

Global Determinants of Health and Wellbeing: Poverty and Social Deprivation in an unstable world

University College London, 12th June 2025

Panel Discussions

Panel 1 **Migration and Displaced people**

Chair: Professor Cornelius Katona [Helen Bamber Foundation]

Host: Ben Still

Rapporteur: Tribeni Gurung,

Panel Members:

- Damaris Frick, Salvation Army, International Emergency Services
- Dr Lucy Kanya, LSE
- Dr Ayesha Ahmad, St Georges-City University
- Tanya Laidlaw, Ukraine Lawyers

This session explored some of the key issues and challenges faced by migrants and displaced people. Chaired by Professor Cornelius Katona (Helen Bamber Foundation), panellists discussed legal challenges, health and nutrition, women in conflict areas and how better we can respond to these issues.

When exploring the topic of international migration, Damaris Frick from The Salvation Army's International Emergency Services, shared that we often view this as 'forced migration' with climate change and economic instability being some of the key factors in displacement and migration. There are consequences that migrants and displaced people face in their host country. Tanya Laidlaw, an immigration advisor at a law firm, shared her experiences of Ukrainian refugees facing a sense of 'bureaucracy vs human trauma' given that legal processes now require comprehensive evidence to support cases, many of which may not be available or accessible for the refugees. It is not only legal challenges faced by migrants and displaced people, since culture and tradition can also fade in a host country, as argued by Dr. Lucy Kanya, an Assistant Professional Research Fellow at the LSE. In her work, Dr. Kanya reported that nutrition is often neglected with migrants and displaced people losing their traditional diets (i.e. foods that migrants like) which can lead to health diseases and generational nutritional impact. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to having poor health conditions. Dr. Ayesha Ahmed, a Reader in Global Health Humanities at St. George's University further explored how women survive war and conflict (with a focus on countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan), stating that this is often experienced based on their own identities and staying 'silent' can be a means for survival.

Across the panellists three key themes emerged. Firstly, the importance of listening to migrants' stories and giving them a voice. Dr. Ahmed highlighted that vulnerabilities can be influenced by what's already known and practiced in society, such as men being perpetrators of gender-based violence. Ensuring that migrants and displaced people's voices are heard through storytelling allows for a dignified and respectful means for them to communicate their experiences as too

often miscommunication can occur giving migrant and displaced people a bad reputation. Damaris further emphasised that by giving people a voice it places them 'at the centre of our response' and gave the following examples of how The Salvation Army are responding to the issue: in Central America, The Salvation Army are conducting awareness campaigns amongst potential migrants on the dangers of the migration journey whilst in Uganda, The Salvation Army has provided immediate relief to displaced people from DRC and neighbouring countries.

Secondly, panellists expressed the need for systems and processes to be strengthened for migrants and displaced people. Too often migrants and displaced people face challenges in their host country, as Tanya shared Ukrainian refugees were likely to face language barriers and accessing service. This was further echoed by Dr. Kanya in that migrants and displaced people lack access to culturally appropriate services including the availability of culturally tailored food aid. Systems can be made simpler and flexible to meet the needs of these populations, which includes strong communication, compassion, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate.

Finally, long-term approaches to support migrant and displaced communities were another key theme agreed by the panellists. Such approaches should go beyond the short-term support that services can provide such as looking at ways to support people into education, employment, immigration etc. This can 'provide stability and reduce anxiety' for migrant and displaced people as described by Tanya. Panellists all shared the vision that policies are also migrant-friendly and recognised the need for a long-term strategy.

Recognising these issues, a question from an audience member on social aspects missing from the lives of migrant and displaced populations concluded the session. Panellists responded to this by suggesting how the church and other faith groups can also welcome migrant and displaced communities by encouraging social connections in their spaces and hosting 'fellowship and friendship' groups.

Panel 2 Climate Inequalities

Chair: Professor Richard Simmons [University of Stirling]

Host Olly: Thorp

Rapporteur: Haley Still

Panel Members:

- Professor Qunshan Zhao, University of Glasgow
- Helen Drewery, UN Quakers
- Joanne Beale, Salvation Army International Development Services
- Zoe Metcalf, AtkinsRéalis

Chaired by Professor Richard Simmons (University of Stirling), this panel explored the impact of climate change on migration, a just response to carbon reduction strategies, and the role of humanitarian and faith-based organisations in the response at local, national and international levels.

Representing diverse sectors, the panel featured Joanne Beale from The Salvation Army International Headquarters, who stressed the importance of keeping people at the heart of

climate adaptation through context-driven, community-led projects that amplify the voices of those most impacted; Professor Qunshan Zhao from University of Glasgow who outlined collaborative approaches between faith groups and academia to address urban vulnerabilities using data-driven engagement, Zoe Metcalfe from *AtkinsRéalis* who focused on sustainable and inclusive urban development and innovative models for social housing, drawing on case studies from Nairobi, Kenya, and Bristol, UK, and Helen Drewery from the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) who highlighted the role of quiet diplomacy and advocacy in promoting ethical dialogue, peacebuilding, and collaboration for climate justice.

