JIPS Conference 7 – 8 June, 2017

MAKING DATA USEFUL

How to improve the evidence-base for joint responses
to forced displacement ?

Credit : Jozef Merkx

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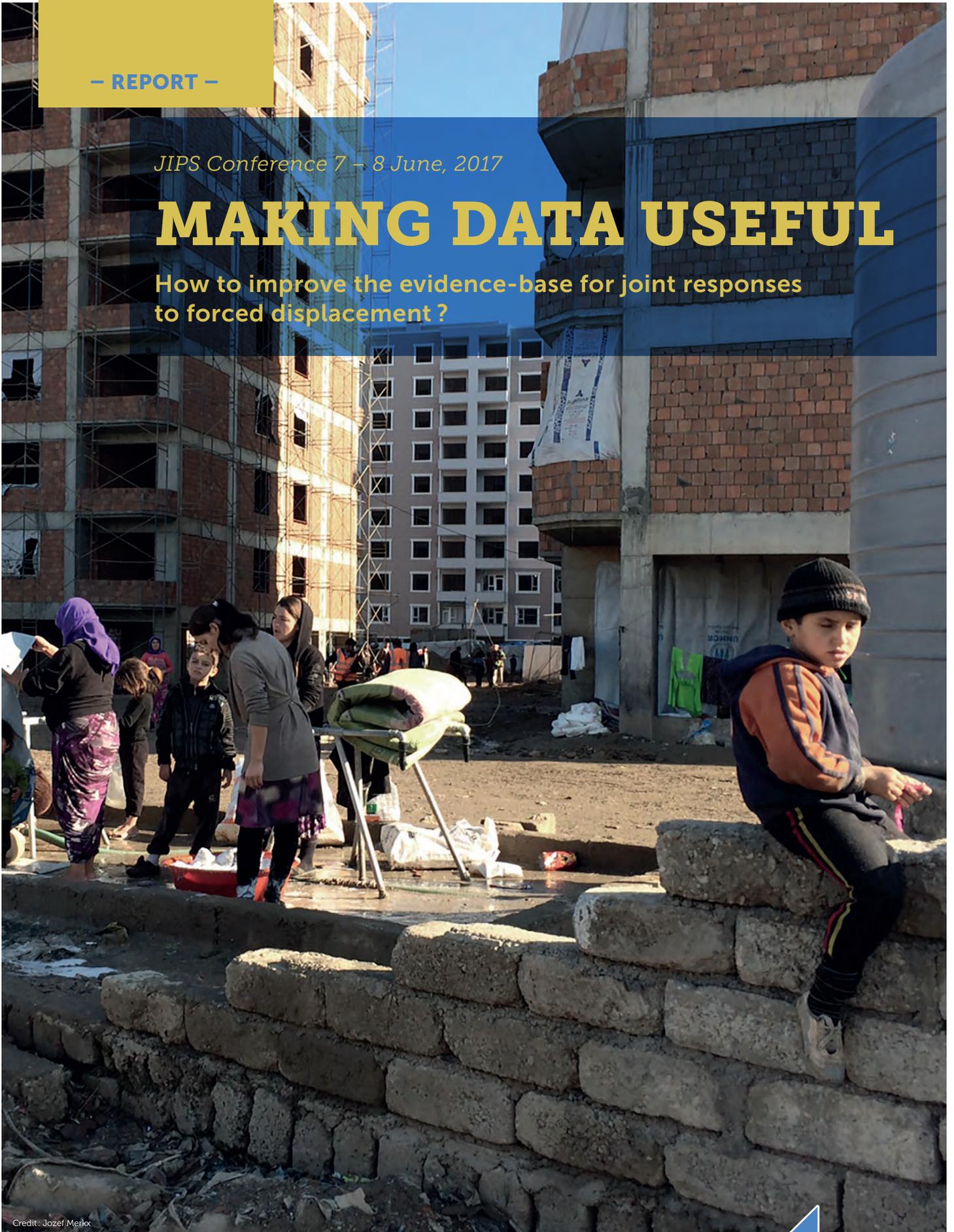
JIPS
Joint
IDP
Profiling
Service

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The JIPS Conference 2017 would not have been possible without the support of a dedicated and inspiring team as well as external experts and participants. It is thanks to their efforts and contributions that we were able to ensure relevant content, an interactive environment and an engaging event, documented in this report and accompanying video.

I would like to extend special thanks to **Prof. Walter Kaelin** and **Prof. Karen Jacobsen** for their joint keynote address; **Manisha Thomas**, for her facilitation of the event; and **JIPS Executive Committee** members and donors for their continued support of our work. I would also like to thank the **JIPS team** for helping with the organisation and documentation of the event (especially to **Corina Demottaz** and **Chantal Recupero**); **Adrien Buchet**, for the beautiful photos from various sessions; **Gilberto Lontro** and **Nathalie Berger**, for capturing some of the key moments on film; and to the **Villa Sarasin** and the Palexpo team for the venue.

I am excited to share with you this Conference report as well as the accompanying video. I hope the event itself and these key products help to inspire a wider audience to improve the usefulness of data practices so we can collectively better inform national, humanitarian, and developmental responses to forced displacement globally.

Thank you!

Natalia Krynsky Baal, JIPS Coordinator

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Credit : Adrien Buchet

THE 2017 JIPS CONFERENCE, HELD ON 7 AND 8 JUNE IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND AT THE VILLA SARASIN, BROUGHT TOGETHER OVER 60 DATA USERS AND DATA PROVIDERS TO CONSIDER THE THEME OF MAKING DATA USEFUL: HOW TO IMPROVE THE EVIDENCE-BASE FOR JOINT RESPONSES TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT?

It is not often that those who collect and analyse data meet together with those who use that data in their decision-making processes. The Conference provided space for an honest and open dialogue to tackle some of the current and persistent challenges that hamper data use. It brought together participants from government, humanitarian and development organisations as well as specialists from statistical offices, private sector and the NGO community in order to do this. Through a mix of plenary and breakout sessions, a number of recommendations emerged around improving the use of data, as well as highlighting new issues requiring further consideration and attention moving ahead.

POLICY PROCESSES NEED BETTER DATA

In recent years, various policy processes have called for more – and *better* – data to enhance joint responses to forced displacement. Among these are, *inter alia*, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which commit to 'leave no one behind,' including IDPs; The Grand Bargain – *A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need*; the 'New Way of Working'; the New Urban Agenda; and the New York Declaration (leading to a *Global Compact on Refugees* and a *Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*).

