

IASFM20 Podcast Series Full Transcript
**Episode 13. Interview with Mumtaz Chopan and Tasnia Prova
on Creative Installations**

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: Dr. Akino Tahir

Hello everyone, welcome back to IASFM20 Podcast Series. I am Akino, your host for today.

In this episode, I want to share about two fun things that happened in the conference. The first one is the art exhibition that the conference commissioned to an amazing artist, an Afghan artist with lived experience of displacement and is now based in Indonesia, Mumtaz Chopan. He’s actually living in Yogyakarta, which is a city well-known for its vibrant art scene. Aireen, one of our field hosts, managed to talk to Mumtaz about the work that he created for the conference, what it means and the inspiration behind it. Pardon the background noise, since they talk in a crowded space. But Mumtaz actually spoke in a panel on Day 2 of the conference, and I heard about how the session provided a lot of food for thoughts for many who attended. Such a shame I was not able to be there myself.

Anyway, the second part is about creative abstracts, or more precisely one of the creative abstracts. As you know, IASFM20 accepted a number of creative abstracts, where presenters are free to decide the format of their presentation which we then displayed in an exhibition space. But we’ll speak more about that later. For now, here is Aireen with Mumtaz Chopan.

Host: Dr. Aireen Andar

Can you introduce yourself?

Guest: Mumtaz Chopan

Hello to you and everyone else. My name is Mumtaz. I am an artist and I am from Afghanistan.

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Today, this work is commissioned by the conference. The title is Museum of Shredded Memories. So it is about the memories, the identity, the experience and culture that refugees, when they go through this migration, they lost or they forget or they kind of shredded for them. That's why it's called Museum of Shredded Memory. I used museum because museum is generally for something nicer to preserve, but actually this one is the opposite of preserved. It's shredded, it's destroyed.

And also the title a little bit I also inspired by a poet, Indonesian poet called Afrizal Malna. He has a book about paper shredding museum. It's a poetry book. So I have that book, and I also, when I talk about this work, I kind of like the museum and shredding things. So I kind of change it for my version of the title. It talks about the difficulties of identity, memories that refugees lose during this long period of waiting in a limbo or in uncertainty.

So this is... I use different medium. And I use plastic wrapping to create the shape is because normally, in the all the airports and places, normally people wrap their luggage and everything in the plastic wrapping. When I also travel and come to my journey was also I always see discarded luggage, backpacks, toys in different places when refugees were there for a while and they'll have to leave to go to another place. So I wanted to bring that kind of lost toy that used to mean something for a kid. Now it's laying down somewhere, there is no use for it. So this is the idea.

Host: Dr. Aireen Andal

What story would you like to tell to visitors?

Guest: Mumtaz Chopan

I think it's more visual and more symbolic. It's a bit abstract in expressionistic style. So there is no narrative in particular, but each individual photographs of like passport size or an ID card that shredded, or a photo that's shredded, it all tell the story of migration, of uncertainty for a long wait, and suffocation. Plastic also is always related to... it's a kind of suffocating thing. It protects you from something, but also a lot of refugees in camps that are not so many facilities, actually their house is made of plastic because they protect themselves from, at least from the rain.

The plastic is symbolic. The photos are symbolic. There is toys. There are spices. There are some spices that relate to culture of people that they cooking food, their culinary. And I also used before food as an artwork. So, so most of them are from the previous work that I did. And most of the drawings that I did from the real portrait of refugees that I met along the way in India, in Malaysia, in Indonesia. So all of them are kind of connected through my experience and also generally my idea of a shredded memory.

Host: Dr. Aireen Andal

So the center point are the symbolisms of everything inside that are quite shredded. There are a lot of layers into this installation. You told us about your personal experiences of traveling, migration. Could you tell us more about your own story that shaped the emotional core of this installation?

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Guest: Mumtaz Chopan

Yeah, it's just a personal experiences that I face as a refugee also, right? I also almost took the same way. Not everyone will take the same way to go somewhere, but because this is a route that refugees takes, it's been used for many, many years. And normally, when you go from the same route, you will see the things that are left behind from the previous refugees. For example, there was a cabin in one place that there was full of writing and everyone wrote, 'I was here', 'Ali was here', someone was here. It was so interesting for me that so many people go through this route that now I take and probably in the future, someone else take. Everyone left something behind. And that also was my experience with this. And I also always saw the thing that people left behind. Because maybe the journey was too difficult, so they could not carry everything. They just maybe... they took essential things. So that was the also from part of my experience.

