

CENTER ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024





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Letter from the Directors

Dear Friends,

As we write these words, we recognize the painful reality that conflicts in the Middle East, Sudan, Ukraine, and many other parts of the world have led to the displacement of millions of people from their homes. We are also aware that another year has passed with tens of millions of our fellow humans forced to live in camps, slums, and urban informal settlements, where they are denied basic rights and access to education, healthcare, clean water, food, and dignified housing. Injustice, economic anxiety, climate change, prejudice, xenophobia, and human rights violations in countries all across the world have increased the pain, suffering, and vulnerabilities of individuals and communities on the move.

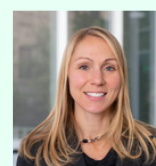
Forced displacement is among the most pressing issues of our time, and we share a collective responsibility to think about many dimensions of the challenge, from historical reasons to pervasive nativist rhetoric, from art and expression to healthy lives. At the Center on Forced Displacement, we recognize both the responsibility of a modern research university in creating a more equitable world through inquiry, discovery, and research and the opportunity to learn, engage, reflect and act. We are fortunate to have the exceptional support of Boston University leadership, the enthusiasm of our students, scholars and researchers, and the extraordinary generosity of our donors who believe in our mission. This annual report is a snapshot of some of our activities during the last year. From research on new methods to predict disease outbreaks in refugee camps to unpacking the issue of climate migration, from understanding the complexities of the US asylum system to identifying challenges faced by host communities, our research reflects our foundational commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship, community engagement and accessibility of our findings. We are proud to be the first institution in the United States to become a member of the IMISCOE network – the largest research network of institutions on migration with members from around the world.

We are honored to have provided a platform to dozens of students, natural and social scientists, physicians, engineers, humanists, artists, practitioners, and community members from diverse disciplines, backgrounds and experiences at BU and around the world. We offer the opportunities to learn about existing challenges, confront our failings, develop new ideas and approaches to improve lives, and establish a venue to work together. We hope that you will join us on our journey and share your thoughts, ideas, and critical feedback as we continue to build our center as a place that aims to create knowledge for a more just world.

Muhammad H. Zaman
Director



Carrie J. Preston
Associate Director





About CFD

Mission

The displacement of tens of millions of people who have fled their homes due to war, persecution, climate change, and other disasters, is one of the great global challenges and ethical imperatives of our time. With the continued conflict in many parts of the world, inequality, disease, and climate change, this number is likely to go up significantly in the months and years to come. The Boston University Center on Forced Displacement supports new ideas, technologies, scholarship, awareness, and solution identification that will improve the human condition of vulnerable persons who are forced to leave their homes. The center supports research and engagement with forced displacement and humanitarian emergencies that is truly interdisciplinary and of the highest scholarly and ethical standards.

Vision

CFD serves as a platform for educators, students, researchers, activists, and policymakers to engage in interdisciplinary research, discussion, and education about forced displacement. Through interdisciplinary, international collaboration, we identify, research, and work to resolve the challenges of forced displacement. By connecting with local communities in Boston and the USA, as well as our partners in Uganda, Colombia, Lebanon, Turkey, and the Western Balkans, CFD learns directly from and with the communities grappling with the challenges of forced displacement and creates venues for new ways of thinking, research, and program and project design.



Research Activities

Sawyer Seminar Series: Border Externalization



CFD continued to develop its interdisciplinary Sawyer Seminar series "US and EU Border Externalization Regimes: Ethics, Identities, and Impacts" in AY 2023-2024, with the sustained support of a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Building upon the productive first year of the seminar series, CFD organized one seminar each month on the evolving dynamics of contemporary border regimes and deterrence policies, with a special focus on externalized migration control tactics and their consequences in the EU and US borderlands. We continued to explore the changing landscape of those border spaces from a variety of angles, analyzing not only the policies, economies and technologies that emerge within and (re)produce those landscapes, but also the forms of resistance and creativity that challenge them, and the ethical quandaries both engender. All seminars were held in a hybrid format allowing attendees to join in person or via zoom, and we maintained strong community engagement throughout the series.