USEFUL DATA, NOT JUST MORE DATA

All of these policy developments represent significant progress. Their collective call for an enhanced and improved evidence-base is also welcome. However, there is a risk that all these processes will end up simply creating much more data. The challenge is to consider how to ensure that the data produced is useful.

DISPLACEMENT IS A HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUE

Explicit in these various policy processes is the recognition that displacement is not only a humanitarian issue, but also a development one : displacement can undermine development policies. Data and joint analysis are key in providing an evidence-base to promote joint responses, particularly in protracted displacement settings. While looking for durable solutions to displacement, displaced persons must be supported to live their lives to the fullest extent possible. Data, and the common narrative that it can foster, can serve as the bridge between humanitarian and development action.

PROCESS MATTERS

The discussions focused on various issues from methodology to capacity building, managing sensitive data and consensus building, as well as the role of decision-makers in the data production process. Throughout the Conference, a recurring theme was that the process around all aspects of the data lifecycle – from the beginning to the end – is critical to improving the quality, ownership, and eventual use of the data.

MAIN POINTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific recommendations were highlighted throughout the different sessions of the Conference. They can be found under each sub-section of the report and included recommendations linked to :

- Methodological rigour and appropriateness
- Sustainability and local capacity
- Informing national response
- Consensus v/s accuracy
- Managing sensitive data
- Qualitative data and analysis
- Communicating data with decision-makers

More general recommendations emerging from the Conference included :
1) The **intended use** of data needs to be the starting point and clearly articulated.
2) **Context** is important when it comes to determining how data is collected and used.
3) The **Localisation Agenda** is important in order to share and build capacity and increase quality, sustainability and use of data.
4) The **New Way of Working** implies specific data needs and processes that require better articulation of the current humanitarian-development data gap.
5) Develop (or adapt existing) **minimum standards** for data production.
6) Create an enabling environment to allow for **constructive criticism**.
7) **Process** is key as it helps to improve both quality and use of data.

As the various policy processes move ahead, the push for more data will provide greater pressure on both data providers and data users. More data, however, does not always guarantee that the data is good, useful, or will be used by decision-makers. The Conference outcomes are intended to suggest concrete ways and means in which to truly make data useful, ensuring the data collected is good, not just good-looking.

Credit : Adrien Buchet

THE 2017 JIPS CONFERENCE BROUGHT TOGETHER OVER 60 DATA USERS AND DATA PROVIDERS[1] TO CONSIDER THE THEME OF MAKING DATA USEFUL : HOW TO IMPROVE THE EVIDENCE-BASE FOR JOINT RESPONSES TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT ?

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, THE MAIN DISCUSSION POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLENARY AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS ARE DESCRIBED, IN AN ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE WHAT WERE MUCH RICHER AND DEEPER CONVERSATIONS.

The event intended to complement a number of recent policy processes that have called for more – and *better* – data to enhance joint responses to forced displacement. It is rare that those who collect and produce data meet together with the policy and decision-makers who use that data.[1] Through this rare mixture of expertise, the JIPS Conference provided an opportunity for these different groups to work together to develop concrete and informed recommendations.

OBJECTIVES

By bringing together these different communities that produce and use data, the Conference provided a platform to reflect on some of the current and persistent challenges, to suggest ways to improve the use of data, and to identify some emerging issues that will require further deliberation moving ahead. As specific objectives, the Conference aimed to :

- Identify **key factors that make data useful** for joint responses to forced displacement situations ; and
- Formulate **concrete recommendations** of how to improve the usefulness (or capitalise on the positive impact) of data for forced displacement response.

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[1] Data providers are technical experts/practitioners or field coordinators working in forced displacement situations who know about the various aspects of data collection and production. They can speak to data production challenges and practices. Data users are decision-makers in (donor) governments or humanitarian and development organisations. They take strategic, operational, or financial decisions, ideally based on the data provided.

PARTICIPATION, FORMAT AND OUTCOMES

The Conference combined plenary and breakout sessions to allow participants to explore various topics in greater detail. Speakers and participants came from a wide range of stakeholders, including: representatives of the Governments of Colombia, Somalia, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and Sudan; donors; national statistics offices; academia; the private sector; and UN agencies, inter-governmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations, representing both the humanitarian and development sectors. Participants had the opportunity to share expertise and learn from each other's experiences, practical techniques, and strategies.

While this report cannot fully capture the richness of the conversations, it attempts to highlight the pertinent points and recommendations to consider moving forward. The Conference outcomes are meant to help participants and others reflect on the various ways and means in which to truly make data useful, ensuring that the data collected is good, not just good-looking.

Credit all photos : Adrien Buchet

KEYNOTE ADDRESS & OPENING PLENARY

PROF. WALTER KAELIN AND **PROF. KAREN JACOBSEN**[2] **JOINED FORCES TO DELIVER THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS, FOCUSING ON THE LARGER POLICY AGENDA AND THE ROLE OF DATA WITHIN THAT BROADER CONTEXT, AS WELL AS HIGHLIGHTING SOME OF THE PERSISTENT CHALLENGES OF DATA GATHERING IN THE SECTOR.**

Credit: Adrien Buchet

» WE NEED DATA ABOUT CAPACITIES OF DISPLACED PEOPLE – NOT ONLY NEEDS OR VULNERABILITIES – TO BETTER UNDERSTAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS. «

— Prof. Walter Kaelin, University of Bern

DATA WITHIN THE BROADER POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Prof. Kaelin noted that the Conference was both important and timely as he reflected on some of the policy changes that have taken place in recent years. He referred to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which commit to 'leave no one behind,' including IDPs; The Grand Bargain – *A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need*; and the policy discussions coming out of the World Humanitarian Summit that have focused very much on a New Way of Working, with the aim of achieving collective outcomes. There has been an increasing recognition that the challenges related to displacement must be addressed by a range of actors, including humanitarians, development actors, peace and security actors, as well as the displaced themselves and their host communities. The contributions of these different actors are necessary to address cross-cutting challenges and achieve tangible results. The focus cannot be only on finding durable solutions to displacement, but also ensuring that displaced persons can live their lives to the fullest extent possible, pending those durable solutions.

To work towards collective outcomes, Prof. Kaelin emphasised that data and analysis must inform this collaborative way of working. Having more – and *better* – data and joint analysis, including quali-tative data, through profiling and other means can underpin greater development engagement and collective responses. The different types of data needed include:

- Data about what people need, but also what they want;
- Data that helps to understand the underlying causes of why displacement has become protracted;
- Data that combines humanitarian and development indicators;
- Data not only on IDPs, but also their host communities;
- Data about the capacities of displaced persons, market oppor-tunities, etc. to inform appropriate investment; and
- Data on intentions – linked to data on obstacles – which can help understand what needs to be done to achieve durable solutions.

