

IASFM20 Podcast Series Full Transcript

Episode 2. Conference Overview Part 1

Opening credit

Forced migration due to war, conflicts, disaster, climate change and urban development impacts is a critical issue requiring attention from multiple stakeholders. The International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, or IASFM, is a global interdisciplinary association committed to advancing research, policy analysis and understanding of forced migration and displacement. The 20th Conference of IASFM was held on the 21-23 January 2025 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with a topic of “Forced Displacement in an Urbanizing World”. This audio series, supported by the Washington University in St Louis, presents various reports from this conference.

The views, opinions, and contents expressed in this podcast are solely of those of the creators and do not necessarily reflect the views or possessions of Washington University in St Louis.

Host: Ayu Prestasia

Hello and welcome to today’s podcast. I’m Ayu, your host for this session and I’m excited to take you through a comprehensive summary of the 20th conference of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration—IASFM20. IASFM Biennial Conferences have always been an essential platform for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share knowledge, discuss critical challenges, and advocate for policies that include the voices of refugees and migrants. This year’s conference was hosted by the Resilience Development Initiative Urban Refugees Research Group (RDI UREF) in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology at Universitas Gadjah Mada.

Over the course of three days, we welcomed around 380 participants, with 238 insightful presentations and 10 creative showcases. From engaging keynote speeches to panel discussions tackling pressing issues in forced migration, this event was packed with important conversations. In today’s episode, we will walk through the major highlights of IASFM20, including pre-conference activities and significant discussions that took place. It will cover Conference overview on day 1 and day 2, with the main topic of Global Agenda and (re)conception. Whether you attended the conference or are tuning in for a recap, this episode will give you an overview of everything that happened. So, let’s get started.

Before the official start of IASFM20, we had some exciting pre-conference events. Two workshops were held to provide valuable insights and training for participants. The first workshop, titled ‘Governance of Displacement and Protection in a Chaotic World’ focused on academic writing skills and was led by Dr. Tristan Harley and Dr. Nicholas Maple. A small but dedicated group of six participants engaged in this session, refining their skills in research and writing. The second workshop, titled ‘Utopian Imagination: The Action Researcher for Transition Change’ was facilitated by Dr. Male Escalante and Muhammad Arfan Achmad. This session, attended by 22 participants, explored how action research can be a tool for driving meaningful change in displacement and migration issues. With these workshops setting the stage, the conference officially began with a packed agenda.

Copyright ©RDI-UREF. 2025. All rights reserved.

Hosted by:



Sponsored by:



Contacts:

✉ iasfm20@rdiuref.org
🌐 <https://iasfm.org/iasfm2025/>
📷 @rdiuref

Day 1 of the conference kicked off with an inspiring keynote address by Professor Tri Nuke Pudjiastuti from the Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). She presented her research on *Forced Migration in Southeast Asia*, emphasizing that migration is not just about mobility but also about dignity and protection. She encouraged further discussions on the universality, nationality, and particularity of migration experiences.

Following the keynote, the first plenary session focused on the *Global Agenda for International Migration*. It was moderated by Professor Antje Missbach and this session featured insightful contributions from Dr. Sripapha Petcharamesree, Prof. Ranabir Samaddar, and Dr. Susan Banki. Another exciting part of the day was the *pitch presentation session*, where 10 organizations and researchers had the opportunity to promote their creative presentations, giving attendees a preview of the innovative work being showcased at the conference.

In the afternoon, the conference continued with 20 parallel panels across two sessions. These panels explored diverse themes, including: (1) Externalization perspectives, border policies, and resettlement issues; (2) Protection mechanisms and legal frameworks; (3) The agency of refugees and the role of non-state actors, and (4) Religious affiliations and networks within immigration industries. To close the day, the IASFM General Meeting was held, where key decisions were made, including the selection of IASFM leadership and the announcement of future conference venues.

Day 2 of IASFM20 brought another set of engaging discussions, starting with a keynote speech by Professor Stephen Cairns. He spoke about urban displacement and how rapid population growth in cities affects displaced communities. Marco Kusumawijaya complemented this by discussing aburbanization, a trend where people move away from cities, particularly in Indonesia's Java Island. Dr. Tular Sudarmadi spoke about the politics of heritage, gentrification and displacement in Yogyakarta's Keraton, which is part of his research with Prof. Bakti Setiawan who moderated the plenary session for the day. Several panel discussions further explored urban displacement, emphasizing both challenges and opportunities. While displaced populations often struggle with limited access to services and unequal aid distribution, innovative solutions such as cash transfers, food aid, and healthcare were highlighted as ways to ensure inclusivity and sustainability. Meanwhile, discussions also turned to the issue of immobility. Dr. Wiwandari Handayani provided insights into the challenges faced by rural communities in Java, where climate change-induced displacement is becoming a growing concern. This was further explored in a panel using the Fail-Forward Café Method, which examined case studies of flooding, droughts, and rising sea levels as key drivers of displacement in Southeast Asia.

Another powerful session at the *Ignite Stage of Pecha Kucha Jogja* featured the Wadas Community case study. This session shed light on community resistance to mining and dam projects, showing how environmental degradation and displacement are deeply linked to issues of violence and neglect. A significant part of the day also focused on Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Discussions revealed how forced migrants, particularly women and children, are disproportionately affected by structural violence within immigration systems. Advocates also stressed the importance of safe spaces and social protection initiatives to support survivors and create meaningful change.

Copyright ©RDI-UREF. 2025. All rights reserved.

The second day of the conference was concluded with an important Scholar-Activist Meeting, where scholars and activists gathered to discuss policy recommendations on refugee governance in Southeast Asia. This initiative aims to push ASEAN towards adopting more inclusive and effective policies aligned with its principles of 'ASEAN Centrality' and the 'ASEAN Way'.

And that brings us to the end of IASFM20 conference summary of Day 1 and Day 2. In this conference, we've seen powerful discussions, innovative research, and meaningful collaborations that highlight the complexities of forced migration and displacement. From keynotes on urban displacement and migration policies to panel discussions on climate-induced migration, protection mechanisms, and refugee agency, this conference has provided a space to exchange ideas and shape the future of migration research and advocacy.

If you want to revisit any of these topics, be sure to check out the official conference proceedings. And if you found this summary insightful, stay connected with IASFM for updates on future conferences and initiatives.

Thank you for tuning in to today's episode. I'm Ayu, and I'll see you in other episode for summary of Day 3 of IASFM20. Until then, take care and good bye.

Closing credit

The 20th International Association for the Study of Forced Migration Conference is organized by the Resilience Development Initiative in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada.

Copyright ©RDI-UREF. 2025. All rights reserved.

Hosted by:



UNIVERSITAS
GADJAH MADA

Sponsored by:



CENTRE FOR REFUGEE STUDIES



Contacts:

✉ iasfm20@rdiuref.org

🌐 <https://iasfm.org/iasfm2025/>

📷 @rdiuref