Our first seminar of the academic year (and sixth overall in the series), "The Ethics of Border Externalization: Migrant Rights and State Obligations" in September 2023, featured three speakers addressing the distinctive and complex ethical and legal questions about migration, asylum, and border control raised by the shifting and expanding 21st-century border. Topics included the legitimacy of border externalization practices, the scope of legal responsibility for extra-territorial border deaths, and the permissibility of certain forms of resistance to harmful immigration policies. October's "Funding Externalization and its Economic Impact: EU and US Funding Streams and Policies and Alternative Economies," addressed the economics of contemporary border externalization policies, with three speakers analyzing states' growing interest in outsourcing migration management and detention to private firms, the colonial origins of EU migration and refugee management practices in Africa, and the entanglement of security and economic discourses in justifying US externalization policy. Our November '23 seminar, "Border Technologies and Ethics: Promoting Health vs. Promoting 'Security,'" brought together thinkers and stakeholders from academic, policy-oriented, and non-profit sectors to think through current trends in and dangers surrounding the use of novel technologies in border control and migration management, highlighting not only the ethically-controversial technologies already employed by the US and the EU to manage their borders, but also the potential for creatively repurposing some of those technologies to more humane ends.

For our February '24 seminar, "Gender, Race, and Intersectionality in the Global Border Regime," we developed a new format, using a hybrid presentation-workshop model to aid participants in developing their research on the differential impacts of border externalization practices on vulnerable migrant populations such as children, women, queer, and trans migrants. March's "Criminalized Hospitality and Solidarity Fatigue: (Dis)Empowering Hosts," was unfortunately postponed due to a family emergency on the part of the keynote speaker, and is being rescheduled using an extension of grant funds from the Mellon Foundation for the fall of 2024. The final seminar of our Sawyer series was the centerpiece of the CFD's larger annual conference, "The Future of Borders," in April 2024. Having closely analyzed the emergent phenomenon of border externalization in the EU and US from a host of different disciplinary perspectives over the course of the seminar series, we concluded by turning our gaze to the future, considering how the reshaping of border management policies and practices in recent years — indeed the reshaping of the border itself — is also likely to reshape the future of refugee protection, transform identities and forms of (national) belonging, foster new technologies of control, deterrence, and liberation, and perhaps bring us closer to a world without borders altogether. Our keynote speaker, T. Alexander Alenikoff, the former Deputy High Commissioner of the UNCHR and director of the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility at The New School, led a sparkling panel on the central theme, which was subsequently engaged with, elaborated upon, and challenged by a series of related panels featuring dozens of speakers over two days of an edifying and well-attended conference.



The Sawyer Seminar series will, via an extension of the Mellon Foundation grant into the fall 2024 semester, continue to foster important comparative research on border externalization at a crucial moment of its evolution. As part of this ongoing project, CFD researchers will also be publishing an edited volume, to appear in print in 2025, titled *Mexico-US and Serbia-EU Border Lives and Works* (edited by Carrie Preston, Marina Lazetic, and Muhammad Zaman and published by Anthem Press, USA).





Migrant Women's Trust in Host Healthcare Systems and Breast Cancer Prevention

During the winter of 2023, CFD director Muhammad Zaman and postdoctoral associate Dr. Selma Hedlund gathered a team of international scholars and medical professionals for the study of Migrant women's trust in host healthcare systems and determinants of breast cancer prevention in Türkiye, Pakistan, and Sweden.

Awareness and participation in breast cancer prevention (including mammography screening) is a crucial tool in the primary prevention and early detection of breast cancer, which significantly improves treatment outcomes and reduces morbidity and mortality rates. However, multiple studies from a variety of national settings show that disparities exist in breast cancer screening rates among migrant populations compared to native-born individuals. In host countries, forcibly displaced populations usually experience more challenges when compared to economic migrants.

The team is currently working on a project with a focus on a three-site international comparison of cancer prevention participation among Syrian and Afghan migrant women in Sweden, Türkiye and Pakistan. All three countries have versions of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), but still struggle to build trust with migrants and achieve equitable participation and access to healthcare among their migrant communities. By centering trust in breast cancer prevention awareness and participation, including related health behaviors and technology such as mammography and ultrasonography, the project aims to parse out common denominators and challenges to equitable breast cancer prevention, in addition to the case-specific dynamics that require individual attention and intervention.

Philosophical Perspectives on Asylum Detention Spaces

Micah Trautmann, a postdoctoral associate at CFD, is studying the ways in which novel asylum detention spaces that have emerged over the last decade as part of global deterrence and externalization policies harm refugees and asylum seekers. Philosophers and political theorists have typically located the harms of protracted displacement in the loss of national membership or specific rights; Micah's research seeks to locate at least some of them instead in the prolonged deprivation of the environmental background conditions necessary for leading a minimally dignified life. Drawing on phenomenological insights into the way our environment shapes various aspects of our agency and well-being, his work seeks to map and articulate the ways in which contemporary forms of refugee "protection" generate their own harms and wrongs. Publications this year that have emerged from this project include "The Wrong of Refugee Containment" (*The Southern Journal of Philosophy*) and "Non-Durable Solutions" (*Journal of Applied Philosophy*). Micah is currently exploring the prevalence and uneven rates of self-harm in different types of refugee protection spaces, seeking to show why certain kinds of refugee housing make the maintenance of hope particularly difficult.



