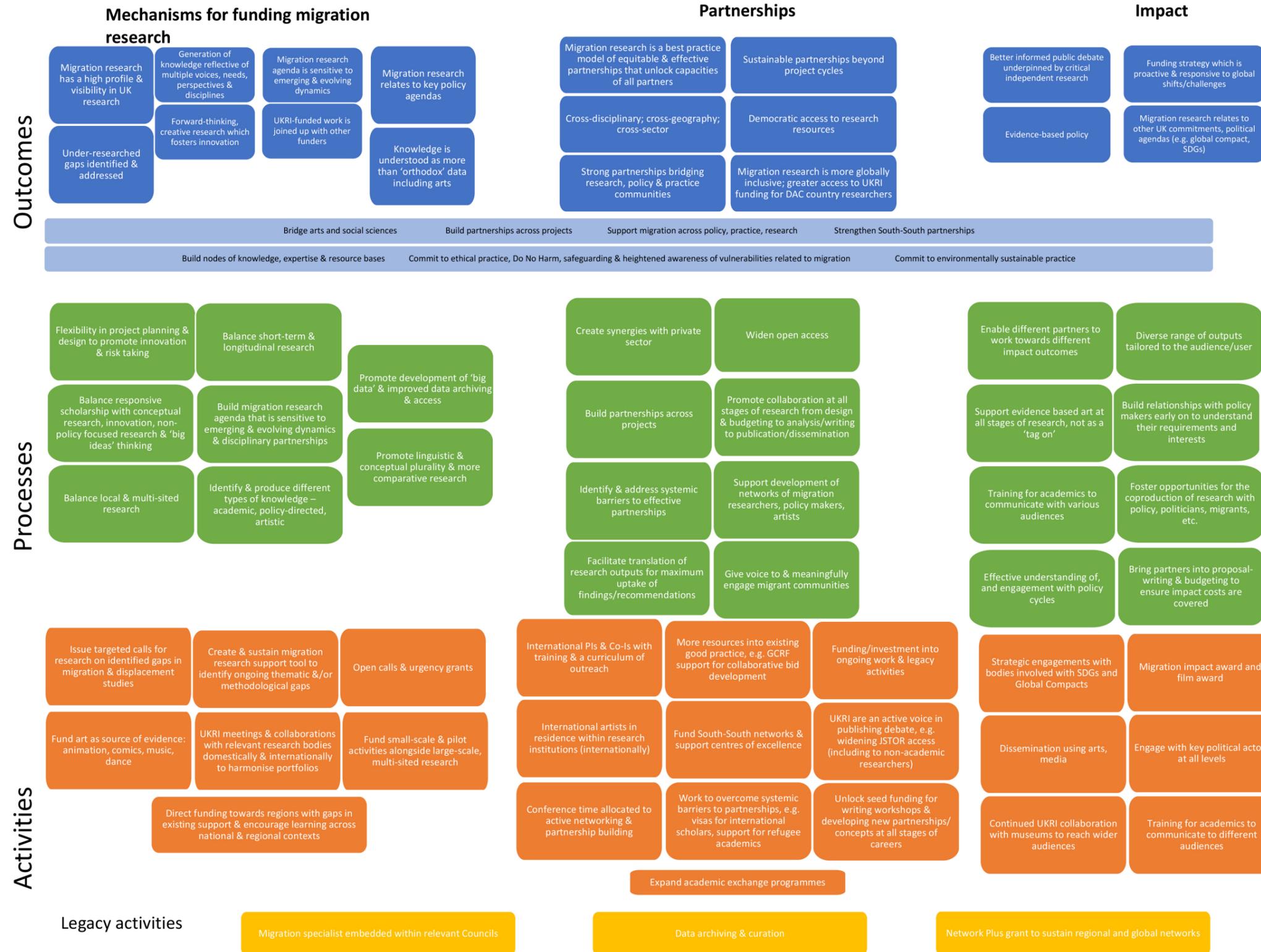
- 1) Cross-cutting, substantive thematic and topic areas of migration, and methodological approaches which are under-researched/understood.
- 2) Work which is likely to enhance and build equitable and sustainable partnerships between all key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries of research.
- 3) Research likely to have the widest impact and reach in terms of influencing policy, practice, public debate as well as supporting other global development agendas.

The recommendations contained in each of these sections arise from feedback from the Global Migration Conversations, review of the UKRI portfolio, and review of literature. Where linkages to the AHRC and ESRC Delivery Plans are clear, they are noted.



Posters collection of refugee initiatives in Glasgow, Scotland. Image credit: LIDC-MLT

Diagram 1: Strategic Agenda Framework for migration research



Strand 1: Themes for funding migration research

Cross cutting themes

While substantive gaps and themes are detailed in the following section, a number of recommendations relate to cross cutting issues including: conceptual clarity; inter-disciplinary working; geographical foci; and the historical and temporal dimensions of migration and mobilities. These are further summarised in the following section since consideration of these issues underpin the strategic agenda as a whole.

Migration – concepts and meanings

The study of migration is driven by different thematic priorities and shaped by the geo-political, sectoral and intellectual contexts in which it takes place. A key theme encountered in the development of this strategic framework concerned the question: *who are we talking about when we talk about migrants and what are we talking about when we talk about migration?* Some actors consulted in our research questioned the utility of the very notion of migration. They felt that at the core of what we term ‘migration studies’ are rather questions of development, wellbeing, inequalities, human rights, identity or psycho-social understandings of community. Indeed, in some cases, migration might be better considered as a cross-cutting theme, enabling it to be more easily integrated into research on other substantive topics or fields such as health, education, economics, heritage, cultural participation, political theory or sustainable development. The diversity of knowledge around migration is a source of richness and we should be wary of collapsing very nuanced and different dimensions of the human experience into a monolithic idea of ‘migration’. Zhang (2018), for example has suggested that ‘mobilities’ may be a more useful framing than migration in that it better captures the ongoing dynamic of affecting, and being affected, by and through movement (see also Urry 2007). Nonetheless, the idea of a common strategic agenda for migration research which recognises these nuances was welcomed.

Migration research does not just require us to count migrants and document their experiences, but also to explore how migration shapes communities and vice versa. This includes family members left behind and communities which are receiving migrants or hosting refugees. While being cautious not to focus on ‘who is a potential migrant’, it would still be beneficial to understand better the motivations and basis of the decision-making of those who decide to leave and those who decide to stay. This points to the importance of funding research which generates better understandings of migration that defies neat categorisation, as well as research on migrant-community relationships including between different cohorts of migrants arriving over time and between migrant and host communities.

The term ‘migrant’ is used in a variety of forms across disciplines and policy areas and, importantly to the global discussion, translates differently linguistically and conceptually across languages and contexts. There are also clear conceptual gaps. For example, there is no common terminology for first and second-generation categories of migrants. Moreover, the question of race and how it is understood in relation to migrant categories in Europe and elsewhere is under explored (see section below on priority thematic areas for further research). Meanwhile, the migration landscape is changing and research is required to advance more nuanced understanding of phenomena such as migration influenced by climate or environmental change as well as making sense of ‘mixed flows’ of people whose movement is determined by both voluntary and forced migration drivers. Political theorists and socio linguists are also needed to help conceptualise new trends in political economy and the ways in which we understand concepts which underlie questions of migration such as democracy

and citizenship, as well as how institutions and policy structures impact the lives of those who move and shape migration decisions and patterns.

Migration research as a multi-actor inter-disciplinary field

While our research revealed a range of successful research collaborations between multiple actors – including researchers, policy makers, civil society organisations, migrant groups, artists, the media, and members of the public – it is also the case that knowledge is often produced in siloes and not shared effectively. Moreover, each actor has specific strategic priorities in creating and disseminating knowledge about migration which often do not converge with those of others. There is clear value, therefore, in fostering coordinated and collaborative inter-disciplinary knowledge production which offers a better grasp of this highly complex phenomenon.

Different disciplines approach migration in different ways and employ terminology which may not easily translate into other fields. Lawyers, for example, commonly guard the term ‘refugee’ as related to its codification in international legal instruments such as the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, making a clear distinction between those moving for economic and persecution-related reasons. However, despite previously being critiqued, the term refugee is still used by environmentalists to refer to those forced to flee because of climate change or other natural disaster and by sociologists to explore a common human experience of rootlessness.

There are also important regional differences in how knowledge about migration is shared among various stakeholders. The arts and humanities can play an important role in shaping the discussion around migration, even in the corridors of power. Indeed, the LIDC-MLT encountered countless examples of successful collaborations across the arts and social sciences, and of civil society groups using art to speak to policy makers alongside more traditional means. Perceptions were mixed about the types of evidence sought by policy makers and how such evidence is used. While some policy makers were said to value ‘hard’ evidence in the form of quantitative data, others were more convinced and moved to action through ‘soft’ data such as personal stories and their impact on individuals and communities. Those generating new data are expected to translate research into digestible forms if there is to be any policy uptake of their findings. However, the work of adapting research findings for policy audiences was reported to be something that many academic researchers struggled to do. Even those who had become adept in targeting policy audiences frequently found it difficult to persuade policy makers to use their research to shape policy agendas. The best examples of research engaging with policy come either from researchers who have a very clear and current idea of what the information and evidence needs of policy actors are, or else emerge as a result of sustained coproduction of research involving collaboration between researchers and policy makers from the beginning of and throughout the research process.

Meanwhile, academics consulted for this strategic agenda felt that in many contexts, policy on migration is becoming less and less evidence-based and more influenced by public perceptions and political posturing so that efforts to meaningfully engage with policy often feels futile. This is a notion previously identified by, among others, the European Commission (see for instance Beutin et al’s (2006) report on [Migration and Public Perception](#); Facchini and Mayda’s (2008) article on [‘Does public opinion rule?’](#) and Hainmueller and Hopkins’ (2013) discussion paper, [‘Public attitudes towards immigration’](#)). Participants discussed the need to maintain a balance between conducting research that is impactful in a policy sense but also encouraging research which is ‘risky’, not afraid to ‘fail’, and which, at the same time, can uphold intellectual freedom and help build new knowledge.

Given this context, and building on important steps already being taken by UKRI, research councils should **continue to promote innovative collaboration between policy/practice specialists and researchers**, encouraging cross-fertilisation of ideas and the framing of research in terms of relevance for practice, while still maintaining the principle of academic independence.

Regional foci

Beyond the expansive geographic scope of the UKRI research portfolio outlined above, it was suggested that more should be done to promote linkages within, and between, UK institutions and other global research centres. This could be done, for instance, through UKRI working more closely with academic centres which are geographically and academically well placed to develop understandings of migration patterns at local, national and regional levels as they evolve. Some important work has been done in Africa to develop Centres of Excellence working on migration – such as the African Research Universities Alliance’s (ARUA) Centre of Excellence on migration at Witwatersrand University. Furthermore, innovative collaborations are being developed between such centres and UK universities. There is, however, currently less collaboration between UKRI and research centres in South Asia and Latin America. A key recommendation therefore is to **direct research funding not only to these emerging centres of excellence but also to regions where less migration research has been supported** (such as for instance Central Asia, Latin America, certain regions in Africa) where there are centres which could enhance understanding of the ‘silent’ refugee crises which get limited international attention. Crucially it will be important to consider how these new investments could build on, and enhance, programmes of research already in place, rather than promoting one-off short-term research initiatives. These include DRC and South Sudan, where ongoing conflict continues and, for example, in Venezuela where an estimated three million people have fled to neighbouring countries such as Colombia (Migration Policy Institute 2018). Similarly, it might help address the fact that, with respect to climate and environment related migration, particular regions such as South America and the Middle East are considerably under-represented in the literature on migration published in English. Additionally, little research has been done on the dynamics of this type of migration in receiving countries and if these are different from other types of migration (Obokata et al., 2014).