Host: Dr. Aireen Andal

You talk about the carryovers or the indirect connection between refugees. Like, they might have their individual journeys, but they are connected in one way or another because of these left behind things. And so I would like to also ask specifically about the format of the museum, because it adds a layer of irony to your installation. So what conversations do you hope to juxtapose on these alliances like irony?

Guest: Mumtaz Chopan

I like the idea of museum because of the museum is for preservation, for display, for showing, for education, for so many purposes, but normally it's in a very nice displayed situation with nice building and proper, everything is proper with caption and everything. But in here is like all of them are unknown. All the works are... there is no identity to them. All of them are kind of unknown, but this is like a beginning of something that I might continue, because it has potential to be like a long term project.

The shape of this artwork, the installation, is also taken from the shape of containers that used to transport refugees from a place crossing border. That's why it's like that. And also, normally they sleep days in those containers. So this shape is also a museum shaped like a container, wrapped with plastic with memories that are shredded.

Host: Dr. Aireen Andal

... that contains memories of the refugees that are fragmented and shredded in all possible ways. Really interesting. And how you mentioned about the shape because I would have never thought of that. Are there any projects you're working on that expanded the themes you explored in this installation?

Guest: Mumtaz Chopan

The past four or five years I was working about mostly project related to refugees. So this will be continuing. We had other collaboration, video art with two other artist refugees that we continue to work on. And recently it was displayed in Museum MACAN. After that, it was displayed in a gallery in Japan. So that's still continuing. So, but there is other projects, so there is always something to do.

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Host: Dr. Aireen Andal

Nice, and so you're seeing yourself to do this for the foreseeable future?

Guest: Mumtaz Chopan

Yeah, of course, yeah, because most of the thing that I do is not one time thing, it normally becomes a long term project.

Host: Dr. Aireen Andal

Thank you so much. Thank you wonderful interview. Thank you very much.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

Back with Akino as your host for today.

Today I am hosting a scholar who submitted her paper as a creative abstract, which is basically a non-traditional way of presenting a research project in a conference. In IASFM20, such abstracts were introduced in the first day of the conference, right after the first day of plenary, in a lightning round presentation of maximum 3 minutes, just to give a glimpse of the idea to the conference participant and basically to invite them to visit the exhibition space where creative abstracts were presented or exhibited in various format.

Now back to our episode for today. We have Tasnia Prova here, ready to speak about her work. But perhaps, let's start with an introduction. Tell us about yourself and the project that you brought to the conference, Tasnia.

Guest: Tasnia Prova

Hey, everyone. I am Tasnia Khandaker Prova, and I am the lead of climate research at the Center for Peace and Justice at BRAC University in Bangladesh. While I work in this position, the project that I submitted for the conference was a personal grant that I received from the US State Department as a part of a coalition called the climate action champions network. It's CACN for short, let's remember that.

So I got a small grant to do a project essentially that had a focus on climate change. But something that has irked me living in Dhaka City is being able to witness people in constant mobility or displacement, and when climate migrants come into the city to look for opportunities, they're often sort of sidelined, and you see a very visible reflection of that 'othering' through informal settlements. So I knew right off the bat that I wanted to do something with the settlements.

But as a researcher I wanted to combine methods and sort of try something creative. Not just for the nerds who like to read research reports, but to engage policy members and sort of a generic audience who'd be, if not interested in the topic from the get go, I just wanted to sort of light a spark so we can get a conversation started. And that's what I hope to do.

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Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

Can I probe a little bit about your background? What field are you working on usually? Because you said that you wanted to work with settlement. That sounds like, did you work on other things?

Guest: Tasnia Prova

So my journey is quite ridiculous, to be fair. I started my career as a development practitioner in Dhaka City. I started with, actually, street dogs. I was a program coordinator for one of the biggest animal welfare foundations in the country. And it's hard for me to explain this to people, but working with dogs or working with a population that is misunderstood constantly really helped me understand how there are human populations that are constantly misunderstood and constantly sidelined and constantly sort of put at the bottom. I spent 2 years trying to advocate for dogs. And when you talk about street dogs in a very busy metropolitan cities, the notion of the health consequences on low income communities show up because free roaming dogs tend to also be in these spaces, and low income communities don't have access to the protection that is needed to fairly coexist.