In protracted displacement situations, this type of data helps to provide the evidence base for joint responses, as in the [example of Somalia](#), where JIPS supported a collaborative profiling exercise. Based on a similar analysis, the Federal Government of Somalia has integrated IDPs into the national development plan, which:

1) Makes displacement a 'whole of government' issue;
2) Creates access to a wider range of funds (e.g. development funds); and
3) Means the government is assuming its primary responsibility towards its own citizens.

ADDRESSING PERSISTENT CHALLENGES OF DATA IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

Prof. Jacobsen focused on the important role of researchers and 'data producers' in creating new information. She highlighted some flaws in current research methods and provided suggestions to address these persistent challenges. Researchers gather and analyse data that then helps to create information and knowledge. It must be recognised, however, that "a lot of data is simply flawed by the researcher's own biases". There is rarely a questioning of these biases that play a role in the data that is gathered or the methodologies used.

These elements related to research have a number of implications in humanitarian settings, which are much more complex today: displaced populations are often in urban settings or in conflict zones that are difficult to access. Conducting research in these areas is challenging, and even more so for external actors, creating problems related to rigour and methodology.

While 'perfect data' does not exist, Prof. Jacobsen highlighted three significant problems affecting humanitarian data:
1) **Translation:** Humanitarians continue to use concepts and jargon as if they are widely understood, despite significant literature on the challenges of translation/interpretation.
2) **Sampling:** Sampling is often hampered by access, security, logistics, or a lack of time. The results, therefore, do not represent the whole population although they are often treated as if they do.
3) **Verification:** Taking results back to populations for verification is often a neglected step in humanitarian settings because of budget, time, and/or resource constraints.

One way to address these problems is by promoting a 'localisation agenda,' where the focus is less on using external researchers, and more on enabling local teams of researchers and data producers. Local partners can be supported to design methodologies and gather and analyse data. Funds can be used to build local-international partnerships that build on complementarity.

Participants added that pursuing a localisation agenda for research will also require looking at comparative advantages between national and international partners to ensure complementarity. Having external persons support local research teams can help ensure neutrality, which can be an important factor in how the data and analysis might be accepted.

Credit: Adrien Buchet

» WE SHOULD BE PROMOTING THE LOCALISATION AGENDA: THE IDEA OF ENABLING LOCAL RESEARCHERS WHO ARE LIVING IN THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE TRYING TO GATHER INFORMATION, TO DESIGN THE METHODOLOGY AS WELL AS COLLECT, ANALYSE AND VERIFY THE DATA. «

— Prof. Karen Jacobsen, Tufts University

Credit : Adrien Buchet

Ms. Natalia Baal
Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)

CONFERENCE INSPIRATION AND GOALS

Natalia Baal, JIPS Coordinator, provided an overview of the growing call for data in the current policy environment, which originally inspired the Conference theme. She pointed to the SDGs' multiple indicators, the World Humanitarian Summit's call for data innovation, The Grand Bargain's request for improved quality and impartiality of needs assessments, and the request for joint analysis and socio-economic data to underpin the "New Way of Working". Focusing also on more thematic and population-specific policies, she drew attention to the data requests embedded in the New Urban Agenda (adopted at Habitat III in October 2016), the New York Declaration (and its commitment to developing a *Global Compact on Refugees* and a *Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*), and the Wilton Park Principles on protracted forced displacement.

All of these policy developments represent significant progress. Whilst their collective call for an enhanced and improved evidence-base is welcome, there is a risk that all these processes will end up simply creating much more data. The challenge is to consider how to ensure that the data produced is useful and achieves its ultimate purpose.

Through JIPS' experience, it has been shown that many aspects have an impact on how to make sure data is useful. These include strategic collaboration, consensus building, and joint decision-making, as well as adequately rigorous approaches, mixed methodologies, and capacity building. Built around these themes the Conference's agenda aimed to foster discussion with a wide range of experts and shape recommendations for us to jointly take forward.

PLENARY DISCUSSION
- Informing national response :
trust and decision-making -

THEMATIC SESSIONS

Credit: Adrien Buchet

FOCUS: WHAT MAKES DATA USEFUL TO INFORM NATIONAL RESPONSES TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT? WHY, FROM A GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE, ARE SOME DATA SOURCES TRUSTED OVER OTHERS? HOW ARE EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY AND PRACTICE PURSUED?

CHAIR:
Cecilia Jimenez-Damary
Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs

SPEAKERS:
Oscar Rico Valencia
Government of Colombia
Mohamed Moalim
Federal Government of Somalia
Paolo Verme
The World Bank

Given that States have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection to IDPs in their jurisdiction, collecting data on IDPs to enable this work is a concrete step that governments can take. Choosing the most effective way to do this – while ensuring inclusion and capacity-building – is difficult, but can be done.

COLOMBIA

Colombia has seen over five decades of internal armed conflict, resulting in over 7 million IDPs. A number of legislative acts have ensured that IDPs and other victims (together, totalling 8.5 million people) have been registered and there is a USD 4 million budget in 2017 to implement the Victims' Law to provide assistance and reparations to this population. The Victims' Unit soon realised this approach was overly ambitious and that there was not enough funding so the Government of Colombia introduced a vulnerability assessment and index in 2014 to identify and target the most vulnerable groups. This is now being applied by working with other government agencies on data and solutions, as well as with local authorities and support from JIPS.

The Government is currently strengthening public policy based on the evidence gathered, as well as improving the quality control of the data although the production of reliable and accurate data remains challenging. For data to be useful in the context of Colombia – and to not just gather lots of data – there needs to be: 1) a balance between surveys and administrative records; 2) a balance between quantitative and qualitative data; 3) agreement on indicators between all relevant stakeholders; and 4) data that compares the situation of IDPs and host communities.

SOMALIA

There are 1.2 million IDPs in Somalia (or 12% of the population), with 50% being displaced for more than five years. The majority live in urban areas and new displacement continues, due to drought and insecurity. Unlike Colombia, Somalia has a limited legal framework for IDPs. There is a draft IDP policy, but some confusion exists over the term 'IDPs,' with different translations. There has been a lack of knowledge about how to decide who qualifies as an IDP and how that differs from refugees. Displacement has become a priority for the Office of the Prime Minister and the new Government, based on discussions on the data already produced about displacement. The National Development Plan has a stand-alone chapter on displacement, which recognises that, as part of reducing poverty, durable solutions are needed.