Irrespective of where funding originates, there tends to be a dominance of particular countries and/or academic institutions within geographic regions where research and resources are concentrated. In South Asia, for example, most research is said to be concentrated in Delhi And Kolkata, India and Dhaka, Bangladesh. To decentre this dominance in regions that have enjoyed greater funding, UKRI should look to **encourage research from countries that have not had as much support** (for instance in South Asia, states within India that have not been the focus of research as well as from Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh). In the UK, the Migration Conversation in Glasgow revealed how innovation in research in Scotland is perceived to be overshadowed by work conducted elsewhere in the UK. There is a lack of understanding of the specific migration issues emerging in Scotland and a lack of awareness of the innovations taking place there which could, it was said, be learned from and adapted to other UK contexts. Alongside supporting research in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on migration and integration dynamics, **learning across these regional and national contexts should also be promoted.**

A significant factor raised in the Global Migration Conversations was how the disciplinary focus of migration studies differs in important ways from one region to another, yet these nuances are often overlooked. In some places, such as in parts of Africa and South Asia, for example, there has been a strong focus on urbanism while conceptual work and political theory and legal studies in relation to migration was felt to be underdeveloped. In the

Americas, legal and political scholarship on migration was considered strong, yet there was a concern that this was sometimes to the detriment of investment in other disciplines. Regions such as Latin America and South Asia are host to a plurality of sophisticated arts-based and participatory methodological traditions which also inform the type of migration research that comes to the fore and determine whose voices are included through such research. **Supporting unusual mixes of disciplines or disciplines which are presently under-represented is recommended.**

Historical and temporal dimensions and longitudinal research

Our discussions reveal a strongly felt need to encourage scholars to avoid a 'presentist' bias and to take the longer view with respect to migration and mobilities and consider the historical and temporal aspects of these phenomena.

Engaging with historical and temporal dimensions implies methods which involve mining older data sets such as archives, historical artefacts and artistic and literary corpuses. The migration portfolio includes some important examples of research approaches which historicise migration. These have been funded particularly through the AHRC and include work such as 'Reckoning with Refugeedom, 1919-1975: refugee voices in modern history' (PI Peter Gatrell) and 'The Exilio Network: Research into Refugees and Other Migrations' (PI Scott Soo). In addition, further research that looks at migrant and 'host' community interactions over time and between different generations is needed (an example of work which does this is the 'Refugee Hosts' project led by PI Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh).

Given that the drivers and impacts of migration are dynamic and complex and shift over time, funding for more **longitudinal research** (both qualitative and quantitative) which captures migratory patterns and dynamics over time and across the life course is needed. [The ESRC Centre for Population Change](#), that specifically focuses on migration and mobility, provides a number of examples illustrating the value of longitudinal research. Relying solely on snapshot, cross-sectional approaches to research can limit our understanding of such complexities and also lead to ill-informed policy and practice. Longitudinal research can be crucial in better understanding how factors such as migration patterns; their economic, psychological, health and social impacts; their intergenerational effects; or the processes of integration and identity formation play out in the medium and longer term. In particular, longitudinal approaches have been highlighted as a way to better understand the dynamics of environmental related mobilities (Obokata et al., 2014).

Funding is required for work that aims to **historicise current trends and patterns in migration** and their individual and collective impacts. Furthermore, greater attention needs to be afforded to work that captures the **temporal dynamics of migration and mobilities with respect to the individual life course, across generations and across collective identities such as country of origin, faith or ethnicity.**

Identified thematic gaps

While the contributions of UKRI (and specifically in some cases GCRF) to global knowledge exchange around migration, as noted above, are to be celebrated, a range of thematic priorities for further research emerged. A key point to note is that in the Global Migration Conversations there was not always consensus around gaps and future priorities. Policy makers sometimes have different strategic objectives from each other and from academics and different stakeholders also work according to varying time scales (for example, policy and legal timeframes versus academic publishing timelines). Gaps and priorities identified in the Global Migration Conversations were therefore further substantiated through cross reference with relevant literature and further consultation with a core group of migration scholars,

practitioners and policy specialists at the stage of finalising the strategic agenda. One particular issue permeating the conversations, however, was the **need to move beyond a 'crisis' approach in migration research**. Although UKRI has funded important work on conflict-related displacement, those consulted were keen for the councils to also **fund more work on other forms of migration including some types of economic and labour migration** (see below) and to focus on **migrant contributions and flourishing** in addition to 'harm' mitigation. There was also a concern expressed that some of the councils' rapid response calls, for instance the [ESRC Mediterranean Migration Research Programme](#), although generating important research, had led to a degree of duplication.

Particular thematic priorities identified through the conversations are outlined below. They are organised around the need to fund research which builds more sophisticated understandings of the demographics of migration; the reasons for migration; the experiences of migration; and the structural and political issues in relation to national, international, regional and global migration governance.

Theme cluster 1: Who is migrating?

Demography, family and generation: migration across the lifecourse

A consistently identified research gap relates to demographic questions including a lack of statistical demographic data in certain regions such as in South Asia as to **who is migrating and how demographic patterns of movement shift over time**. This includes the need for more concentrated exploration of how migration interacts with questions of age and ageing and family composition and change. How the family is understood, shaped and re-formed in contexts of mobility, and how mobility identities play out over generations were identified as important research foci. There is also a need to explore how migration shapes experiences of those 'left behind' including family members, children, and spouses. One example given was how migration impacts on the wives/partners of Nepali men migrating to the Gulf. Moreover, the effects of migration on children has led to public outcry over the treatment of child migrants and asylum seekers and the inability of governments to generate adequate solutions (Migration Policy Institute 2018). There are increasing concerns also about children migrating alone and making the transition to adulthood within systems of migration governance.

Gender and intersectional identities

There was an identified gap in unpacking the various ways in which mobility and immobility shape and are shaped by gender and other aspects of identity including race, class, disability, age, faith, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity. Much work on **race** was said to be dated and there is a need for renewed critical inquiry to explore how intersectional racial identities play out in different contexts over time, including questions related to 'shadeism' and race relations within, and between, migrant communities and host societies. This includes how different communities of migrants interact among themselves in host states, as well as how host states interact with them.

There is insufficient research on how **disability** is affected by migration, including how it might drive migration in the context of inequalities; may be a consequence of migration; or how it is experienced in the context of migration and integration in host countries.

While it is recognised that **gender** shapes migratory decisions, journeys and outcomes, there has been limited research into the plurality of gendered identities in relation to intra- and

inter-group differences. Critical interrogations of male migrations and masculinities highlighting both the relationality of male and female migrations while challenging homogenous representations of women and girl migrants as 'victims' and men and boys as 'risky' are needed. In recognising the potential for gendered and intersectional approaches to facilitate a shift from siloed to coordinated, multisectoral strategies, further research is needed on how intersectional identities combine in different ways before, during and after migration and shape experiences of both marginalisation and privilege.

Research could do more to explore the plurality of **sexual and gendered identities** including the specifics of how men experience migration as well as women, and how the migration experiences of those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex (LGBTI) may be distinct from other kinds of experiences.

Theme cluster 2: Why do people migrate?

Factors shaping migration decision-making

There is considerable research on the general reasons why people do or do not migrate, the processes they go through in formulating their decisions, and why people return or decide not to return. However, there is a need for more research on the **migratory journeys** that people make, involving points of origin and destination and the spaces and stops between them as well as on how context specific factors influence why people move. Research is also needed on how migration decisions reflect relational influences such as family and wider social networks. Over time, such influences may shape the movement opportunities and choices for subsequent generations. Indeed, a key question concerns 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 wider power structures related to social mobility and demography. These dynamics and more holistic analyses of 'journeys' needs to be better integrated into research.

Further research is also required into how **technology** in its multiple forms shapes opportunities for and experiences of migration (through information sharing, access to required services and support and necessary documentation); as well as hampers and controls movement through increasing powers of surveillance and border control. Technology also has important social impacts in the context of migration which require further exploration. One academic, for example, recounted how a research participant described their primary means of staying in touch with their family of origin as being through the ATM (i.e. through sending of remittances).

There is a reported gap in better understanding combined and intersecting reasons for migration over time; for example, in how environmental and society factors in migration are often very closely intertwined (Obokata et al., 2014).

Labour migration and elite migration

Labour migration, which already features in the migration portfolio, must remain a focus of attention given the continued **significance of economic migration, the global commitment to the provision of decent work and the emergence of new types of work** and employment in the global economy. There are also suggested but unclear differences in outcomes for those who migrate for work according to whether they travel to high, low or middle income countries (Aldridge et al., 2018) and differentiated benefits and disadvantages according to other socioeconomic factors, although these dynamics remain under-researched (Foo et al., 2018; Sterud et al., 2018).

Within the corpus of labour migration research, there is believed to be relatively less emphasis on **elite and highly-skilled** labour migration, or on the relationship between highly-skilled and unskilled labour migration. Given the changing landscape of migration/immigration policy in the UK in the post-Brexit period, this area will be an important focus for some researchers.

Research on labour migration should include not only international economic migration, but also internal labour migration. This field intersects with urbanisation studies and labour studies more broadly.

Climate and the environment

Despite some investment, the relationship between the environment and migration, and specifically climate change or environmental migration, is relatively underexplored in UK-funded scholarship and in other international research. Research by Black et al. (2011) has concluded that environmental change affects migration indirectly, and in interaction with broader factors. This is further corroborated by a more recent systematic review on international environmental migration by Obokata et al. (2014) which reports on the complexities surrounding the **scale and causes** of international environmental migration and the demographics of who is likely to move. This work has highlighted how factors leading to movement in the context of environmental degradation typically coincide and interact with other social, economic and political factors. Obokata et al. (2014) also highlighted the need for a greater focus on **urban environmental challenges** such as air pollution since, until now, most research has been on rural problems related to environment and climate. More research to understand these complexities across different regional contexts is required.

Furthermore, in recognition of the dominance of scientific, technocratic and policy-driven research, there is an urgent need to foster interdisciplinary perspectives that build upon the insights of critical social science and arts and humanities migration scholarship. In particular, more nuanced perspectives on **'resilience', adaptation and well-being** which are cognisant of broader structural constraints are required. There are important opportunities to learn from, and link to, a wider body of knowledge in Latin America, Africa and South Asia where research in this area is more developed but scantily resourced. To help facilitate such collaborations, **closer synergies between the Resilience and Displacement challenge areas** within the GCRF would be welcome.

Forced migration

Forced migration research (including work on refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as environmental and disaster-induced displacement) is a priority theme of the GCRF. Recent GCRF calls related to this theme have included Protracted Displacement as well as a Network Plus call on Protection (including displacement) and a complementary joint AHRC/DFID call that focuses on humanitarian protection. UKRI also supports research on refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and in Europe more broadly. The ESRC Urgency Call on Mediterranean Migration is an example of this.

Continuing gaps in research with respect to forced migration, however, include coverage of **newly emerging or worsening displacement crises** (e.g. Rohingya and Venezuelan displacements), **gendered drivers and experiences** of displacement, **chronic health conditions and displacement**, **livelihoods** and protracted displacement, **refugee education**, and creative approaches to durable solutions (including translocality, freedom of movement, and extended forms of humanitarian protection).

The GCRF Challenge Lead for Conflict and Displacement is currently engaging with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other organisations in the construction of a **global academic network** to support research with refugees, in support of the Global Compact on Refugees. This initiative draws on UKRI's extensive experience and expertise in network building and should be supported.

Internal and circular migration

It is clear that while much research has focused on cross-border migration, there is still need for further insights and understanding of the dynamics of **internal migration and displacement** within borders. Furthermore, there has tended to be a focus on the idea that migration is a linear and single event and limited research has engaged with the **circular nature of migration** and the factors shaping these patterns of movement over time. This suggests the need for further longitudinal research that can capture these dynamics over the life course of individuals, but also at the collective intergenerational and community level. An important aspect of these dynamics is the factors shaping return migration. This includes the increasing political focus and investment in migrant returns that has taken on global significance and raises important research questions about how when and under what conditions can migrants and asylum seekers safely return to their origin countries (Migration Policy Institute 2018).