And so that got me thinking as well. I moved on to doing my master's. I was grateful to get a Commonwealth scholarship to complete my graduate education. And there I focused on the coexistence once again, but this time with refugee populations and elephants. So I focused on the borderlands of Bangladesh and Myanmar, and how Rohingya refugees and the settlements that grew overnight, because they were very quickly displaced, and it was sort of a crisis. Their biggest settlement blocked the only migratory route for Asian elephants to go from Bangladesh to Myanmar, and the only time alarm bells rang was when these elephants walked through the Rohingya refugee camps and killed refugees. So that started a bigger conversation about how do we envision and plan for humanitarianism, but also conservation, and how both of them go hand in hand.

So I think throughout my career I've been pushed to and inspired by complex spaces where conflict happens, or normal life happens and people sort of take insecurity for granted. And granted that I lived in Dhaka City, I saw this 'othering' constantly in social classes. So you have the rich of Dhaka City, the fancy cars and very tall buildings, and then in the midst of it, so much so that I could see the settlements from my office window, you have the biggest informal settlement in the country. Their tin shed houses very rare to have trees in these settlements, and as the city becomes susceptible to climate change, they are at the frontlines of that impact. And I really wanted to bring that story forward.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

It's very interesting, Tasnia, that you started with a very, I would say, uncommon research topic for a lot of people who work in this space. And I can see the attraction of using creative method to you. But can you explain a little bit about what kind of methodology, first of all, because I think we haven't touched upon that. But what kind of creative products that you displayed in the conference? And what kind of methodology did you use for the research itself? Is it just the creative exhibition or is it also the creative methods in the research? And how did you come up with the idea?

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Guest: Tasnia Prova

I think ethnography as a method is something that has always sort of intrigued me. I think I've read books produced by researchers who did a compilation of photos and photoethnography in particular. And the stories that they shared really moved me. I remember reading it and I felt like I was there, like I know the people that this researcher is talking about. And that automatically creates empathy because regardless of whether this is a person without a home on the streets, you are now connecting to his story of how he got there, not his current situation only. And that is something that I've held on in my heart for a bit looking for an opportunity to sort of use it.

And on the other side, this notion about informal settlements is something that I was also looking for an opportunity to focus more deeply around this space, particularly because I was looking at migration and mobility and displacement and how dispossession happens in layers. So you're dispossessed of your home. You're dispossessed of your land. You're dispossessed of peace. And that is something I move on to a different research project to talk about.

But in this particular one, I remember working with the local government officials on how to better prepare the city for urban heat. As I very unfortunately realized is that our city is absolutely not prepared. We are growing higher numbers. We have a large income disparity between classes. I'm sitting in an A/C room right now speaking to you. It's very hot outside, but I know that there are rickshaw pullers out there who don't have access to cooling. There are obviously informal settlers who don't have either electricity or I've been even told through this project that I presented on that turning on the fan makes it even hotter. They don't have access to proper clean water, and it's like a complete disruption from the basic rights that a human being should be granted. And it happens because migration is something that happens under the radar. The government does not entirely know how many people live in these settlements, and so they're not ready to prepare for it. And so, it's sort of like a policy hole. Everybody knows that this is happening but they're too busy with their own lives to be talking about this.

And I also recognize that some of these informal supplements were over researched. So a lot of researchers came here and tried to ask these questions like, where are you from, what do you do, oh, you're living in a tragic environment. But, as everyone knows, when money runs out, the project ends, you sort of move on, and that is something that kept on happening. And I feel like photos and photoethnography was a method to bring back that attention. That I understand you have other things to do. I understand that you're upset that traffic jam is worsened because of rickshaw pullers, but you have to also have empathy. You also have to resonate with the plight that this income disparity has burdened them with. And that was where the notion of photoethnography came.

And also it presented a way to not just again, like I said, to involve the local government officials who perhaps see this as a challenge, see this as a problem that is hindering their statistics of how good a city Dhaka City is. But I also wanted to tell them that these are real people who are trying to make the most of life as are we. And so we really need to humanize when we talk about people from the settlements.