Data is needed for policy and action and there is plenty of data available in Somalia, but it is not always useful data. It is difficult to know what data to trust, and much of it is uncorrelated and not harmonised. Sometimes the issues of IDPs are not seen as consistent with national priorities, including national security. However, the Government is working on finding new ways to carry out collaborative processes using joint methodologies, as was done in the displacement profiling exercise supported by JIPS. That profiling exercise had government ownership and the application of a protection lens, which together, helped to produce evidence to integrate displacement into the National Development Plan. Work is continuing to align this Plan with over 60 SDG indicators, as many as possible of which will include IDPs in reporting processes.

THE WORLD BANK

Prior to the Syrian crisis, the World Bank did little policy or programmatic work with refugees or IDPs: displaced persons were not seen as "clients" of the World Bank. National statistics offices (NSOs) were not supported in covering these mobile populations in their household surveys to measure poverty, so the displaced were excluded from these key data collection efforts. Displacement was seen as a humanitarian, not a development, issue. But, by 2014, it became clear that refugees and IDPs should, in fact, be viewed as clients of the Bank, as they were often poor and because of demand from European States to get involved given the European migration crisis. The Bank now has a research programme on IDPs and refugees and a forced displacement strategy, developed with UNHCR, to work with humanitarian organisations from the beginning of a displacement crisis.

Although work has so far focused on refugees, the World Bank is increasingly interested to engage on issues of internal displacement.

Credit: Adrien Buchet

» WE CAME TO REALISE THAT STRENGTHENING ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS, PARTICULARLY FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES, WAS THE QUICKEST AND MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION OF IDPS. «

— Oscar Rico Valencia, Government of Colombia

Credit: Adrien Buchet

» DISPLACEMENT IS NOW A PRIORITY FOR THE TOP OFFICES OF THE COUNTRY, AND IT EVEN HAS A STAND-ALONE CHAPTER IN THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. THAT CAME AS A RESULT OF AGREED-UPON DATA. «

— Mohamed Moalim, Federal Government of Somalia

Credit: Adrien Buchet

Mr. Paolo Verme
World Bank

Building on the Bank's special relationships with NSOs worldwide and work already being undertaken and implemented by JIPS, this will likely include, developing better data collection methodologies and helping to include IDPs in large-scale poverty surveys. The goal is to move towards a system to collect socio-economic information on IDPs. This work should also lead to further economic research, as there is currently very little that focuses on the specific economic aspects of internal displacement.

Looking at current data available, however, this objective will be hugely challenging to achieve. Since there is no one organisation charged with collecting data on IDPs, partnerships will also be complex. While there has been significant progress in counting IDPs, making sense of IDP data is still very difficult due to lack of common definitions and key conceptual gaps such as on when an IDP ceases to be an IDP.

MAIN POINTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Official and agreed-upon data** is important for national responses, as well as a clear national policy.
- **Collaboration and cooperation** between key stake-holders at the local, regional, and national levels, as well as between humanitarian and development organisations, are important.
- A **mixed-methods approach** – using both qualitative and quantitative data – is useful: counting is not enough. A comprehensive analysis of the situation is required to better understand the displacement situation and to inform the quest for durable solutions.
- A **comprehensive approach** that looks not only at the displaced, but also includes host communities, is important to get a more complete picture and understand elements of displacement, such as social cohesion.
- **Working with national statistical offices** to include internal displacement in their data collection efforts holds significant potential for improving national policy and effective response.

Credit: Adrien Buchet

FOCUS: WHY ARE RIGOROUS METHODS IMPORTANT? TO WHAT EXTENT IS METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR POSSIBLE IN FORCED DISPLACEMENT SETTINGS? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT METHODOLOGY?

SPEAKERS:
Karen Jacobsen Tufts University
Kimberly Roberson UNHCR
Agnès Dhur OCHA

Methods need to be rigorous to ensure that data is viewed as valid, trustworthy, and credible. No method is perfect nor can any single method provide zero errors or deliver everything desired. Knowing the pros and cons of different methods can contribute to ensuring greater rigour. At the same time, it is important to recognise that rigour is relative, as it depends very much on the environment and context in which data is being gathered, and the perception of rigour may also change over time.

TECHNICAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS

The technical aspects of collecting data are relatively easy. Other aspects – particularly the ethical ones – are more difficult to implement and new methods often get taken up with little consideration of the ethics of data collection. For example, concepts do not exist to assess "do no harm" in data collection. Three core principles of rigorous methods used to collect qualitative or quantitative data are as follows:

1) Ensuring transparency so that others can understand what methods were used and even replicate the study;
2) Being clear about the methodology's limitations (the "confidence levels"), which will make the data more credible and trustworthy; and
3) Collecting the data in an ethical way and clearly stating the ethical aspects of the data collection (e.g. that no one was (potentially) harmed/jeopardised in any way during the data collection). In humanitarian settings, this ethical aspect is often not noted as it is not always clear what the risks are of asking people questions.

SPEED AND RIGOUR

There is often a difficult balance between collecting data quickly, while ensuring sufficient rigour. Looking at existing information and designing the methodology in consultation with affected communities can help to improve rigour.

» WE WANT OUR METH-ODS TO BE RIGOROUS SO THAT THE DATA CAN BE TRUSTED … ALTHOUGH RIGOUR IS A RELATIVE TERM. «

— Prof. Karen Jacobsen, Tufts University

» THERE IS A LACK OF A CULTURE OF PROFES-SIONAL CRITIQUE AND REVIEW WHICH UNDER-MINES THE ABILITY TO ACHIEVE SOME KIND OF RIGOUR. «

– Kimberly Roberson, UNHCR

Rigour is not only about better techniques, but also requires being clear about the purpose of the data collection exercise. Ensuring a proper dialogue with those requesting the information is essential so that the method(s) can match the question(s) that need(s) to be answered. There is often a fear of openly and frankly discussing the limitations of data, especially with donors, but such conversations are an important part of methodological rigour.

SKILLS AND CULTURE

The perception that everyone can collect data is one of the most profound distinctions between humanitarian and development data collection : only those with the appropriate skills would be allowed to collect development data whereas everyone and anyone does it in humanitarian settings. There is a minimum set of skills required to collect data, which requires training and practice. Creating norms for data sharing can help with comparability and reproducibility of data.