A focus on **urbanisation**, and cities, in a migration context is important as it provides a lens through which different 'types' and 'layers' of migration work together (for example, internal and international, forced and labour migration, migration across generations and time periods), *and* the vital interconnections between these. In a context where international migration continues to dominate research agendas, the significance of rural to urban migration in specific contexts, and the insights it affords in relation to the links between urban and rural economies and societies, are important areas for research. There also needs to be a shift in attention from global and primary cities to secondary cities and smaller towns which might be, or have the potential to become, stopping points in migrant journeys or places of settlement.

'Irregular' migration

While patterns of movement tend to be categorised as either regular or irregular (or 'legal' and 'illegal' although these terms are less and less used, in recognition of their problematic essentialising aspects), in reality people move between these different categories at different points in time. Being denied access via legitimate migration routes or becoming categorised as no longer legitimate after a period of time (for example with some migrant children who become subject to deportation after making the transition to 'adulthood' on their 18th birthday), means that people frequently have no options than to 'become illegal'. Further research is required to understand these **patterns of regularity and irregularity** and the **role of policy and governance processes** in creating illegitimacy and illegality. Given the goals and intentions of the Global Compact for Migration, research is required to better understand how policy intentions to promote 'safe, orderly and regular' migration can in practice be operationalised.

Mediators of migration

There are multiple and diverse actors facilitating migration on both sides of the law. Much media coverage vilifies mediators of migration as 'traffickers', 'smugglers', 'perpetrators of modern slavery' etc. In reality the roles of those facilitating movement are diverse and are motivated by different values and objectives (see Khosravi, 2010). In recent years there has been increasing reporting of the criminalisation of humanitarian efforts to support migrants

throughout their journeys (see Carrera et al., 2019). Further research is required to better understand the different actors involved in migratory processes, the roles they assume and the impact and influence they have on migratory decisions and their enactment.

Theme cluster 3: How do people experience migration?

A further set of research gaps centres around people's lived experience of migration and its impacts on their health, its emotional, social and economic effects, as well as on access to education, training and other learning and life opportunities.

Health

Particular aspects of health and wellbeing in the context of migration were identified as being neglected in current research and migration researchers felt that literature on migration and health is often hidden or difficult to access. A recent [UCL-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health](#) (Abubakar et al., 2018) highlights both the potential detrimental effects as well as benefits to health brought about through migration. The Medical Research Council and Wellcome Trust have both expressed an interest in engaging more with health issues relating to migrant and displaced populations, and could be engaged as partners with social science and humanities researchers.

Several recent systematic reviews on the evidence base of the health of migrant populations have highlighted important gaps in research and policy. While there appears to be higher incidences of work related stress, poor general health and higher reports of discrimination and bullying amongst migrant workers, there is still a lack of available research to support the link between immigrant status and poor health and mental distress (Sterud et al., 2018). A further review by Hargreaves et al. (2019) concluded that international migrant workers are at considerable risk of work-related ill health and injury and that their health needs are critically overlooked in research and policy. Similarly, while migration to high income countries may have some benefits for international migrants in terms of lowering mortality rates, there is an identified lack of data on health outcomes of migrant communities in low and middle income countries (Aldridge et al. 2018). A systematic review and meta-analysis of the evidence of depression amongst migrant populations again revealed a severe lack of understanding of the factors associated with poor mental health of migrant sub populations (Foo et al 2018). As an example of more regionally focused analysis, a recent systematic review in India on the health of internal migrants revealed significant health issues for migrant communities which had a combination of environmental and behavioural causes (Kusuma and Babu 2018). The authors pointed to the need for more migrant-sensitive urban health care systems suggesting the need for research as to how these could best be achieved. As well as better understanding and how best to respond to the health and wellbeing needs of migrant communities in different contexts, the importance of integrating a migration lens to the management of national health issues is also an emergent field in research. A case in point is a recent review which calls for national strategies on the management of tuberculosis to become more 'migrant-inclusive' (Shete et al. 2018). Moreover, there is a need to better understand how migration impacts chronic health conditions such as HIV, diabetes, cancer and tuberculosis.

Given the above, more investment is required in research to inform the development of **approaches to health promotion and care that go beyond emergency, short-term approaches** and consider how best to support migrant communities within national health strategies; the **mental health needs** of migrants and displaced populations including post-migration stressors; and how different **socio-economic factors of migrants** and the host communities they arrive in diversely affect health and wellbeing outcomes.

Another health area that requires more research is the role of migration in the context of **health emergencies**, such as **pandemics**. Research by Wickramage et al. (2018) highlighted the elevated risks for migrants and refugees in global health crises and the failure to consider refugee and migrant populations in pandemic influenza preparedness plans. Other related factors are the **discrimination** and **stigmatisation** of migrants in these contexts, partly associated with their perceived role as vectors of disease and illness. At the time of finalising this strategic agenda, the COVID-19 pandemic is highlighting direct and adverse impacts on migrant and refugee populations both in terms of the lack of adequate care and protection of these populations, as well as the use of so-called 'public health' measures which risk fundamentally undermining the human rights of migrant and refugee communities.

Affective and experiential dimensions of migration

The emotional wellbeing as well as economic conditions of those who migrate and those who remain was highlighted as a further important gap in current research. Migration can generate both esteem and, in other contexts, stigma, particularly for women and young male deportees or for those who have a 'failed' migration project which does not bring about the anticipated benefits for individuals and their families. Several of the Global Migration Conversations identified the need to explore in more depth the '**social costs**' of migration and the **centrality of emotions** such as shame and dignity in the context of migration, as well as ideas related to duty and religion. More studies are needed to show how such emotions may facilitate or hinder integration and reintegration into communities across migratory trajectories. While these moral, ethical and psycho-social aspects of migration were considered central to the migratory experience, transnational family making and diasporas, it was felt that the so-called 'financialisation' of the diaspora by the policy community tends to divorce migrant communities from their social reality.

Cultural heritage

Important issues relating to **cultural heritage, identity and language** were identified, including the effects of migration on 'cultural safety' and cultural rights (Williams 1999). Such cultural rights are alluded to in policy discourses (see for example the [United Nations Report on The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Migrants in an Irregular Situation](#) [2014] and the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) [1966]). However, there is limited research on how cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible), identity and language shape, and are shaped by, migratory and post-migratory experiences, how people negotiate complex and over-laying cultural contexts and how these can be best represented in cultural and heritage sectors, in literature, arts, media, etc.

There are also interesting connections to be explored surrounding how **cultural assets, knowledges, values and practices** are accessed, transmitted, sustained for future use in the context of migration and diasporas, as well how they interact with other cultures and heritages. These practices may have implications for supporting or limiting achievement of sustainable livelihoods or migrant thriving.

Education

While there has been an increase in research funding for education in contexts of displacement, conflict and post-conflict, and on the role of education as a driver for sustainable development (current [GCRF Network Plus](#) and other grants), there is still space for widening understandings of education in the context of migration and displacement. Important questions include, for example, what constitutes **inclusive education** in contexts of displacement (with respect to language medium of teaching and learning; appropriateness of the curriculum; creating whole learning approaches which respond to the diversity of

learners); how, given on-going pressures concerning the supply of educational provision in these contexts, a focus can be maintained on **quality as well as access**. There is also important work required to explore the full potential of **non-formal and informal forms of learning provision** in these contexts and how they might be made available to migrant and refugee populations across the life course (for example, for different age groups and constituents of people such as refugee out-of-school youth or people who require new skill sets in order to secure employment in host countries etc.). A further issue relating to education in forced migration contexts is the importance of **shifting from short-termism and crisis mode provision**, and recognising that educational needs are not temporary but likely to last many decades and the potential of non-formal and vocational education to support different categories of migrants.

Outside of the realms of forced migration and displacement, more research is required to better understand the complex intersections and dynamics surrounding migration and education including **patterns of movement in relation to both consumption and provision of educational goods and services**; and how migration and education are linked to **wider processes of global development, social and political change**.

Theme cluster 4: What are the politics of migration and securitisation of borders?

A final set of thematic issues relates to the geopolitics of migration governance and securitisation as well as how these interact with public and media discourses surrounding migration and related issues of integration and international protection.

Securitisation, international relations and migration governance

There is a need to better understand the multiple ways and the different levels at which securitisation takes place in the context of migration. For example, there is growing evidence of the criminalisation of humanitarian actors aiding migrants and an intensification in policies enforcing migrant returns at a global level (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). These developments raise important questions which require further investigation as to **how, when, and under what conditions, can migrants and asylum seekers be returned to their origin countries** (Migration Policy Institute, 2018)?

At the same time there is evidence of governments seeking to narrow avenues for humanitarian protection of migrants as observed in the USA and EU member states where asylum policies have been hardened and migration governance has been outsourced beyond Europe (Baldwin Edwards et al 2018). Global efforts to synergise core principles surrounding safe migration have been unsettled from the start as in, for example, the US withdrawal from the Global Compact on Migration. At the same time efforts such as the [Cartagena Declaration](#) in Latin America suggest that governance can take a more humanitarian approach (LIDC-MLT, 2019). These factors speak to the need for further research into the **political economy of migration governance**, and the **intersection between such governance, international relations and global securitisation**. What are the human and political impacts of **new regional and global alliances** established for the purposes of migration governance? How are **new and evolving securitisation measures** impacting on the lives and wellbeing of migrant populations as well as shaping new and emerging patterns of migration and migration governance?

Popular culture and public opinion

In order to understand the shifts occurring in many parts of the world in relation to migrants' rights there is a need to better understand and engage with public opinion. It was frequently proposed by those consulted that migration studies needs to look beyond migrants to consider **how mobility affects whole communities**, and engage with **host populations** and **disaffected voters**. This would involve more rounded assessments of the impact of migrant communities, shifting the rhetoric away from notions of migrants as 'burdens' and build on the evidence base that is currently emerging which demonstrates the **potential contributions** migrants make to economies and societies and highlighting the factors that enable them to flourish. The issue of migration is often looked at from a purely economic perspective rather than hearing and exploring the narratives and stories of host populations and engaging with questions of hospitality and/or hostility. The Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies at the University of California-Berkeley was cited as one attempt to understand this public sentiment. There was an identified need to **counter xenophobia through interdisciplinary research and public engagement**. Such insights are particularly relevant in view of the emergence of populist movements which are pushing migration to the forefront of public discourse (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). Further research is needed on **factors shaping public perceptions** and attitudes on migration and their impact on host and migrant communities in the Global North and Global South. Related to this is the perceived need for work which determines more appropriate and meaningful **benchmarks for integration success and failure** beyond markers such as employment rates or access to education.

In addition, there is a keen interest in continuing to foster **dialogue between the arts and social sciences** and to bring in those humanities that have been less represented to date including music and popular culture. Popular culture including music, food, social media and digital sources, it was stressed, is central to understanding the drivers, experiences and outcomes of migration.

Areas for methodological innovations/developments

Beyond, or alongside, specific thematic areas of further research is a set of methodological gaps and priorities that were identified during the course of the Global Migration Conversations. These are highlighted below.

New technologies

There has been a welcome turn in recent years towards exploring how new technologies can be harnessed to better understand migration and support education and research in this field. Especially in contexts where research is conducted across multiple locations, investment in technology is important to secure coordinated working between researchers, the protection of data and ensuring research participants' safety. Such factors are particularly important in migration studies given the vulnerability of many migrants, their often necessary involvement in irregular or clandestine activities, their lack of documentation, and the potential that information in the wrong hands could bring harm to them.