Across the presentations three key themes emerged. Firstly, that climate justice is a human and social imperative. Beale highlighted the growing mental health crisis linked to climate related health burdens in Papua New Guinea as well as the deeply gendered nature of climate inequality with climate stress contributing to gender-based violence and exploitation. Zhao, drawing on his work in Phoenix, USA, emphasised how climate inequality manifests in heat-related health issues particularly for lower-income residents living in under-resourced housing. Metcalfe stressed the need for integrating community voices in urban planning and development and advocated for climate-smart housing models which prioritise social impact over profit. Drewery moved the focus from climate adaptation to climate mitigation, challenging the view that 'techno-fixes' - such as carbon capture and storage - can solve the climate crisis without requiring lifestyle changes or reductions in fossil fuel use.

Secondly, all speakers emphasised the need for co-created solutions which include community voices and shift the power. This means community-based projects tailored to local contexts, working with residents, and putting communities at the heart of economic thinking. Zhao shared how his urban modelling project - based in informal settlements in Nigeria and Kenya - involved residents in data validation and invited them to assess and refine the models. Drewery shared how QUNO's work includes amplifying the voices of those most affected by climate change, who are essential for creating sustainable solutions, yet often lack the financial power and influence of the fossil fuel lobby. Metcalfe described how inclusive planning shaped AtkinsRéalis' urban development programme in Kenya, where workshops, surveys, and research were used to understand the needs of disadvantaged groups, particularly women and older people. Beale highlighted how The Salvation Army, with its long-standing presence within communities and trusted relationships, is well-placed to facilitate community-led responses.

Finally, it was agreed that building resilient, inclusive systems through collaboration is imperative. Drewery described QUNO's use of 'quiet diplomacy' and off-the-record conversations to amplify the voices of small nations and indigenous communities to ensure they are part of climate change mitigation and adaptation decisions. In an example of faith-secular collaboration, Zhao highlighted the partnership between academic researchers and The Salvation Army in Phoenix on their utility assistance programme, improving operational efficiency and demonstrating how data-driven expertise can support community-based responses.

Following the presentations, the floor opened for an engaging question and answer session which touched on a variety of topics from policy and housing to climate justice and inclusion. Contributions from both panellists and audience members explored challenges in the UK housing market, including affordability, sustainability, and the role of social infrastructure in building resilient communities. Metcalfe noted growing government support for modern

methods of construction to deliver healthy homes which reduce waste and improve sustainability. Broadening to a global perspective, it was highlighted how the discussion around climate inequalities can become distant from those who are most vulnerable, being subjects of research and study but lost in the search for solutions.

Panellists' closing remarks highlighted the need to recognise climate change as a current crisis, for education and policy to reflect real-world experiences, and the importance of collaborating to create practical, community-led solutions that deliver real impact.

Panel Discussion 3 **Reducing Harm-Creating Health**

Chair: Professor Nicholas Pleace [University of York]

Host: Lee Ball

Rapporteur: Amy Quin-Graham

Panel Members:

- Professor Carolyn Snell, University of York
- Katherine Knight, Intelligent Health
- Lt Col Drew McCombe, Salvation Army Mission Service
- Jo Underwood, Kings College

This session explored the complex intersections of lived experience, policy and practice around reducing harm and creating health. Chaired by Professor Nicholas Pleace from the University of York, this panel created space for the sharing of four different perspectives on key health and wellbeing issues facing the UK population today. Katherine Knight, Director of Intelligent Health, challenged the ways we typically think about creating healthy communities by emphasising the importance of physical activity, while Jo Underwood from the King's Legal Clinic drew our attention to homelessness as a legal issue, highlighting how the law can be used to remove systemic barriers that keep people in poverty and without a home. Drew McCombe, the Secretary for Mission at The Salvation Army UK & Ireland (TSA), outlined various projects that demonstrate how TSA brings together the secular and the spiritual to meet needs across local communities, and Professor Carolyn Snell, also from the University of York, demonstrated the need for homelessness provision to take a 'whole house approach'. She did this by sharing the powerful and devastating lived experiences of a range of homeless individuals.

Importantly, there were key themes that emerged from this discussion, pulling together and reflecting a collective wisdom. First, we saw the commitment to placing the human being at the centre of any intervention, policy or approach. Tackling these complex health and well-being issues requires seeing the whole person, as 'the 'presenting' issue isn't always the underlying issue' (Drew McCombe). Katherine Knight highlighted the need to look beyond the activity and ask how value is being provided to that person, as people will engage with what matters to them.

Second, the power of partnerships was clear. Multi-agency working was referenced as a key part of success, but so were intra-organisational partnerships. For example, Professor Carolyn Snell highlighted how she brings her expertise in energy together with Professor Nicholas Pleace's expertise in homelessness at the University of York to fill a gap in research linking fuel policy to homelessness.

Third, this panel highlighted the need for policy and practice to take a harm reduction approach. This was captured well in Professor Nicholas Pleace's explanation of Housing First (HF); an approach increasingly being adopted by local authorities following shifts in homelessness policy. Unlike traditional 'staircase' models of homelessness provision, HF creates a new way for those with complex needs to be supported out of homelessness, as housing is provided to them as a human right and free from the fulfilment of criteria (such as sobriety) to retain it.

Echoing a question from the audience about state responsibility, this session concluded with a call on the new Labour government to redress the balance between state and community delivered interventions for health and wellbeing. Panellists acknowledged that the role of charities and community organisations to meet needs and cultivate community wellbeing is important, as is a shift in the culture of how we relate to each other as fellow human beings. However, recognition of and investment in physical activity, radical homelessness approaches, legal aid, and the impact of the energy crisis are all important state responsibilities when it comes to reducing harm and creating health.