To enhance rigour, it is also important to create a culture of profes-sional review, transparency, and critique to be able to discuss the limitations of data as a way to hold data providers and data users more accountable. There needs to be greater acceptance of the fact that humanitarian data can have high levels of uncertainty. Currently, defending methods can often result in conflict, rather than a genuine conversation about the rigour of the data.

MAIN POINTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Methodological rigour is needed to ensure that data is seen as **valid and trustworthy**.
- Rigour is a **relative concept** that is linked to the contex-tual reality and intended use.
- There is a need to build a **culture of professional critique and transparency** to openly discuss the lim-itations of data, including between data users and data consumers.
- A minimum level of **professional standards** for data collection and management, including ethical considera-tions, would be helpful.
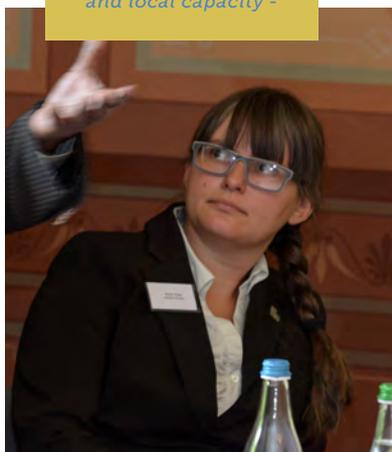
FOCUS: INVESTING IN LOCAL CAPACITY AND FACILITATING LOCAL OWNERSHIP CAN LEAD TO BETTER DATA QUALITY AND HELP WITH THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DATA, BUT IT IS RARELY PRIORITISED. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN LOCAL CAPACITY AND OWNERSHIP?

SPEAKERS:
Vibeke Nielsen Statistics Norway
Serwan Mohamed Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO), Iraq
Ahmed Gangari Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), Government of Sudan
Edward Benson UNHCR CCCM Cluster Coordinator, Myanmar

ENGAGING OVER THE LONG-TERM

Long-term engagement and building mutual trust are key elements when it comes to investing in – and further developing – local capacity. With such investments, the quality and sustainability of data can be improved over time. Regular and repeated engagement and assistance through data collection exercises – not just one-off trainings – are critical to overcome challenges, such as high staff turnover in national statistics offices or other relevant organisations. Of course commitment from leadership/senior management is a pre-requisite for this type of engagement.

ADDRESSING DIFFERENCES IN CAPACITY

Challenges can arise when there are different capacities between the central and local levels. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, for example, during the profiling exercises supported by JIPS, these challenges were addressed by handing over authority and responsibility from the regional Statistics Office to the local branch units. Having a local lead to think through the various partnerships can also help to build trust.

TRUST AND UPFRONT INVESTMENT

In Sudan, for example, there is a lot of data available, but there is not always agreement around it. Investing in coordinating with relevant national and local authorities, as well as investing in local capacity (as is currently underway through profiling processes in country) can ensure more useful data. There is a need to ensure advanced planning with all stakeholders involved, particularly to navigate the different relationships that exist (for example, intra-governmental relationships).

Profiling exercises have led to on-going collaboration with local actors and the value of such collaboration cannot be overestimated. The profiling exercise in Kachin State, Myanmar took significant initial investments, but the collaboration with local actors and investing in their capacity helped to build confidence by working with all stakeholders as part of a response. The building of trusting partnerships has meant that data can continue to be collected and shared, even when there is a lack of physical access for some partners.

Credit all photos : Adrien Buchet

Credit: Adrien Buchet

SESSION C
- Consensus v/s accuracy -

FOCUS: IS ACCURACY OR CONSENSUS MORE IMPORTANT OR IS IT ABOUT THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO? WHICH MAKES A GREATER DIFFERENCE ON THE GROUND, AND WHY?

SPEAKERS:
Adrián Calvo Valderrama IDMC
Herbert Tatham OCHA
Natalia Baal JIPS

THE SPECTRUM BETWEEN ACCURACY AND CONSENSUS

The relationship between gaining consensus around data and the accuracy of data is not always a clear one. It can be seen as a spectrum that needs to be analysed in every context. The ideal balance is to have jointly analysed, contextualised, and accurate data that drives the consensus leading to an intelligent and prioritised approach to the response – but such a situation is almost as rare "as a unicorn".

INTENDED USE IS KEY

The ultimate intended use of the data will drive how much consensus is necessary, between which stakeholders, and what level of accuracy is required. For example, pursuing policy change at the national level or identifying strategic goals for a common operational response plan are likely to require strong consensus building efforts, whereas targeting specific assistance provision, developing more local programmatic data or producing population estimates

Credit: Adrien Buchet

for global policy purposes emphasise accuracy over consensus. More often than not, there is a need to find the right balance between consensus and accuracy and defining the use of the data from the start is the only sound way to do so.

STRIKING THE BALANCE

How to strike the right balance is not always easy. In some cases – where timeframes of emergency decision-making are tight – there is little space for building solid consensus so leadership needs to find other incentives. In others, where crises are continuing and become protracted, negotiation skills become crucial to find common ground through discussion between the strategically selected partners. Agreeing with partners on 'how' to conduct a specific profiling or other data process can enable agreement on the 'what' that is produced. Moreover, experience has shown that neutral facilitation of key steps in the process can be an effective mechanism for achieving this result, ensuring quality and increasing the use of data produced.

It will always be a balancing act between accuracy and consensus of data based on the intended use and users. There are different levels (global, national, local) and different purposes (programmatic, strategic, advocacy, resource mobilisation) that should be considered when deciding on the right balance between accuracy and consensus.

MAIN POINTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Be clear on the **intended use** of data to help find the right balance between consensus and accuracy.
- Create incentives and provide **leadership** to find the right balance between consensus and accuracy.
- Focus on a **neutrally facilitated process**, rather than the results, to help build both consensus and accuracy.

Credit: Adrien Buchet

FOCUS: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MANAGE SENSITIVE DATA WELL, AND HOW CAN ITS EFFECTIVE USE BE STRENGTHENED AS PART OF RESPONSE TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT?

SPEAKERS:
Guilhem Ravier ICRC
Kathrine Starup DRC
Kimberly Roberson UNHCR

MAIN POINTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Managing sensitive data is a process requiring a **principled approach** and a **defined purpose**.
- A **complete and context-sensitive risk assessment** must be conducted before collecting data.
- **Data sharing** must always be considered before data is collected (keeping in mind that any data sharing must be undertaken in a responsible manner).
- **Inter-agency initiatives must be supported** to develop standards to manage sensitive data, knowing that there is some work already on-going.