Particular opportunities for methodological innovation were recognised with respect to the use of social media in capturing all aspects of migratory trajectories. This includes how social media may shape migratory decisions, frame representations of self and the context of migratory experiences, maintain relationships and connections with those remaining behind or sustain political and/or social participation from afar. **How migrants are using social media** and other technology is a particularly important area for research in this regard. Similarly,

there needs to be more attention to the possible role of **artificial intelligence** (AI) in shaping migratory trajectories and how they impact the lives and livelihoods of migrant communities. It was considered that public-private research partnerships could be an important way to free existing knowledge in this area (for example with Facebook), although issues of privacy will require careful attention if such partnerships are to be pursued.

Maximising big data sets and further investment in quantitative data gathering

As identified in the Global Compacts on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and on Refugees, and raised in our conversations with the IOM, there is a need for sustained focus on using existing **big data** sets (that is large sources of data designed to gather information on other aspects of society) to identify what they might reveal about migratory patterns and outcomes. More work needs to be done to investigate the potential of large data sets - such as, for example, work permit registration data; tax data; health system registrations; census and household survey data - to what they can reveal with respect to migration.

Over and above the better use of existing data sets, there is a need for further **large-scale quantitative studies** in order to address important gaps and/or to improve 'big data' globally in terms of migratory patterns and flows. Our consultations revealed that there are important gaps in our knowledge of migration in some countries where its scale is vast. In India, for example, there is a lack of information about migration dynamics across the country with respect to intra-state and cross border movements. Meanwhile, in Brazil questions related to migration have, worryingly, been omitted from the latest census, and in the US there is a move to introduce questions about citizenship within the census, which may discourage many migrants from completing it. Within this context, opportunities to **integrate questions on migration and mobility into existing large-scale surveys** such as household, attitudinal and lifestyle surveys must be encouraged. This would increase the pool of data relating to migration while also encouraging scholars to consider the relevance of mobility in their analysis of wider dimensions of people's lives. However, at the same time, there is a need to understand and document **how the lack of effort to redress gaps in available data can have deeply-rooted political motivations**.

Another issue is the need to **strengthen mixed methods** approaches to research and more successfully combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies (for example through better use of qualitative methodologies to design the tools for generating large data sets). There is also potential in promoting **public-private partnerships** with social media, banks and consumer companies that could have an important role in making new types of big data available for secondary analysis from a migration/mobility perspective.

Further insight is required into how universities can better **manage data archiving and maintain open data** to ensure that important research is not lost, while at the same time enabling archives of data to be better used to inform ongoing and future research. The work of archiving statistical and non-statistical data is under-resourced. More could be done to work with online and physical data portals including museums to preserve quantitative and qualitative knowledge on migration, while at the same time remaining sensitive to the ethical challenges of sharing some kinds of data (see Ethics section below). This could include artistic outputs such as galleries of street art related to human rights and migration in Syria and Colombia. Overall, there is a need to promote better management of data archiving in multiple formats and facilitate wider accessibility to existing multi-format data sets.

Funding 'big ideas' thinking and learning from what doesn't work

A common call by Global Migration Conversation participants was for more research into **large conceptual questions** related to mobility and migration rather than political theory, postcolonial analysis or literary theory (which people felt are areas that are relatively well

developed). There was a sense that more conceptual tools or what was termed **'big ideas' thinking** is needed to help understand the multi-scalar nature of migration and its complex dynamics across land and sea. Other areas for 'big ideas' thinking identified included the relationship between space and time; and the connections between the local and the global.

It was also considered important that funding be made available to generate new conceptual ideas with respect to migration and mobility that may entail elements of **experimental and 'risk taking' research designs**. There is also urgent need to promote opportunities for reflection and learning from strategies for knowledge production that have not worked well, or have had unintended or even harmful impacts. This reflects the need to create a culture where it is acceptable to reflect on research 'failure' and the learning that can be gained from this, without fear of compromising future funding opportunities. For example, the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, a partnership network of migration scholars and practitioners in Scotland, had recently allocated time to reflect on which aspects of its work had been successful and which had not, and what might be some of the reasons for their lack of success.

Understanding migration through different linguistic and conceptual languages

Engaging with **terminologies in languages other than English and literatures** and in different contexts can help us to broaden our conceptual as well as practical understanding of migration. US/Latin American migration studies and European/African and Middle Eastern migration studies often have their own languages and concepts which sometimes fail to translate to other regions. Many Latin American countries have historically been neither countries of immigration or emigration, for example – although in some countries this is currently changing – but are more hybrid spaces of temporary migration or transitory mobility. Supporting linkages between research conducted in different languages is vital to enable conceptual and empirical comparisons to be made.

This requires greater investment in **translating knowledge and promoting access to knowledge and data sets captured in languages other than English** which have the potential of offering new conceptual, substantive and analytical insights into migration issues. Allocating resources for translating research from languages other than English should be actively encouraged for this purpose.

Ethical questions

Given the shifting nature of research approaches and strategies, more work is required on how to establish a clearer shared understanding of ethical principles and practice in research across different contexts. This requires thinking beyond the procedural issues of gaining institutional ethical approval, towards nurturing **reflexive ethical practices** throughout all research conducted and with particular attention to the specific ethics emerging in migration-related research. Capturing ethical dilemmas and concerns in the context of migration research would provide important learning to share with others working with vulnerable communities and rapidly changing dynamics. It is vitally important that researchers gain a better grasp of how ethical concepts and principles translate across cultures and contexts and circumstances and how they might best respond to these in and through their research. Some of the key questions and issues that require further exploration include:

- The dilemmas of **acting ethically** in the context of migration research;
- How to navigate **different ethical protocols** used by different actors involved;
- How to manage the risks of research **evidence being misused** for purposes for which it was not intended, for example how big data might be used for political purposes;
- **Issues of 'research fatigue'** and how to avoid the same people being interviewed repeatedly;
- **Complexities of research** in conflict settings;

- The **ethical consequences of labelling** people such as ‘refugee’, ‘IDP’, ‘asylum seeker’ which can be problematic and lead to discrimination. What other terms could be applied which might avoid such categorisation and potential inequalities e.g. ‘displacement’, ‘mobility’?
- The need to encourage applicants to write **more detailed ethics statements** demonstrating awareness of these issues in the field they are working within, and to encourage mid-term reporting that gives an account of ethical dilemmas emerging through the research and how these were responded to;
- The ethical questions concerning **archiving of migration data**, considering which kinds of data are appropriate to share and which might prove risky to informants and/or researchers to be shared. This goes beyond mere anonymisation to consideration of informed consent, the contexts of trust within which data is often gathered, and the ever-changing landscape of risk in migration situations.

Valuing and investing in the Arts

The arts can be important for supporting processes of **migrant integration** (McGregor and Ragab 2016), **building connections** between host and migrant communities and for **promoting intercultural dialogue** (European Union, 2014; Yeter, 2016). At the same time, it is important to understand how mobilities fundamentally shape the production, reception and display of arts across cultures (Mathur, 2011). The arts provide a rich source of methodological innovation in participatory research and powerful tools in informing and shaping policy, amplifying the voices of migrant and diasporic communities, countering myths and stereotypes and re-humanising migration policy debates (Ionesco, 2015). However, it is important that research avoids instrumental engagement with arts practice as a method of engagement or communication and both problematises the role of the arts as well as recognising the wider contribution it can make for example in terms of critical insights, interpretations and change agency.

Throughout the conversations, there was a great deal of focus on the unique potential contribution of research and practice in the arts to conceptualising and understanding ideas related to migration. Research in the creative and performing arts was seen as offering valuable opportunities to forge new ways of theorising mobility; helping to reach beyond the ‘noise’ of everyday politics and to understand migration and mobility in non-linear ways. Engagement with arts research can be important to the process of decentring hegemonic policy discourses. They present opportunities to engage with the wider array of humanities and social sciences as well as visual and auditory arts, including practice-based arts as research. In a field wrought by bureaucratic labels and discourses of irregularity, critical engagement with the arts were seen as a means to allow us to think beyond the constraints and limitations of semantic divisions in law and policy discourses. Given this context, key recommendations include **increased funding for practice-based research in the creative and performing arts on migration** and **encouraging and supporting equitable research partnerships and collaborations** between academics and artists.

As noted above, there is a need for **critical research** to problematise the role of the arts, examining such questions of whose narratives and experiences are engaged and whose are not, how narratives are represented (for instance, there are important issues around ‘victimhood’), and exploring the potential of practice-based arts research in relation to agency/change agents and the arts as interventions, disruptions, forms of activism or empowerment, etc.

Summary

Bearing in mind that the thematic gaps in research identified above are time-limited, the relevant substance section of the conceptual framework (Diagram 2, below) suggests the key activities and processes required to ensure that funded migration research responds to the changing dynamics of the field and highlights the intended outcomes from applying and funding the proposed strategic agenda. Of particular note was the importance of continuing to fund small-scale research activities, including opportunities for networking and building collaborations; or for conducting small-scale local project/pilot research etc. alongside funding large scale and multi-site research projects. A good example of a small-scale research project with substantial impact is the “Children’s Literature in Critical Contexts of Displacement” by Arizpe et al. (2017-2019) at the University of Glasgow.⁵ With funding just over £50k, the project has successfully created an international network that began in Egypt and Mexico but has since spread to Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Lebanon. The project has created a toolkit for mediators, using art-based strategies, to enable them to better respond to the needs of displaced children and their families.

Diagram 2: Actions required of UKRI to address thematic gaps in migration research



⁵For project details, see: <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FR004218%2F1> and www.childslitspaces.com

Working towards more effective and equitable research partnerships

The challenges of developing effective and more equitable research partnerships was a major discussion theme throughout the LIDC-MLT's consultations for a number of reasons. The fact that many migration researchers are engaged in multi-sited research, and working with partners who have very different access to funding and resources, raises particular sensitivities around inequality between different research actors. Furthermore, since migration is often about people moving in order to escape adversity or overcome inequalities, the particular issues of how to build equitable partnerships with research participants, allowing them, for example, to identify priorities or modes of enquiry emerged prominently throughout the conversations. While in many ways these concerns reflect debates in other research fields, we found ideas and constructive suggestions for ways of narrowing research inequalities to be particularly vibrant within the migration studies community.

Migration studies as a field of collaboration

Three common arguments were made for the practical value of equitable collaborative research on migration. The first related to the value of **interdisciplinarity**. As a complex phenomenon that affects all aspects of human life – related to those who move and those who stay; those who are hosted and those who welcome – migration is also best understood through an interdisciplinary lens which spans quantitative and qualitative research teams across the social sciences, the sciences, and the arts and humanities. Most migration-related programmes of study in the UK (including several relatively new Master's Degree programmes in migration and/or refugee studies), and the growing number of migration research centres, promote a scholarly landscape that is open to all disciplines and is dialogical. The major academic journals in the migration field also promote this interdisciplinary approach. While certain disciplines have dominated the study of migration, such as geography, anthropology, development studies, economics and law, other areas are now coming to the fore. These include public health, education and disciplines within the humanities. The establishment of the LIDC-MLT to develop a shared research strategic agenda across the social science and the arts research councils is itself one example of the growing impetus to foster inter-disciplinary knowledge production on the topic of migration.

Migration is inherently a mobile phenomenon and thus it requires a fluid approach to understanding it. A second rationale for equitable collaborative work on migration is, therefore, the added value of **multi-sited teams**. Working together across and between geographic regions allows us to trace global migratory movements across time and place. This can be in the form of a single multi-sited project or through creating stronger collaboration and synergies across research projects working in the same countries or regions. 'Decentring' the locus from which we approach the issue of migration (for example, to include sending as well as receiving communities, and those who stay as well as those who leave) creates a more nuanced picture. A growing number of initiatives seek to map trends through large-scale studies with partners located in the Global South and North, and by linking research conducted in rural and urban settings. In all of these research endeavours, there are important opportunities for 'decolonising' the research process so that all researchers have key roles in all aspects of the research, from design to data collection to analysis and authorship.