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Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

And what's your impression on using photoethnography as a research methodology for the research itself, but also for the output that you produced after the research. Because I feel sometimes when we talk about creative methodology or creative presentation of our research project, people don't realize how much work is done to prepare for the creative part of it. And then people are asking what's then the difference between this is as an art and this is as a research product. So I'd like to get your opinion about that a little bit.

Guest: Tasnia Prova

Of course. Yeah, that's a very interesting question and something that I pondered on as well, because you have journalists and social media photographers who constantly take the same kind of photos that I've taken, but I'm doing it as a researcher. So I think ethics is very big on taking consent, not plastering people's faces constantly on these photos. And I understand that people are moved by faces. Something that I think it's human nature to see your reflection in other people's faces, but I made it a point to not show faces. Because I don't think that these stories are the entirety of the stories of the people that I was talking about. They have happy days, good days. I just wanted to normalize their existence. It's not an entirely sad situation, but we need to extend our care network to them was the point that I was trying to make. So of course, ethics was one point that we were careful about.

I recognize from the get go that this was a very fast paced research. So it was essentially a 6 month grant and ethnographies are done obviously for a much longer period of time. And so I understood that this is going to be an iteration of it, of how we sort of adapt to, adapt the methodology to the restrictions of time and money that we have. So essentially also using community networks of people who are already leaders in these settlements to guide the conversation. And comforting them, making them feel like this is not a time for me to be talking about solutions of what happens next, I can't promise you that this is going to completely change your lives. This is just an open dialogue, and extension of a hand of friendship that I wanna extend and understand how you exist so close to me but we live such different lives.

I think the research factor was also obviously recording these conversations, transcribing and then analyzing, and then there was thematic analysis. We had 7 different themes. And so, we looked at gender, we looked at children, we looked at health, we looked at men who were rickshaw pullers or outdoor workers, and we looked at the effect of disparity in the disruption of services. And so, obviously from a researcher's perspective, you're also using secondary data to make sense of what we're seeing, of the fact that it's ridiculous that they live in such conditions, but their per square meter, their rent is higher than some of the poshest places in Dhaka City, simply because they're outside of the purview of traditional governance. There were points like this that we kept on referring to and connecting the dots.

And finally, I think a big takeaway for me was, after this project was over, what we did was publish a photo book. And so we created something that was easily shareable with prominent members of our society. We have a PDF version of this as well. And like the exhibition that I did at the conference, we had a bigger exhibition of all the stories in Dhaka City. And people kept on looking at the photos, taking pictures with it. My biggest achievement was inviting the respondents to these exhibitions, and creating an equal

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space where they were the stars. They get to own these stories. And I think just creating access to spaces usually not accessible to a certain group of people, I think, yeah, that was one of my biggest highlights.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

I really love that part, and I think that is... as a researcher, that probably is maybe one of the biggest achievement, I think.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

Talking about these exhibitions, what kind of conversations then that was created or happening during the exhibitions that you did in Dhaka and also in the conference?

Guest: Tasnia Prova

So they range between informal and formal takes. I heard from a lot of people that the stories really resonated with them. I think when a person assumes that they know everything about a group, they stop being curious about them. But when you see these stories upfront and you don't realize, this is the sustained fragility that they live in, I think it creates a shock factor. That is it true that they don't have access to water? Is it true that a rickshaw puller consumes like 6 packets of saline every day, how is that healthy? Is it also true that women suffer from UTIs (urinary tract infection) on a regular basis because of the lack of water that they have? And the fact that extreme heat is getting worse and worse. Dhaka had the longest heat wave in recorded history last year, and we're also anticipating heat waves this year. How are we better prepared?

The question constantly keeps turning back. And the fact that a lot of women have to still cook with firewood because of a lack of gas or electricity helping them and that exacerbates their health conditions. And I think these connections, I don't think a lot of people saw it in unison. And so that is what the exhibition sort of allowed people to see. I don't want to say it's a full picture, but it's more than what they are privy to when they live as residents in Dhaka City. And so, I think there was just a space where they stopped and reflected on. Is this truly the city I'm so proud of where this kind of disparity is so professed in that kind of a way?

And the second strain of conversations were from NGO workers and other professionals who are like, oh no, we're working on this, we're trying to improve this, or maybe we should see this from that angle, maybe we should heatproof schools for children because we also saw that children fainted during classes because of adequate access to cooling. And then there was floods and the diseases that floods bring. They were thinking from a solution perspective, which I welcomed, of course, and sort of understanding also the limitation of the solutions. I constantly focus on the fact that there needs to be more partnership between government and non-government organizations. This cannot be something that private and NGOs continue to shoulder the burden of. The government needs to do a better job, and the government needs to do a better job of just recognizing that this is a big problem. And this problem is only going to grow with time.