THE RELATIVITY OF SENSITIVE DATA

The sensitivity of data, generally, needs to be seen relative to the context and not be viewed as just standardised categories. Personal data, for example, is not the only type of sensitive data (other common examples include medical records or human rights violations). There is a need to assess the risk for the providers of the data, the data collectors, and those who process the data. The sensitivity of data may also change over time within a single context.

NEW TOOLS ARE NOT THE ANSWER

The solution to managing sensitive data is not about using more, or building new, technical tools, but is instead about building good practices and methodologies for a common understanding, common definitions, as well as ensuring trust and a solid analysis of the risks and benefits. Making data anonymous does not mean that it automatically removes any sensitive elements. The Protection Information Management (PIM) principles and the Professional Standards for Protection Work (currently under revision) are just two examples of on-going initiatives to contribute to better information sharing of sensitive data.

Information management needs to be more structured, with the stated purpose and information requirements defined in dialogue with the affected population. Consider the use and sharing of data needs from the outset. When we come across bad practices for sharing data or information, it is important to have a dialogue so that there can be a collective improvement in our practices, not to simply point fingers. For example, there is currently very little exchange of information between the different branches of the UN to enable a stronger implementation of Human Rights Up Front.

ACTION CAN BE TAKEN WITHOUT MORE DATA

There is also a need to change the current mind-set: one does not always jump to the solution of more data in order to take action. For example, responding to sexual and gender-based violence does not require data on individual cases: there are other ways to understand the problems that put populations at less risk.

Credit: Adrien Buchet

FOCUS: DO DECISION-MAKERS UNDERVALUE QUALITATIVE DATA, PARTICULARLY COMPARED TO QUANTITATIVE DATA, AND HOW CAN THE TWO BE COMBINED? HOW CAN THE USE OF QUALITATIVE DATA BE IMPROVED?

SPEAKERS:
Stefanie Barratt Samuel Hall
Shelley Gornall UNHCR
Boris Aristin iMMAP
Daunia Pavone IOM/DTM

THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

Data is useful if it effectively informs policy and operations. While there are many references to quantitative data, it often needs the qualitative component to complement it. Qualitative data has a role to play, particularly in emergency contexts where data is needed within short timeframes. However, it can be misused. A greater focus is needed on how to better analyse qualitative data. Involving decision-makers and those familiar with the context (who can more easily make sense of the data) can help to make interpretations more relevant and useful.

THE CHALLENGES OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Qualitative data is often viewed as being easy to get. However, analysing, cleaning, and sharing qualitative data is far more complicated than quantitative data. Qualitative data is not machine-readable; it comes in huge volumes; and storing it over time is critical, but it is not obvious how to do it. Making better use of analytical frameworks and using new tools, such as the Data Entry and Exploration Platform (DEEP), could help to meet the challenges of processing and analysing qualitative data.

CREATIVE WAYS OF COLLECTING QUALITATIVE DATA

There are creative ways to capture qualitative data when collecting large amounts of it through questionnaires, for example by asking a proxy question such as '*What kinds of activities do you participate in outside of your home?*'. Mobile data collection tools can also be used to capture qualitative responses by asking such questions and then filming respondents for a minute (with their consent, of course). Once qualitative data is aggregated, it is important to keep specific examples from the initial data collection to illustrate what is meant by the data in order to put a human face to it. At the same time, ensuring appropriate anonymity, although time-consuming, is crucial.

Credit: Adrien Büchel

TRUST ISSUES ARE COMMON

Ultimately, the same trust issues apply to qualitative and quantitative data, so documenting methodology and working with partners is important to help overcome them. Being more rigorous with translation/interpretation, using different kinds of qualitative data, and validating the results with partners and affected populations, will improve the quality of the data. Often, information management officers are given the responsibility of explaining data, but they do not have the necessary skills or profiles to do the required analysis. Collaborative analysis can be helpful in interpreting qualitative data.

MAIN POINTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Both qualitative and quantitative data are **critical to provide a full picture** of a situation and must be strategically combined to make the best use of results.
- While not undervalued, qualitative data could be **more effectively used**.
- **Trust** is a challenge with both qualitative and quantitative data : documenting the process can help improve trust, but further work is needed.
- The **analysis of qualitative data needs further improvement** : consider processes, analysis frameworks, tools, and how to share interpretations.

Credit: Adrien Buchet

Credit: Adrien Buchet

Credit: Adrien Buchet

FOCUS: OFTEN DATA IS NOT WELL LINKED UP TO DECISION-MAKING. HOW CAN DATA BE BETTER COMMUNICATED WITH DECISION-MAKERS TO ENSURE ITS FULL POTENTIAL? IS DATA ILLITERACY THE CHALLENGE OR ARE THERE OTHER ISSUES TO ADDRESS, AND HOW?

SPEAKERS:
Vincent Annoni REACH
Hana Baronijan Ipsos
Karl Steinacker UNHCR

» IT IS IMPORTANT TO CULTIVATE OWNER-SHIP AT ALL LEVELS - PERSONAL, ORGAN-ISATIONAL AS WELL AS WITH ALL RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS. «

– Hana Baronijan, Ipsos

DATA IS ONLY ONE ELEMENT

It is important to realise that data is only one key element of deci-sion-making. Other factors, for example ongoing access negoti-ations or budget realities, may influence decisions, despite what the data may say. If decisions are made contrary to the availa-ble data, this information could potentially be used as a tool for accountability.

INVOLVE DECISION-MAKERS TO ENSURE OWNERSHIP

It is important to involve decision-makers at key points from the beginning to the end of a data process. Such involvement includes : discussing the purpose, methodology, expected results and their intended use, as well as the planned dissemination and sharing of the final product.

Presenting unsolicited data to a decision-maker can mean a lack of ownership, which risks the data not being used. Buy-in and owner-ship of data – on the part of data producers and data users – comes by working together through the entire process. This ownership needs to happen not only at the individual level, but also at the insti-tutional level. Cultivating ownership at different levels in an organi-sation is essential : such 'mutual ownership' will result in data that is better conveyed to decision-makers.

FIND WAYS TO MAKE THE DATA EASIER TO UNDERSTAND AND USE

Making sure targeted decision-makers understand the relevant data is essential. Data may need to be tailored for those with less data literacy. While there have been improvements in the past 15 years, data literacy is still an on-going effort, so it is important not to over-whelm decision-makers with data they cannot use. The time-frame is also important, and finding the right window of opportunity in which to communicate data can help.