The third and most commonly cited reason for promoting collaborative migration research is the **linguistic and cultural diversity** that characterises migration. As many of the case studies presented in this paper show, migrants' experiences are often best understood through multi-

stakeholder perspectives (including migrants themselves as well as those who engage with them – brokers, aid providers, government staff, etc.), allowing us to understand, interpret and communicate the nuances at play at the subjective and structural level. There are clear opportunities for redefining the sorts of research relationships that tend to privilege Northern (or UK) research staff and institutions in order to reduce inequalities in the research process.

Current challenges to equitable partnerships

While collaborative research brings different perspectives and skills to the research enterprise, the inconsistencies and inequalities referred to above negatively shape the potential for partnerships working in practice. These challenges are unpacked in this section. They run right through the research process and result in:

- Unequal status in setting research agendas and accessing funding opportunities;
- Divergent institutional capacities for managing grants;
- Different pressures on academics that often prioritise teaching over research; or on project partners when programme implementation and intervention is premised over in-depth, rigorous research;
- Competing conceptions of impact and its importance;
- Unequal access to library resources and electronic journals;
- Lack of involvement of all research partners in data analysis and write-up;
- Lack of support for writing of research outputs;
- Lack of acknowledgement of the contributions of different researchers engaged in the same enterprise.

Ultimately, these inequalities also raise ethical as well as conceptual questions related to how we understand migration and displacement and the process and purpose of research.

Institutional pressures for partnership working

UK-based academics consulted in this research reported being pushed hard to secure grant funding by their institutions and, as a result, are pressured into forming ‘partnerships’ however they can. There is often **insufficient time** to develop new, strong relationships before a grant call is issued, so teams must be formed quickly and there may be little or no time for collaboration in research design. Often the **rules and regulations of the funder**, as well as of the principal investigator’s own institution, work against even the best intentions and efforts to create equitable partnerships, for instance by stipulating that PIs must be from UK institutions. In addition, researchers based at universities in Global South countries often **lack the resources that UK-based researchers take for granted**: for instance they do not have research offices to assist with grant applications and management and career progression is not linked to publication in highly-ranked journals. Moreover, often NGO partners who might otherwise be able to contribute significantly to research projects spoke of experiences where they felt they were allocated inadequate resources **to fully participate as project partners**. This is particularly true for local NGOs who lack core funding and have a small number of staff. Yet coproduction of research with such partners is vitally important. The trust, longevity, and sustainability of relationships needed to build genuine partnerships between all of these actors is frequently underestimated and compromised. **Greater investment is needed in opportunities for building these relationships, through researcher residencies, networking, mutual training events, and discussions around topics and problems of common interest.**

From capacity 'building' to 'bridging'

Participants in the migration conversations robustly pushed back against the notion of 'capacity building' of Southern partners in favour of **developing effective partnerships that unlock capacities on all sides**. There are only a few opportunities for scholars to move between regions and especially for early career researchers and researchers from the Global South including those with precarious or uncertain legal status. Some attempts to redress this have been made through online conferences, training events, and webinars. These are valuable, and given the need for academia generally to work to reduce its carbon footprint, it is important that they continue. But such virtual learning is not a fully effective substitution for being able to physically move and build research expertise by in-person interactions.

Effective partnerships were identified as necessary for supporting international research partners to better understand procedures and expectations for writing grant proposals, managing research budgets, and reporting to donors. Most international partners located in the Global South do not have extensive experience working for research institutions with funding from UKRI and therefore are not aware of what the expectations and requirements of the funder are. If partners do not have this training, the expertise will remain in the hands of the Northern researchers and their institutions and the objective of making research partnerships more equitable can never be reached. However, such support needs to be built around an understanding of the logistical, institutional, and other constraints encountered by international research partners in the Global South as well as what their interests are. Funders must be aware of what is practical and possible in the context that their partners are working in, so that they do not demand unreasonable or unsustainable processes of reporting and management from international partners.

As much as it is important to recognise that all sides in a partnership can benefit from effective partnerships or skills acquisition, it is also important to think of research partnerships as not only involving a focus on 'Southern problems', but that Southern perspectives on 'Northern problems' can also be extremely valuable. One participant, for example, celebrated the fact that as part of a grant from the GCRF, they have been able to bring scholars from abroad to share practice in Scottish schools and higher education institutions. Other important exchanges are taking place in Scotland between academia and NGOs in the form of visiting institutional residencies.

Those consulted were keen to see more resources made available for **seed funding**, especially to develop new partnerships and concepts to drive work forwards, and also funding for the important work of writing. Without this early investment, there is a risk that, especially in global partnerships, the same actors are repeatedly consulted and that no new networks are forged.

Challenges for migrant and refugee researchers

Particular challenges are faced by migrant and refugee researchers and academics who are uniquely placed to contribute to the migration research landscape and yet often lack the necessary resources to do so. More scholarships for asylum-seeking and refugee students are becoming available across UK universities, but similar opportunities do not exist at the postdoctoral level or for early career researchers. Migrant and refugee scholars and researchers face particular challenges negotiating the precariousness of the landscape for

early career researchers in the UK which often comes with poor pay, short-term contracts and an expectation that the worker will be mobile, single, young and able to move to where opportunities present themselves ‘as and when’.

This relates to a wider issue concerning the lack of diversity in higher education in the UK. Several discussions with the LIDC-MLT centred around the ‘whiteness’ of the English and Scottish research landscape (generally, not only with respect to migration studies) and how this dominates and shapes research agendas to a significant degree, including how scholars based in British institutions engage with partners globally (sometimes without postcolonial sensitivity).

It is important that research funding aims to support and strengthen efforts to diversify higher education and promote the research of BAME and other minority researchers. This includes addressing issues of career progression, which is important given the lack of diversity at senior career levels in British universities. This is an issue that relates as much to process (who gets funded, who is included in proposals in the most significant positions) as to substance (what research is recognised as important and what, for instance, a ‘decolonised’ approach to migration studies might look like).

Silencing migrant community voices

Most structures and systems for research and policy making are set up by and for academics and policy makers and remain largely inaccessible to most migrants and refugees. Where they are included their involvement can easily become tokenistic. Exclusion can come from a wide array of conscious and unconscious practices, including not having a crèche service available during research or consultation exercises, not paying migrants or refugees for their time or logistics such as transport, or holding meetings at times that do not fit with participants’ other commitments.

There is also a need to make sure such that engagement with research participants recognises the extant **hierarchies of power of knowledge** within migrant communities, including in relation to gender, age and ethnicity, and seeks to include the voices of those who have less power. A further issue raised was in relation to how migrant and refugee communities, rather than being recognised as core partners, are often objectified and labelled in particular ways. Participants noted how some people do not want to be labelled ‘refugees’ or ‘migrants’ or be identified according to race and that researchers should not feel compelled to use these categories in order to respond to research calls, get funding, do the research or get published. It was felt unless there are changes to these processes of engagement there will not be meaningful representation of migrant and refugee communities within the research process.

Top-down research agenda setting

There is a perceived gap in creating spaces where public engagement and political opinion might play a greater role in formulating migration research agendas. While some research calls are framed by the strategic priorities of government and its legal commitment to promote development research to generate tangible impact, as with the GCRF and Newton Fund, more could be done to find ways of identifying gaps in research through wider **public consultations, including with migrant groups themselves, as was done in this review.**

Responsive/discovery mode grants can be a useful way of ensuring that there is funding for research framed by local priorities that may not be reflected in research agendas set at the top level, or for excellent research that may not have a direct link to policy priorities. It is important to maintain a funding system that balances thematic and responsive funding opportunities.

Appropriate seed funding and allocated time and resources by universities are required to develop meaningful research agendas with partners. Without this, research proposals tend to be determined by personal interests or are always based on existing knowledge, rather than on the usefulness or relevance of the research to specific contexts or for particular migrant communities. Often, international research projects funded from the UK are formulated without any initial scoping visit to the place where the research is expected to be conducted. **Networking and engagement opportunities**, mentioned above, as well as seed funding for proposal development to bring applicants together, can help encourage co-production of research bids and can help foster new partnerships.

Inequitable allocation of resources

While we are seeing more collaboration between research actors in the Global South and North, as well as more North-North and South-South partnerships, there was widespread concern among Conversation participants that the bulk of resources remain with those in the Global North. As much of UKRI's international research comes from the UK's commitment of 0.7 per cent of its overall governmental budget for international development, there is an imperative to spend as much of the development research budget as possible in developing countries. Some participants queried how much of the funding that is distributed through UK research institutions and businesses is ultimately spent in low and middle income countries. The disbursement of development funds for research provides an opportunity for institutions leading research to reflect critically on their positionality, their role in research partnerships and how they might use available funding for more equitable academic, as well as social, benefits in the Global South. The GCRF's research grant-making function is among the few that seeks to encourage work that is partnership-focused, and is helping to shift thinking on the nature of these partnerships in relation to funding, network building (through specific calls) and capacity building.

Extractive knowledge production and the need for core funds for institution building

Despite examples of good practice, academics and knowledge brokers such as INGOs are still sometimes more likely to 'parachute in' their own researchers to extract knowledge than to invest in sustainable research capacity in the region of interest. In situations of conflict where displacement is the topic of concern, research 'experts' are often sent in to high-risk environments, delivering superficial or inaccurate analyses that can go on to inform ineffective or even damaging policy initiatives. **Investment in universities** within the contexts where research is taking place, in particular, is rarely a priority for development agendas (Kariuki 2018). The recently-initiated African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), an association of 16 of the leading research universities in Africa which receives core institutional support from the GCRF and includes migration and mobility as one of its research themes, is an important exception in this regard, and is a model which should be closely monitored for its potential to be replicated in other regions.

Growing recognition of the value of the Arts and Humanities

Across all regions, a key barrier to interdisciplinary collaborations is an enduring hierarchy of knowledge which sees certain disciplines and certain types of knowledge as more valuable than others. For example, there is a perception, supported by clear evidence, that the arts and humanities receive less funding and recognition in the field of migration studies compared to the social science spheres of development and economics. This can happen both at the funding level as well as the institutional level, where institutions for instance may only be allowed to submit one proposal for a particular scheme. Other barriers include a 'presentist' bias which neglects changes over time and/or insufficient recognition of the value of research and knowledge communicated in languages other than English, through non-academic literatures and/or in non-textual forms (oral, visual, etc).

We recognise there is a substantial body of funded practice based arts research. In terms of research involving collaborations between the cultural and creative sectors, the Migration Conversations revealed cases across the world where artists have been expected to contribute their time to migration research for free in ways that not only fail to build their capacity, but deplete it. Impact plans, for example, may include practice based arts research, but is usually under-costed in terms of the artists' time. This may not be a problem with funding rules, since artistic production is allowable in most grants, but rather there may be a need to sensitise applicants to the fact that such **costs can be included in grant proposal budgets**, and for **artists to be involved in the proposal writing stage** to ensure that budgeted costs are realistic. It is also crucial to highlight that arts practice needs to be integrated into projects, rather than included as an add-on or aid to communicating outcomes, and therefore proposals should be fully co-designed to ensure that the integration of arts practice within proposals is reflected in both the budget and research design, that the contribution of artists to research is fully recognised and acknowledged in research outcomes and publications and that artistic outputs can benefit from deep and reciprocal engagement with the research.

Ethical considerations in partnership working

Several ethical issues flow from the inequalities in capacity across and within regions in relation to the higher education knowledge production landscape related to migration. As well as the aforementioned power imbalances within global research teams, ethical issues relate to how we work with and involve people who migrate in research and incorporate their voices while ensuring that they maintain ownership of their own stories and that their safety is not compromised through taking part in research.