And so, there was some sort of conversations on that front. We had a former chief engineer from the Dhaka North City Council, who was very candid about some of the problems that he faced. He said that fires are very common in these settlements, and one of his missions when he was in position, was to install fire hydrants. And he said that there are so many legal barriers, that he had access to the money and the funding, but he was only able to install one fire hydrant because of national government stopping this or another ministry saying that... no, this is our land, that you can't do this, you can't do this. And so, I really cherish the candid, transparent conversations that the exhibition sort of facilitated.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

Wow! The conversations that came out from looking at this photo exhibition are very diverse and also coming from diverse groups, right? I understand that you had 15 or 20 stories in full. So maybe, can you give us a little bit of an insight what are these stories about? And do you have any, not favorites, but the one that calling you all the time?

Guest: Tasnia Prova

So we had 7 themes and essentially 15 stories. We wanted to do more, but we needed to finish a book by that time. But essentially the stories of women always really tug at my heart. There was someone who was a second generation climate migrant who's lived in these settlements her whole life. She's gone to school. She's done everything right. She got married to someone who lives in the settlement, and then moved into her own home, and as soon as things started to look right, her husband was in university, she had a child with a heart defect. It's hard for me to describe how one event in a family's life can completely derail you from the plan that you had. She's now a teacher herself but she talks about this balance between caring for her own child and other children. And sometimes children in her school show up without having had food, and how she looks beyond that.

And so that was something that really like humbles me and made me reflect on the deep realities of how a lot of people are just continuing to exist, hoping that something bad doesn't happen. And when it does happen it's devastating. On the other side of the spectrum, something positive that really brought me a lot of joy was the community coming together. One person struggling, when she goes to school, she usually leaves her daughter with a neighbor who's happy to look after her child. And so, it's a community raising children here in a community who understands these struggles very deeply.

While these stories, obviously I love all the stories, my favorite stories is a small one and I'd like to read it out. It's called *Vastly Different Worlds*. It shows a depiction of a boy looking at a very dirty canal in the settlements on one side, and on the other side you have tall buildings and a lake where these buildings and this real estate is arguably the most expensive real estate in the country. And it goes like:

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Next to potholes, both deep and shallow. Barefooted infants and children are playing with makeshift toys. Tyres, container cover frisbees, and an odd tricycle among them. Close to the waterway overlooking high-rise apartment blocks sits a group of young men sorting out waste. Resourceful rag pickers, also called tokais, are busy separating unusable rubbish from plastic that they can later sell to recyclers. Standing on the borderlands of these two vastly different worlds, we end the day reflecting on the screaming disparity of futures. Hopeful on one side. Stolen on another.

That is something, every time I look at the picture, I see all these memories of having been to these settlements come back really quickly. That is one of the stories that I presented at the conference as well.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

Now I have to ask you this question on position, positionality as a researcher and how do you work through these stories? As I'm sure it affects you in one way or another, but also there are other sides of you that you need to mix together, as a researcher, as a storyteller, as an advocate. So maybe speak a little bit about what you think on the terms or on the phrase of positionality.

Guest: Tasnia Prova

Because this was such a reflective exercise of who we are and what we're seeing, who they are and how they live, positionality was something that crossed my mind almost every day. I remember every time I got super sad about something, I reminded myself, shut up. It's not about me. It's not about how sad I feel about this community. It's about how the community feels. And it's about putting their stories on a platform that can leverage more attention and more empathy. And I always reflected on the fact that every time I entered the settlements I could also leave. Every time it was raining outside and was not convenient for me to walk through the settlements, I could choose not to go. It was something that really sort of shaped how these stories were written. They spoke about resilience, of course, because these people are absolutely resilient in these circumstances. But they also spoke about how a community or a household or a person does not have to be this resilient to go through every day.