Storytelling is an important means by which data can be conveyed and should be considered by data producers – not only by com-munications or media officers. "Activation workshops" and other participatory and innovative methods of dissemination can help to

Credit: Adrien Buchet

Credit: Adrien Buchet

translate the data into actual use and action by engaging data users with the meaning of the results.

Complexity is often not helpful for a decision-maker. Data providers need to consider what the data means before presenting it to decision-makers and if they cannot, the required further analysis must be indicated and / or limitations explained.

COLLABORATION FOR JOINT DECISION-MAKING

Key stakeholders also need to consider whether joint processes can bring more coherence to the results and avoid potentially contradictory results. This is most important when the needed responses are likely to necessitate joint action and effective coordination. Collective action can be vastly facilitated by a common reading of data and resulting priorities, as it can be significantly hampered, delayed or jeopardized when conflicting results are presented and cannot be explained.

» STORYTELLING IS NOT ABOUT DECISIONS: IT'S A WAY OF MAKING DATA DIGESTIBLE. «

– Vincent Annoni, REACH

» WHEN MULTIPLE ACTORS BRING MULTIPLE CONTRADICTORY DATA OR WHEN THERE IS NO CONSENSUS, DECISION-MAKERS WILL NOT ACT. OFTEN THE NEXT STEP IS TO START ALL OVER AGAIN, WITH A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH. «

– Karl Steinacker, UNHCR

MAIN POINTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Data is not the only** – or necessarily the most important – **input** that decision-makers must consider.
- Data users and producers must collaborate and communicate **from the beginning to the end** to ensure broad ownership of the data, which should be **solicited** by the decision-maker.
- Consider the various techniques of contextualising and communicating data : **facilitating engagement** with data and **storytelling practices** can help.
- Data providers have a responsibility to **communicate the limitations** of what can be done with the findings to avoid inappropriate use of data.

Credit: Adrien Buchet

STEVEN CORLISS, UNHCR'S DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT, IN CLOSING THE CONFERENCE SPOKE FIRST ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE AND USEFULNESS OF DATA FOR UNHCR.

SPEAKERS:
Steven Corliss UNHCR
Natalia Baal JIPS

> » IT IS REALLY A STRENGTH OF JIPS: WHEN JIPS DEPLOYS TO THE FIELD, IT BRINGS TOGETHER AGENCIES ON THE GROUND. IT FACILITATES PROFILING AND IN THAT WAY RESULTS ARE OWNED BY THE PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING THE GOVERNMENT. «

– Steven Corliss, UNHCR

UNHCR needs humanitarian and protection data to save lives, to know who needs UNHCR's help, what kind of help they need, and what they need to help themselves. Data needs to be people-centred: "people need to become the owners and masters of their own data."

The environment in which humanitarians operate has become more complex: no longer can humanitarian and development actors live in their separate silos. Credible socio-economic data can serve as the bridge between the humanitarian and development worlds.

Data must be useful for humanitarian, development, and private organisations, but most importantly, for governments of the countries affected by displacement. There also needs to be a distinction between "fast" and "slow" data. Fast data, which is good enough, draws attention and helps make decisions in emergencies and slow data produced through working with governments, development partners, and others, to show socio-economic differences and similarities between those who are displaced and the host population.

Steven Corliss welcomed the topic of the conference and the initiative of JIPS to have brought together data producers and users from such varied institutions. JIPS exists in the intersection of common interest between different organisations that together form its Executive Committee: it is both "all of us" and "none of us." As an inter-agency service, JIPS brings together and supports agencies on the ground and facilitates profiling whose results are owned by agencies and government. Building trust helps to create common data for all and we have seen how these approaches have strengthened uptake of the data produced. Such common data and collaborative approaches, while at the heart of what JIPS does, is also important for ensuring that data is useful and have been particularly relevant in underpinning joint responses and policy development in situations of internal displacement.

CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the suggestions and recommendations noted above from each of the plenary and break out sessions, there were several recurring themes and recommendations that emerged throughout the Conference, including :

1) The **intended use** of data needs to be the starting point and should be clearly articulated. Data should not simply be collected without a clear and actionable purpose.

2) **Context** is important when it comes to how data is collected and used. Methodology, partnerships, and opportunities are all context-specific elements of producing useful data.

3) The **Localisation Agenda** is important in order to share and build capacity. Through this approach, partnering with governments, national statistics offices (NSOs) and local civil society, data quality, sustainability and use can be enhanced.

4) The **New Way of Working** requires data that feeds both humanitarian and development needs, and processes that facilitate consensus and can underpin joint responses. The gap between humanitarian and development data standards that currently hampers this work, needs to be better articulated.

5) Develop (or adapt existing) **minimum standards** for data production. These should include standards around the ethical aspects of managing data; the technical/process considerations; as well as the skillsets required.

6) There is a need to create an enabling environment to allow for **constructive criticism**. This will help improve the quality of data and analysis over time, build trust and ultimately increase the appropriate use of data.

7) **Process is key throughout!** Process helps to improve both quality and use of data and therefore needs to be considered when defining stakeholders; developing methodology; collecting, analysing, and sharing data; capacity-building and capacity-sharing; and working together to make joint decisions. Importantly joint response will require a collaborative process.

EMERGING ISSUES

There were also a number of emerging issues that surfaced during the discussions, which require attention moving forward, including:

1) **Applying the SDGs to humanitarian situations and displaced populations.** While there is a huge potential impact to this pursuit, how to do it in practical terms is less clear due to the uncertainty of much humanitarian data and the limited local capacity and willingness to pursue it.

2) **Managing and sharing personal data.** We are collecting more individual IDP data particularly due to cash-based interventions, availability of biometric technology and pressure to implement more complex targeting exercises. How should this reduced anonymity be tackled in a protection sensitive manner?

3) **Automating qualitative data and using artificial intelligence.** Recognising the value of qualitative data and the challenges of its more cumbersome analysis, how can we integrate new tools and technologies into the work of operational actors?

4) **Working with new methods** (e.g. crowd-sourcing, machine-learning algorithms with big data). Currently these often get taken up with little thought as to the use of data or the ethics of collection. How should we turn this trend around and still make effective use of their potential?