Working collaboratively with migration and displacement-affected communities requires **building trust**. Migrants and refugees may be hired as field researchers for this purpose. However the ethics of this practice have been insufficiently interrogated. Not only are in-country researchers often employed on short-term or precarious contracts, they sometimes have little say in how the data they collect are used later and thus may experience feelings of exploitation and alienation from the research enterprise. Because of the vulnerable situation of many migrants and displaced persons, their labour too often also carries a strong emotional component, something for which contracted researchers are frequently not adequately remunerated nor prepared for. Moreover, whether or not they are migrants themselves, researchers working on specifically conflict-induced or other forms of forced displacement sometimes experience vicarious trauma among other occupational risks.

Ethical considerations run through all research – from the composition of research teams to the interaction between researcher and subject, to the way that data is stored and used and the way that findings are written up or portrayed through creative means. Ethical risks may arise from the particular vulnerability and inequalities that migration research confronts and sometimes replicates, no matter how inadvertently. Applicants applying for research grants should be encouraged to **go beyond merely citing their institutions' own research ethics procedures**, be able to reflect a clear understanding of the sources of risk with respect to a particular project and consider how vulnerabilities and risks of all involved in the research will be minimised.

Activities for UKRI to support equitable research partnerships

While the recommendations given above for more equitable research partnerships are not exhaustive, they give a strong indication of why such partnerships for migration research are desirable. Key questions remain, however, including: who benefits from migration research collaborations? How workable are partnerships in geopolitical contexts that are fraught with unequal distributions of research resources? In this section, we propose concrete steps that UKRI can take to promote more equitable and effective research partnerships from a funding perspective.

UKRI has led important work in establishing principles for fair and equitable research partnerships as part of the GCRF programme through its support for the [Rethinking Research Collaborative](#) (2018). This is an informal network of academics, civil society practitioners, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and research support providers from the UK and many other countries who are committed to improving research in response to global challenges. A companion website developed by Christian Aid provides concrete recommendations and a [Toolkit](#) for academics based in the Global South, UK-based academics, civil society organisations based in the Global South, international NGOs, research brokers and research funders. This work is organised around 8 principles which echo our own findings and priorities for equitable research partnerships:

- 1) Put poverty first. Constantly question how research is addressing the end goal of reducing poverty through better design and evaluation of responsive pathways to development impact.
- 2) Critically engage with context(s). Consider the global representativeness of partnerships and governance systems and commit to strengthening research ecosystems in the Global South.
- 3) Redress evidence hierarchies. Incentivise intellectual leadership by Southern-based academics and civil society practitioners and engage communities throughout.
- 4) Adapt and respond. Take an adaptive approach that is responsive to context.
- 5) Respect diversity of knowledge and skills. Take time to explore the knowledge, skills and experience that each partner brings and consider different ways of representing research.
- 6) Commit to transparency. Put in place a code of conduct or memorandum of understanding that commits to transparency in all aspects of the project administration and budgeting.
- 7) Invest in relationships. Create spaces and commit funded time to establish, nurture and sustain relationships at the individual and institutional level.
- 8) Keep learning. Reflect critically within and beyond the partnership. (Rethinking Research Partnerships, 2018, p. 2)

In June 2019 a workshop funded by GCRF⁶ was held in Johannesburg to deliberate specific principles for partnership working in the field of migration research. This event was a collaboration between the Centre for the Study of Migration at Queen Mary University of London, the LIDC-MLT and its networks in India, Kenya and Lebanon. It was convened by the African Centre on Migration and Society (ACMS) which hosts the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA)'s Centre of Excellence for Migration Research. The resulting Draft Principles (see Appendix 2) complement those established by UKRI for global research more generally. They highlight particular issues or concerns likely to emerge when conducting migration-related research. They are currently being refined by workshop participants and other stakeholders.

Given the work of the LIDC-MLT, as well as the Johannesburg group, migration research has the potential to become a best-practice model in terms of promoting equitable research partnerships. This is particularly, but not only, important for GCRF-funded initiatives, as these funds are derived from the UK government's International Development budget.

In several important ways, GCRF has been leading the drive to **decolonise the research process**. The fund's mandate is to 'strengthen capacity of research innovation and knowledge exchange in the UK and developing countries through partnership with excellent research and researchers.' As noted above, there is an expectation that, as much as possible, funds should be spent in DAC countries. Key to this is opening up opportunities for international researchers to act as principal investigators and co-investigators on research grants. GCRF's Research Hubs, a nearly £250 million commitment, stipulate that at least 40 per cent of the grant received is disbursed in DAC countries. Furthermore, its partnership with DFID on a set of Humanitarian Protection grants stipulated that PIs from any country could apply as long as they met the due diligence required by UKRI. A GCRF Global Engagement Network grant call was run recently which was opened only to PIs located in DAC countries, setting a new model for disbursement of grant funds.

Opening UK research funding to wider participation requires more than just political commitment. Broadening the criteria of eligibility also requires ensuring that adequate capacity is in place within the research councils to ensure that new investigators and research organisations are adequately supported to ensure that they are able to meet the due diligence criteria for accredited research institutions. This requires due diligence checks that can be resource intensive. Within UKRI, research calls must be adequately funded to ensure that this level of support is made available.

On the side of the applicants, **a curriculum of outreach should be developed to ensure that potential applicants know what the requirements of becoming accredited are**. There is also a need to make it possible for research institutions to apply to be recognised in advance of submitting a grant application. This can save applicants time and give them the assurance that their applications will be considered before they start to invest scarce time and money in preparing them.

Just as new international research partners need to have clear and accessible information about financial eligibility, they also need to be given **training as to the requirements for proposal preparation, budgeting, and project management to help them become familiar with UKRI procedures and expectations**. This may involve online and/or in-person training modules and involvement of researchers in the Peer Review College and on panels.

⁶ This initiative was made possible through a grant from Queen Mary University of London's GCRF QR funding allocation.

Finally, there is a need to **critically explore and develop the potential of public-private partnerships in migration research**. Moves by the UKRI (through the ESRC) to develop stronger partnerships with other funders on migration-related calls, e.g. Nordforsk and the upcoming Belmont Forum call on Climate Change and Migration are welcome. Over the course of our consultations, several funding bodies – both public and private – also expressed a keen interest to collaborate with UKRI on joint initiatives in the future. In many contexts, such as the US, the private sector is an important source of funding for migration research. There may be some considerations associated with private funding having a bias effect on the research agenda (e.g. if it is aimed at raising profit) or relating to data protection and intellectual property. Yet UKRI could do more to explore and promote new public-private partnerships which may be of mutual benefit. These might include opportunities for making better use of data gathered through private companies of relevance to migration trajectories and outcomes. This would require the development of clear guidelines and procedures on how private research companies might collaborate with academic institutions.

In response to the issues highlighted above, the conceptual framework section on partnerships, Diagram 3 (below) summarises the key actions and processes required to promote equitable and sustainable partnerships, along with their intended outcomes.

Diagram 3: Actions required for equitable partnerships in migration research



Working towards greater impact of migration research

Impact is increasingly recognised in both academic and policy circles as a core component of 'good' research, and demonstrating that research will make a positive difference is key to securing competitive funding. Correspondingly, the LIDC-MLT sought to identify ways to showcase the strength of the ESRC-AHRC migration portfolio, maximising knowledge exchange and research impact, and incorporating key research insights into areas of policy debate as well as making them available to support the work of stakeholders. For instance, members of the LIDC-MLT have been involved with AHRC and ESRC staff on the Advisory Board of the Imperial War Museum's 2020 Season documenting 100 years of refugee movements. This exhibition will showcase at least seven different UKRI-funded migration research projects including through creative videos, artwork inspired by the projects, and video interviews with the researchers.

In another example, the LIDC-MLT commissioned a stop-motion animation project that took the narratives of five different migrants from the Horn of Africa and told their stories through a series of powerful testimonials. The film, '[Life on the Move](#),' went on to win the AHRC Research in Film Awards' Social Media Category. A [companion film](#), aimed at researchers and



creative artists shows the 'behind the scenes' process of making the film, and is meant to inspire researchers to consider including similar creative outputs in their research applications.

Filmmaker Osbert Parker and colleagues from MLT and Positive Negatives at the AHRC Research in Film Awards, November 2019. Image credit: LIDC-MLT

The strategic framework's Impact band picks out several key areas to promote greater impact (Diagram 4, below). It summarises the key actions and processes required to promote meaningful impact through migration research and the sorts of outcomes which might be anticipated as a result.

Diagram 4: Actions required to promote meaningful impact through migration research



In thinking about the kinds of initiatives that are likely to have the widest impact and reach in terms of influencing policy, practice, and public debate with respect to migration as well as supporting wider global development agendas, five key aspects relating to ‘impact’ in migration research emerge.

1) Be clear about what the desired impact is, remaining flexible enough for different partners to work towards different impact outcomes.

There is a need to consider what impact means in the specific context of migration related research. How can research with an explicit goal of influencing policy be promoted alongside important conceptual scholarship, as well as more ‘risky’ or pioneering research projects? If it is defined too narrowly, impact work might constrain the potential for other forms of change and influence in the longer term. Importantly, sometimes not acting on research findings (for instance, when people’s security is dependent upon not being targeted for registration or confinement) can have a positive outcome for migrant communities or at least reduce the negative impact on them. Moreover, where research is conducted in partnership,

stakeholders from across different sectors, disciplines and geographical regions may have very different understandings of impact and different priorities in terms of institutional deliverables and dissemination. There is a need therefore for flexibility and time so that shared understandings of impact are developed.

2) For policy impact, engage with a wide range of stakeholders from the very inception of the project idea.

There is a substantial appetite among a range of stakeholders for improved engagement with policy makers and others in order to bring about policy ‘impact’ and a better understanding of *how* research can inform policy at different stages of the policy cycle. As Ruhs et al. (2019) discuss, it is important to include not just policy makers but others as well. Policy makers are more likely to take note of a piece of research, for instance, if it is being talked about in the local media or if it generates significant public attention. It is a widely-held view that policy engagement, rather than being a ‘tag on’, should be integrated at all stages of research planning, delivery and dissemination, starting from the very inception of a research project’s formulation. The question of how to engage effectively with policy requires mapping policy formulation processes at local as well as national and international levels. This involves engaging with key political actors at all levels and understanding how proposed recommendations from research findings might speak to existing national and global strategic priorities (such as the SDGs). Such policy engagement needs also to critically engage with the highly politicised nature of migration research and the fact that policy appetite for impact and what constitutes ‘impact’ may change during the life course of any project. Consequently, there might be some aspects of research that can translate into change but others which cannot due to political attitudes. The GCRF’s engagement activities may be useful models in this respect (see case study 4 below).

Research by the STEPS Centre at the Institute for Development Studies shows that impact is like a journey, with many twists and turns (and not one that is susceptible to prediction) (Ely and Oxley, 2014, p. 8). Some of the greatest impact comes from relationships between

researchers and the targets that are well developed over time, starting from the inception of the project. Researchers should therefore be constantly cultivating relationships with people who they think they might ultimately want to influence with their evidence – even before research projects start. They should fine-tune their impact plans as they go along as well, to take account of changing circumstances.



The LIDC-MLT at UK Parliament, February 2019. Image credit: LIDC-MLT

Two extremely useful systematic reviews of impact in academia conducted by Kathryn Oliver and Paul Cairney (2018 and 2019) yield several 'Do's and Don'ts' of influencing policy, including **making research relevant and readable, having a firm understanding of the processes by which policy is made, and maintain regular, constructive engagement with policymakers**. Another key resource recently published is a special issue of the [IDS Bulletin](#) dedicated to 'Exploring Research Policy Partnerships in International Development' (edited by James Georganakakis and Pauline Rose).

3) Impact activities need to be adequately costed and funded.