I think the biggest reflection of my position was realizing that the majority of my privilege, essentially all of it comes from the fact that I was just born into the family of a different set of parents who had access to education, who had access to the tools that they had to build up a life. And that is the definer of these lives. And that really tells us of how problematic, how society is built, and how the social justice aspect of the society that I want to believe in is so missing. We think about all these things, but how does it play out in action? And so, yeah, I think positionality or thinking about who I am and the fact that I have the privilege to leave is something that has shaped how these stories were sort of created.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

After doing this research, did it shape the way that you are right now or your next project in terms of how you see yourself as a researcher, or how you see your relations with other people who are involved in your research?

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Guest: Tasnia Prova

I think it did. Especially the recent research project that I just finished. I think it brings back that context of how to talk to people, how to communicate with them. And this sort of notion of resilience being celebrated to a point that you forget the fact that institutions have put them in a position to have to constantly be resilient. If I like to just chill out and sleep all day, so does the next person. I think that reflection has sort of seeped into how I do research now.

The second thing I think especially about creative methods is because I am a professional turned researcher, I always look for how to generate impact from research. And I think some academics struggle with that, some academics are fine with the output just being a journal article or just engaging with similar minded folks. But I really want my, whatever I'm doing to have some real impact. I think doing policy research or engaging with stakeholders in a way where I can cultivate relationships, where I can later hone them to spread awareness on an issue that I've touched upon is a strategy that I now take up. But again, thinking about real life impact through research and not just the academic teaching, publishing sort of boundaries that we put ourselves in.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

Ok, so this is probably the last question that I'm going to ask you. Do you have any suggestion for young researcher who is thinking about doing a creative method but cannot really imagine what they have to do in that creative things. Some people cannot imagine that we are kind of doing dual roles in doing creative research. You're a researcher, but you're also sort of a creator.

Guest: Tasnia Prova

My advice would be to just find the first story. Whether it's a story, whether it's a picture, whether it's a video, just find the first frame. Don't put a lot of pressure on yourself to know exactly how this is going to turn out and don't marry into this notion of how the last product must look like. It's a journey and it sort of changes and it evolves, so focus on the first frame.

The second advice, focus on ethics. That has to be front and center of how you engage with people. It's not about you, it's not about the book you publish, it's not about the exhibition you have, it's not about the praises you get. It's about the stories that these people are essentially gifting you or allowing you to relay, and you have to have an immense amount of respect for that. I don't personally as a researcher like answering surveys, and this is something that I've spoken about constantly. People don't like answering questions. People don't like their time being wasted. So make sure that you are valuing what they're gifting you, and it truly is a gift.

And the third point would be always try to focus on collaboration. One of the ideas that I had for this project, which I couldn't do because of the limitation of time and effort and time and money essentially, was I wanted the community members themselves to be taking the pictures and not me or not the team that I had. So try to look for avenues where you can collaborate. It absolutely will shape how the project becomes co-production, co-ownership between you and the person that you interviewed or the person that you engaged with.

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Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

I found myself struggling with writing for popular writing. How do you do it?

Guest: Tasnia Prova

I struggle very deeply and I think this is something that I've spoken about with the director of my research unit, so much that I can't do academic and policy writing together. My language changes. I think my brain is different. Like when you're doing purely journal article writing, your brain is thinking completely different things, and then when you're thinking policy writing, it's completely different. And so when I was writing these stories, something that helped was being on a break from all the other kind of writing and reading a bit of the language that I wanted to incorporate. And that break was important. And I told everybody that I'm not going to do anything else. I'm going to finish these stories first and they're going to be... unless they're going to be at a position where I'm happy with them, I'm not going to take up another project, and so that's what I did.

I think it's important for you to think creatively and be a younger, sort of a funner version of you. And I think we study such tragic topics, it really like takes out the life out of you. I think it's about hitting a balance of both.

And it's also been having really good bosses. Like, you need a boss who understands that you are at your peak. Like, you can't do this anymore, you need to work from home, or you need to take a break. And I lucked out with a boss like that. So let's hope for greater academic sort of leaders.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

Alright. Thank you very much, Tasnia, for this conversation. I really really appreciate it. And I really value this. A lot of insights I get from from our conversations. So thank you so so much for coming in this podcast.

Host: Dr. Akino Tahir

That was our episode for today. Thank you Tasnia, and thank you Mumtaz and Aireen. We'll be back next time with another episode to share about other side events that added quite a bit of fun for participants in the conference.

In the mean time, thank you for listening to this episode. I'm Akino as your host today will stop here. Stay tuned for our next episode, and wishing you a lovely day ahead.

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.

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