APPENDIX I: AGENDA

13.30 PM CHECK-IN

14.15 PM KEY NOTE ADDRESS

Prof. Walter Kaelin Expert on internal displacement
Prof. Karen Jacobsen Tufts University

Situating the conference within the current policy agenda related to forced displacement and welcoming the event as members of JIPS Advisory Group

15.00 PM OPENING PLENARY

WELCOME DAY 1
—

Natalia Baal JIPS
Manisha Thomas event facilitator
Experts of each thematic session

Introduction to the event from JIPS
Agenda overview and event logistics

16.00 PM COFFEE BREAK

16.30 PM BREAKOUT SESSIONS

A: METHODOLOGICAL RIGOUR AND APPROPRIATENESS
—

Prof. Karen Jacobsen Tufts University
Kimberly Roberson UNHCR
Agnès Dhur OCHA

Why are rigorous methods important, and to what extent is methodological rigour possible in forced displacement settings? Why is it important to choose the right methodology?

B: SUSTAINABILITY AND LOCAL CAPACITY
—

Ahmed Gangari Government of Sudan
Edward Banson CCCM, Myanmar
Serwan Mohamed Kurdistan Region Statistics Office, Iraq
Vibeke Nielsen Statistics Norway

Investing in local capacity and facilitating local ownership can ensure better quality and sustainability of data, but it is rarely prioritised. How and why should we better invest in this?

18.00 PM RECEPTION

08.30 AM CHECK-IN

09.00 AM JOINT SESSION

INFORMING NATIONAL RESPONSE: TRUST AND DECISION-MAKING
—

Cecilia Jimenez-Damary Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons
Oscar Rico Valencia Government of Colombia
Mohamed Moalim Federal Government of Somalia
Paolo Verme World Bank Group

What makes data useful for informing national response to forced displacement? Hear Government perspectives on why they trust some data sources over others, and how they pursue evidence-based policy and practice.

10.30 AM ☕ COFFEE BREAK

11.00 AM BREAKOUT SESSIONS

C: CONSENSUS V/S ACCURACY
—

Adrián Calvo Valderrama IDMC
Herbert Tatham OCHA
Natalia Baal JIPS

To ensure data is used for joint response is accuracy or consensus more important? Or do we need a balance of the two? Which makes a bigger difference on the ground and why?

D: MANAGING SENSITIVE DATA
—

Guilhem Ravier ICRC
Kathrine Starup DRC
Kimberly Roberson UNHCR

Why is it important to mange sensitive data well? How can we strengthen the effective use of sensitive data as part of our response to forced displacement?

12.30 PM 🍽 LUNCH

14.00 PM BREAKOUT SESSIONS

E: QUALITATIVE DATA AND ANALYSIS
—

Boris Aristin Gonzalez iMMAP
Daunia Pavone IOM
Stefanie Barratt Samuel Hall
Shelley Gornall UNHCR

Do decision-makers undervalue qualitative data? How does it fare in comparison to quantitative data? How can we improve our use of qualitative data?

F: COMMUNICATING DATA WITH DECISION-MAKERS
—

Hana Baronijan Ipsos
Karl Steinacker UNHCR
Vincent Annoni IMPACT Initiatives

How can we better communicate data with decision-makers to ensure it is used to its full potential? What challenges do we face? What steps can be followed? What techniques exist?

15.30 PM ☕ COFFEE BREAK

16.00 PM CLOSING PLENARY

MAKING DATA MORE USEFUL FOR FORCED DISPLACEMENT RESPONSE
—

Steven Corliss UNHCR
Natalia Baal JIPS
Manisha Thomas event facilitator

Presentation on conference outcomes and reflections on the event

APPENDIX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NAME	FIRST NAME	INSTITUTION
Annoni	Vincent	REACH
Aristin	Boris	iMMAP
Azzi	Virginia	EU Delegation Geneva
Bagshaw	Simon	OCHA
Baronijan	Hana	Ipsos
Barratt	Stefanie	Samuel Hall
Benson	Edward	Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) Myanmar
Boulay	Diane J.	US Mission in Geneva
Calvo Valderrama	Adrián	IDMC
Caterina	Martina	Office of the Special Rapport on the Human Rights of IDPs
Chatin	Mathilde	EU Delegation Geneva
Corliss	Steven	UNHCR
Costanzo	Joseph	Save the Children
Cusack	Andrew	FICSS / UNHCR
Dejby	Jesper	Flowminder
Dhur	Agnès	OCHA
Eimert	Monica	Danish Mission to the UN
Gangari	Ahmed	Governement of Sudan - Humanitarian Aid Commission
Glendinning	David	Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS)
Gornall	Shelley	UNHCR
Habouzit	Matilde	UNDP
Jacobsen	Karen	Tufts University / Feinstein Institute
Jimenez Damary	Cecilia	Special Rapport on the Human Rights of IDPs
Kaelin	Walter	Bern University
Koeltzow	Sarah	Platform on Disaster Displacement
Laronche	Mathilde	Flowminder
Lefebvre	Véronique	Flowminder
Linekar	Jane	ACAPS

NAME	FIRST NAME	INSTITUTION
Maio	Ernesto	Global Cluster on Early Recovery
Milligan	Marianne	UNDP
Moalim	Mohamed	Federal Government of Somalia - Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management
Mohamed	Serwan	Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office, Iraq
Mutshanyani	Erick	Platform on Disaster Displacement
Oo	Htun Zaw	UNHCR
Osterreich Nielsen	Vibeke	Statistics Norway
Paganini	Roberto	UNDP
Page	Eleanor	Ipsos
Pagot	Anaïs	UNHCR
Pavone	Daunia	IOM / DTM
Petzoldt	Marc	UNHCR
Presutti Witt	Camilla	Danish Mission to the UN
Ravier	Guilhem	ICRC
Rico Valencia	Oscar	Government of Colombia - Victims' Unit
Roberson	Kimberly	UNHCR
Rogemond	Dalia	UNHCR
Rollinat	Lucie	EU Delegation Geneva
Salazar	Magalie	OCHA
Schörgendorfer	Mareike	Permanent Mission of Germany
Sinziana Puscas	Ileana	IOM
Starup	Kathrine	DRC
Steinacker	Karl	UNHCR
Sumari	Laura	UNDP
Tatham	Herbert	OCHA
Terán	Javier	OCHA / HDX
Verme	Paolo	The World Bank - Global Programme on Forced Displacement

JIPS
Joint
IDP
Profiling
Service

The **Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)** was established in 2009, tasked to provide technical support for **collaborative profiling exercises in forced displacement situations**. As an inter-agency service, JIPS has received over 160 requests and supported dozens of operations; it invests in capacity building for governments, statistical offices and the wider humanitarian and development community; it builds partnerships with like-minded institutions; and has refined expertise in specific areas such as urban and durable solutions profiling.

DRC DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL   iDMC internal displacement monitoring centre   NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR
ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS
OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

UNDP   OCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs   UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

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