Engaging a wide range of knowledge brokers (including, for example, artists, film makers or digital specialists) in delivering impact is sometimes costly but necessary for academic work to reach different audiences. Partners need to be brought into the proposal-writing and budgeting phase to ensure that costs are covered, including the time required to generate impact materials. Working with others who bring creative communication and engagement skills can be beneficial in terms of targeting impact activities and efforts at key events and bringing research findings to wider audiences. There is also a need to fund coordinated impact across different disciplines, geographies and scales in order to bring about greater significance and reach.

4) Academic impact is measured differently across disciplines and geographies.

Academic impact is related to the question of dissemination and the different types of academic and non-academic impacts. In the UK and US academic contexts there is a strong focus on publishing peer-reviewed journal articles and books. Most disciplines, and the Research Excellence Framework (REF) process in which UK-based academics are expected to participate, value articles published in journals with high impact factors (for instance, using the Thompson scale); sometimes this works against publishing in interdisciplinary journals, which are considered not to have as high an impact rating (although the REF addresses this). It may also be a disincentive for some researchers to engage in interdisciplinary research. These dynamics are largely unknown to academics in less resource-rich academic contexts; they cannot even read many of the highly ranked journals if their institution does not subscribe to electronic journal databases, as articles are kept behind a paywall. Ongoing efforts to make more academic work available through Open Access is slowly improving this situation, but access to academic literature remains highly unequal.

Researchers from developing regions are also governed by different academic expectations from their institutions. For example, they may be less likely to prioritise publishing their work in peer-reviewed journals but instead be recognised for generating change through their research. This may result in them being more likely to publish their research more locally or through online and Open Access platforms. Moreover, while publishers insist that the research is original and not published elsewhere, a frustration comes from the fact that it can take years to publish through these channels, often negating the desired impact of generating timely change. It is important that these differing agendas and priorities are recognised and negotiated across the life course of any collaborative research initiative.

5) Arts-inclusive impact plans can and should be creative – they should try to use methods of reaching new audiences.

The Arts can be useful tools for re-conceptualising migration and generating new knowledge, as noted earlier, as well as essential tools for communicating ideas from migration research to wider audiences and having a broader kind of ‘impact’. However, several participants expressed concern about the trend among some researchers now to ‘tag on’ the arts as part of research dissemination in ways which fail to do justice to the artistic process and to art as a form of knowledge production in its own right. Impact can be realised through stimulating awareness and debate through countless forms including (among others) single artworks, exhibitions, performances, videography, fiction writing, poetry, design of teaching materials, comic books and graphic stories. These media are not only successful in reaching the public but can also sometimes reach policy makers more effectively than a report or a policy brief.

UKRI engagement activities to promote migration research

The above discussion on impact relates largely to individual researchers and their approaches to creating impact. The principles discussed above are important for UKRI to promote in its activities, to ensure that grant applicants approach impact from as strong a position as possible.

However, UKRI’s impact engagement work can go further (and in some cases it already does go further). Approaching the portfolio of migration research as a corpus provides opportunities for finding synergies between projects, for amplifying research findings and recommendations that are common to clusters of projects, and for making more visible the excellent work on migration and displacement that UKRI is funding.

Some of this engagement work is being done through the Global Challenges Research Fund’s Conflict and Displacement portfolio, where the Challenge Leaders are working to develop platforms for individual researchers and networks to come together to learn from each other and also to present their findings at venues and with stakeholders that they might not otherwise have access to. The box below describes some of these activities.



Graffiti in Medellín, Colombia. Image credit: LIDC-MLT

Case study 4. GCRF engagement activities on conflict and displacement

To build coherence between funded projects and to bring key relevant conflict- and migration-related research to the attention of policy makers, GCRF has hosted several engagement activities through its Challenge Leaders. One such event was a two-day meeting held at the UN Development Programme offices in New York in which GCRF-funded researchers presented their research related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding to UN staff. A second event, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was co-sponsored with the International Committee of the Red Cross and brought 80 GCRF-funded researchers, other externally funded researchers, policy makers and practitioners to consider 'Migration and Displacement: Roots of Vulnerability, Roads to Solutions.' This conference focused on migration within the Horn of Africa and North Africa, and has led to further collaboration between GCRF and the African Union, Red Cross movement, and international NGOs working on these themes.

Whilst recognising the importance of research on migration informing policy, at the same time there was expressed concern that the knowledge landscape surrounding human mobility had become overly determined by global governance migration structures and systems, evidenced most recently by the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees. Since much research is government-funded, obtaining a research grant may be contingent on working within pre-established policy frameworks (for example, related to the predominant securitisation and humanitarianism discourses) and on 'problematizing' migration as an issue. The need for academics to demonstrate impact according to this logic can impede genuinely co-produced research, since a number of aims and objectives are pre-established from the start. Some participants in conversations expressed a wider unease about a perceived shift in focus from evidence-based policy to policy-based evidence in significant funding streams related to migration. There is a need to ensure investment in both policy-relevant research and important conceptual work which critically interrogates this framework and considers how only speaking to policy in real time can lead to a dearth in high-quality longitudinal work which engages with prospective migration trends and emergent issues.

There is plenty of room for **expansion of this kind of engagement with external stakeholders**. Key stakeholders might include the International Organisation for Migration, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Committee of the Red Cross and Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the African Union, international NGOs, Department of International Development, House of Commons Select Committee on International Development, and other governmental and nongovernmental bodies.

Finally, within UKRI itself, there is a great opportunity to promote impact within the migration portfolio through the creation of **a set of migration-specific awards**, including a Migration Impact Prize and a Migration Research in Film Award.

Summary of recommendations

The following recommendations are a summary of those provided throughout the text above:

Cross-cutting themes

- 1) Promote research which offers innovation with respect to:
 - a. Advancing conceptual understandings of migration and mobility;
 - b. Expanding the geographical foci of research;
 - c. Fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, particularly with disciplines that do not work together very often;
 - d. Breaking new ground/methodological 'risk-taking'.

Substantive themes

- 2) Research which addresses questions of: **Who migrates**, in particular:
 - a. How mobility shapes and is shaped by identity across all social categories including race, class, disability, age, faith, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity;
 - b. Migration patterns within families, across generations and the life course;
 - c. How families are shaped and re-formed in the context of mobility and migration.
- 3) Research which addresses questions of: **Why people migrate**, in particular:
 - a. Labour migration and shifting labour norms, values and politics with particular reference to new forms of low-wage-low skilled work in the 'gig' and 'platform' economies;
 - b. New geographies of 'talent' or 'elite' migration shaped by changing geopolitics such as Brexit and the European context including elite migration flows within Europe; from and within the global South and the movement of international students;
 - c. Family reunification;
 - d. Forced migration and how it is shaped by rapidly changing displacement dynamics in the world, including humanitarian emergencies;
 - e. Gendered decision-making in migration and aspects of displacement;
 - f. Climate and environmental factors influencing migration and displacement and linked to issues of 'resilience' and adaptation;
 - g. Factors influencing urbanisation and migration to secondary cities and smaller towns;
 - h. The role of technologies in shaping migratory decisions and outcomes.
- 4) Research which addresses questions of: **How people experience migration**, in particular:
 - a. How age, aging and family composition influence migration experiences;
 - b. The role of emotions (such as shame and dignity) in migratory experiences;
 - c. How cultural heritage, identity and language shape migration and post-migration experiences;
 - d. How cultures of migrant populations are represented in host country culture and heritage;
 - e. How migrants positively contribute and what enables them to flourish in host countries;

- f. The establishment of meaningful markers/measures of integration success and failure.
- 5) Research on **migration and education** in relation to:
- a. Issues of inclusivity and quality of education in migration and displacement settings;
 - b. The potential of informal, non-formal and vocational education to enhance the lives of different categories of migrants;
 - c. How education and elite migration interact.
- 6) Research on **migration and health** in relation to:
- a. How migration impacts chronic health conditions such as HIV, diabetes, cancer, and tuberculosis and care of migrants affected by these conditions;
 - b. Possible health promotion and care approaches beyond emergency, short-term;
 - c. Addressing the mental health needs of migrants and displaced populations including post-migration stressors;
 - d. Migrants as providers as well as consumers of care and health service provisions.
- 7) Research on the intersections between **migration and securitisation, international relations and migration governance** including:
- a. The complexities and impact of securitisation in the context of migration;
 - b. The human and political impact of regional and global alliances for migration governance;
 - c. The impact of constraining (and criminalising) humanitarian responses to migration;
 - d. The processes, conditions and impact of return policies in migration governance;
 - e. Impacts of global compacts and whether and how they are shaping migration outcomes;
 - f. Political economy analyses of migration governance;
 - g. Identifying alternative 'durable solutions' and protection frameworks for refugees and migrants.
- 8) Research on how **public discourses** on migration shape migratory experiences including:
- a. How public perceptions and attitudes impact migrant and host communities;
 - b. How the media influences and interacts with public opinion and attitudes towards migration.
- 9) Research to promote and enhance **methodological innovations** including:
- a. Using 'Big data' and improved data archiving (and widening access to archives);
 - b. Longitudinal research;
 - c. Linguistic and conceptual plurality (across cultures) and more comparative research;
 - d. Ethics and spaces for reflective practice;
 - e. Valuing and investing in the Arts.

Equitable partnerships

- 10) All research should take a reflexive approach to partnership working throughout to ensure equity in relation to:
 - a. Collaborative agenda setting and research design;
 - b. Allocation and distribution of resources;
 - c. Opportunities for professional development and capacity bridging;
 - d. Investing time and resources for building relationships and spending time together;
 - e. Giving voice to and meaningful engagement of migrant communities;
 - f. Ensuring fair allocation of resources and recognition between arts and social science.

- 11) Research councils should support equitable partnership working through
 - a. Allocation of resources to build institutional capacities in ODA countries to enable research leadership from the Global South;
 - b. Provide technical advice to support applications from researchers in ODA countries (such as how best to meet due diligence requirements etc).

Impact

- 12) All research needs to consider impact in relation to:
 - a. Clearly defining desired impact and enabling different partners to work towards different impact outcomes across disciplines and geographies;
 - b. Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders from the inception of the project;
 - c. Adequate allocation of resources to impact in project design;
 - d. The potential of arts-based methods to reach new audiences.

- 13) Research councils should ensure adequate funding for impact-related activities.

Appendix 1: Methodology

Between 2017 and 2019, the LIDC-MLT set out to assess the scope, achievements and challenges of the existing portfolio of global migration research. While the main focus was to explore the existing and prospective impact of UK research funding in this area, we also sought to situate this in a broader context, identifying strategic opportunities and priorities for further research collaborations; and highlighting best practice with respect to research impact from other stakeholders.

Several sources have fed into this strategic agenda: (i) a review of the existing UKRI-funded migration research portfolio; (ii) our participation in the global migration studies community and events; (iii) desk-based research mapping the state of global migration research; (iv) 1:1 meetings with key stakeholders in the field; (v) a series of ten global migration conversations which brought together and provided networking opportunities for researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, migrants' associations and arts organisations. This co-production process is detailed in the infographic below.

In addition to this strategic agenda document, a range of secondary outputs have stemmed from the work of the LIDC-MLT. These include an online navigation and mapping tool for UKRI migration research; arts-based outputs including 2 videos; 2 podcasts; academic outputs; and a set of principles and toolkit (forthcoming) to inform equitable research partnerships.

The LIDC-MLT adopted a co-production approach to developing this strategic agenda, starting with a conversation about migration in the Global South (Delhi) and ending there (Johannesburg). It was important for us to start away from the normal spaces we work (London) in an effort to mitigate subjective bias in our understandings of key terms and concepts. We also wanted to send a message that we were genuinely interested in bringing into the strategic agenda insights from the Global South, and in giving these equal weight to those ideas and ways of working with which we are more familiar in the Global North. By adopting this approach, we uncovered an extremely rich variety of work and ways of working which are documented in detail in the reports from each event.

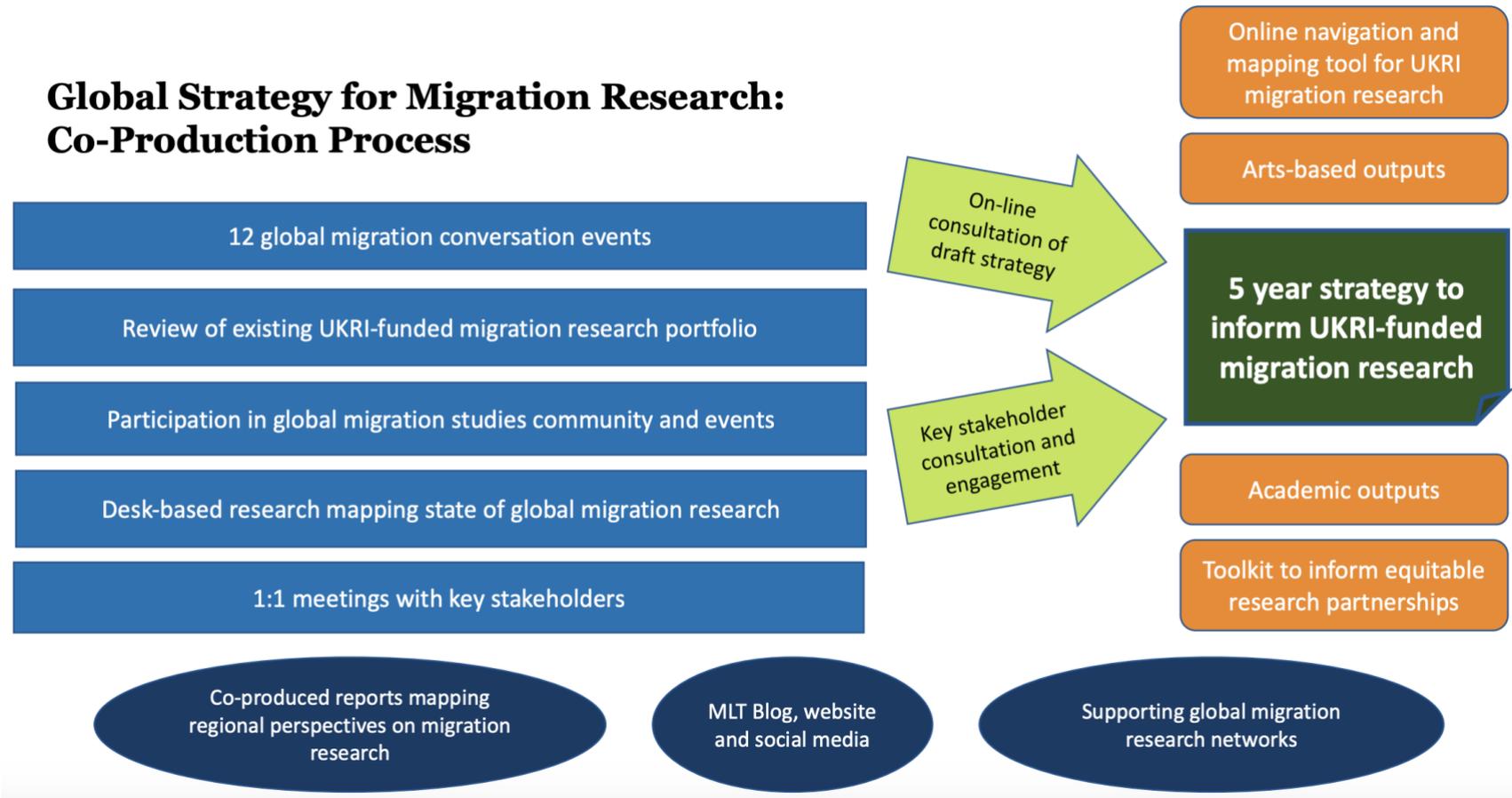
The workshops followed a similar participatory methodology and addressed common questions, although the programmes were adopted in consultation with our hosting partners. A timetable for the Global Migration Conversations and list of partners can be found in Appendix 2.

The analysis of UKRI's existing portfolio was informed by analysis of data provided by the research councils of projects funded in the last 10 years. We also consulted with over 50 researchers and partners who had worked on projects funded by UKRI or applied for funding to understand their experiences, best practices and learning. The consultation with policy stakeholders and other funders took place through a series of 1:1 meetings, a survey and as part of the Migration Conversations.



Panel at the Migration Conversation in Brussels, Belgium

Global Strategy for Migration Research: Co-Production Process



Appendix 2: LIDC-MLT Global Migration Conversations

| Location | Date | Report | Host/partner |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Delhi, India | 22-23 May 2018 | Decentering the 'Global': A South Asian Migration Research Agenda | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jindal Global University - Sonipat, New Delhi, India; • Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group - Calcutta, India |
| Barcelona, Spain | 4 July 2018 | The Democratization of Research? Bridging the Academic and Policy Divide in Global Migration and Refugee Research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE) - Rotterdam, The Netherlands |
| Nairobi, Kenya | 10-11 July 2018 | From Border Crossings to Everyday Mobility: The State of Migration Research in the Horn of Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rift Valley Institute – Nairobi, Kenya; • Hargeisa Cultural Centre – Hargeisa, Somaliland; • University of Makerere – Makerere, Uganda |
| London, UK | 5 Nov 2018 | Beyond 'Fake News': Challenges and Opportunities in UK Migration Research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOAS University of London – London, UK; • Queen Mary's Centre for the Study of Migration – London, UK |
| Thessaloniki, Greece | 26 July 2018 | Bridging the 'Evidence' Divide? Critical Reflections on Arts and Social Sciences Interventions in Global Migration Research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM) - Washington DC, USA |
| Glasgow, Scotland | 14 January 2019 | The Global City: Lessons from 20 Years of Scottish Migration Research and Ways Ahead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet) - Glasgow, United Kingdom; Scottish Refugee Council |
| Beirut, Lebanon | 4-5 Feb 2018 | From 'Crisis' to Opportunity: Migration Research Priorities in the Middle East | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RELIEF Centre - London, United Kingdom and Beirut, Lebanon; American University of Beirut - Beirut, Lebanon; • Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) - Beirut, Lebanon |
| Brussels, Belgium | 1 April 2019 | What 'Counts'?: Data Priorities and Practices in Migration and Displacement Research in the European Union and in relation to the Global Compacts | Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) - Brussels, Belgium; Research Social Platform on Migration and Asylum (ReSOMA) - Brussels, Belgium; Vrije Universiteit Brussel - Brussels, Belgium |
| Medellín, Colombia | 20-21 May 2019 | Ruptures, Rights and Reconciliation: The Migration Research Landscape in Latin America | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museo Casa de la Memoria (House of Memory Museum) - Medellin, Colombia; Fundación Mi Sangre - Medellin, Colombia |
| New York, USA | 6 June 2019 | Thinking Beyond the Border: A Critical Appraisal of Migration Research in North America | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New School, Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility - New York City, USA |
| Johannesburg, South Africa | 27-28 June 2019 | 'Many Hands Make Light Work?' Building Equitable and Effective Partnerships for Migration Research: Background Document and The Johannesburg Principles for Ethical and Effective Partnership Working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Centre for Migration and Society, Wits University - Johannesburg, South-Africa; African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) - Legon, Ghana |

Appendix 3: The Johannesburg Principles for Equitable Partnerships in Migration Research

The Johannesburg Principles are derived from a collaborative workshop which brought together colleagues from Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East to co-produce interdisciplinary guidelines for equitable and sustainable partnerships in migration and forced displacement research. This workshop built upon a series of Global Migration Conversations (GMCs) led by the London International Development Centre’s Migration Leadership Team which were held in diverse locations including Delhi, Nairobi, New York, Beirut, Glasgow, Thessaloniki and Medellin in 2018-2019. Regional in nature, these conversations held in collaboration with a range of partner organisations, involved over 400 migration and forced displacement scholars, practitioners, policy makers and funders working on internal and cross border migration and across disciplines including economics and urbanisation, development, education, public health, geography, law and the arts. The Johannesburg Principles reflect a consensus on the need to strengthen research partnerships around core principles of equity, meaningful participation and shared power in decision making for good quality migration research.

| Principles | Actions |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Given existing power imbalance in the way migration research priorities are set, diversify agenda setting at all levels. | Foster greater transparency in funding process in relation to the identification of the parameters of funding calls, setting of research agendas, assessment and decision-making processes. |
| Challenge how research problems are defined recognising the value of local research in shaping global agendas. | |
| Encourage funders and researchers away from ‘parachuting’ research models to reflect greater faith and trust in local research. | |
| Challenge perceptions of corruption and mismanagement which prohibit or constrain the de-centring of research. | |
| Have diverse and inclusive panels to set funding calls and review applications. | |
| 2. In a context where research is increasingly being driven by policy priorities, ensure that this is not detrimental to curiosity driven research. | Build time into research design to think together and recognise the value of ‘slow scholarship’. |
| Recognise the value of longitudinal research. | |
| 3. Given the complexities of situations of migration, promote and value innovative and unconventional research thinking and design | Take risks and be innovative in responding to shifting migration research landscape. |

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| across disciplines. | |
| Acknowledge when things do not go according to plan and learn from 'failure'. | |
| 4. To avoid the dominance of certain languages in migration knowledge production and dissemination, value often hidden work in different languages to frame more plural understandings of migration. | Foster a multilingual approach which does not always start with English. |
| Funding for interpretation and translation not only of primary research but also existing scholarship and data sets so as to challenge the hegemony of anglophone scholarship. | |
| 5. In an increasingly inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral migration research landscape, recognise and ensure complementarity of knowledge, skills and experience of all partners at all stages of research. | Produce a checklist of capacities (e.g. methodological expertise, expertise in the local context) of all team members. |
| Encourage knowledge and data exchange across different actors and projects working in the migration research space. | |
| Promote a culture of on-going and reflexive learning and training opportunities for research partners. | |
| 6. Given the power imbalances and hierarchical practices that infuse, and are embedded in, project design and implementation, promote transparency and clear communication in migration research through inclusive dialogical spaces founded on mutual respect, feedback and self-reflection. | Build space and time in funding applications to constructively engage in difficult conversations about existing power dynamics even if they are uncomfortable. |
| Flexibility in research design to allow for accommodation and incorporation of feedback. | |
| Promote self-reflection particularly among Northern scholars to recognise different forms of expertise. | |
| 7. Recognising the increasing precarity of many involved in migration research, knowledge production and dissemination, promote solidarity and generosity in partnerships, particularly by those in senior and secure positions, to push back against | Ensure that ECRS are included and costed into the entire duration of projects. |

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| coercive practices. | |
| Writing time should be costed into research grant applications to provide dedicated space and time to write. | |
| To write in ways which are inclusive, and attentive to audiences. | |
| 8. Taking account of the increase in project scale and funding for migration research, ensure the necessary division of labour and adequate resourcing for research, management and dissemination across all partners. | Standardise practices for compensating and treating research participants so that they feel equally valued. |
| Establish clear and accountable delineation of responsibilities and chain of command in the research team which ensures all partners have a voice. | |
| Invest in project management and facilitation to ensure effective as well as equal working, to establish common parameters and build trust. | |
| Build in proper funding for administrators. | |
| Construct check list of appropriate and accessible technological support for international and/or mobile teams. | |
| 9. Recognising the importance of mobility in migration research, challenge restrictive and unjust immigration and visa regimes. | Foster and advocate a culture of mobility of people and ideas to redress the North-South imbalance in academic mobility. |
| Hold conferences in countries where the majority of participants can travel to. | |
| Support Southern scholars to conduct research and teach in the Global North as part of equitable partnerships. | |
| 10. Ensure that the voices of migrants are central to all research activities from identification of research agendas, analysis and 'solutions'. | Enable ERCs to be able to speak outside of the local. |
| Advocate for migration and refugee scholars. | |

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