Climate Change and Migration: What Does the Literature Say?

Discussions within academic, non-governmental organizations and the popular media have increasingly focused on the expected impacts of climate-related events on migration and displacement. CFD researchers are conducting a systematic literature review of academic journal articles published within the last ten years, to explore the dominant climate migration narrative, aiming to understand how prevalent narratives predicting mass climate migration and displacement have become, whether they acknowledge the possibility and prevalence of climate immobility, assess the existing landscape of literature in terms of regional focus, the range of climate events explored, the disciplines in which this research is being conducted, the terminology they make use of and its implications and the methods being utilized. While we do find that academic articles increasingly call for a greater attention to immobility and actively resist once-dominant hypermobility narratives, our initial findings reveal that these narratives tend to appear more frequently depending on the discipline of study and methods utilized and that these understandings are also not always reflected in the implementation of policy. Interested in understanding these trends and their implications, we aim to explore deeply the methods the studies in our review make use of, and the impacts of these methods on the conversations this work is able to initiate. Initial findings reveal that among studies which consider the increasingly common possibility of climate immobility, studies which meaningfully engage local communities are outnumbered by those which rely on purely quantitative methods or take the expected relationship between climate and migration as a premise upon which their argument is built. Studies which do meaningfully engage local communities, speaking with community members in open-ended interviews, find that decision-making is complex, decisions to stay following a climate event are more common than assumed and that a straightforward, linear relationship cannot be supposed between the onset of a climate event and migration. We also find that while academic research may seek to center the voices and experience of those most at-risk, it often does so by exploring the effects of already implemented policies/responses on local communities, rather than proactively speaking with and engaging with local communities in order to then determine the most effective policies/response.

While we do find that the academic literature approaches questions related to climate migration and displacement and migration decisions with nuance, resists and moves beyond simple binaries and straightforward relationships about climate events and migration, the methods through which many studies arrive at their conclusions raises additional questions about whether this research is being conducted in a way that best supports the development of effective community and policy responses on the ground, based on the holistic perspectives and experiences of those most at-risk.

Stateless Communities and Healthcare Access

Several hundred thousand ethnic Bengalis are denied citizenship in Pakistan. In this project, we explore the health outcomes of the stateless ethnic Bengali community residing in an urban slum, Machar Colony in Karachi, Pakistan, individuals who have been marginalized since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, facing deprivation of citizenship, education, healthcare, and meaningful employment. Our research, conducted in collaboration with the local NGO Imkaan Welfare (the only NGO providing legal, education and health services to stateless Bengalis in Pakistan), aimed to assess the health status of this community. Using qualitative and quantitative analysis of health facility records (2016-2022), we examined the impact of environmental conditions on childrens' health and analyzed how systematic marginalization affects overall health outcomes. We have worked to quantitatively analyze the available monthly report data (from 2016-2022) for the mother and child health center operated by Imkaan Welfare. To complement this analysis and answer lingering questions which purely quantitative data was unable to answer, we conducted a survey that was completed by the local health care providers to report trends they have observed, in overall health outcomes and patient visits, their understandings of the main drivers of health risks among children, and potential barriers to accessing the health center, in order to draw conclusions about the main health risks faced by children in Machar Colony, the impact of environment on health, and the ways that marginalization affects overall health and well-being.

Research Workshops

Research Methods Workshop Series

In the spring of 2024, CFD postdoctoral associate Selma Hedlund and program director Marina Lazetic launched a workshop series aimed at supporting emerging researchers of various disciplines, predominately those conducting fieldwork with people that have experienced displacement or other vulnerabilities that require inclusive or participatory approaches. The workshop addressed a particular need among junior scholars – to demystify and collaborate around parts of the methodological process that can sometimes feel messy, intimidating, or uncharted. Graduate students and early-career scholars often take on large research projects with few resources under strict time constraints, which impacts the research design process and outcomes. While there are plenty of forums for sharing research results, this series of conversations served as an exchange in which to discuss first steps, challenges faced along the way, and how to recalibrate from obstacles.

Each workshop was facilitated by the CFD organizers and led by invited speakers from both inside and outside Boston University. Topics of the workshops included: research ethics and design with the Institutional Review Board, lessons from community engaged research, community engagement strategies, and public writing. The sessions garnered wide participation and appreciation.



IINE Workshops

The Center on Forced Displacement and International Institute of New England (IINE) have embarked on a new collaboration to support IINE staff to learn more about the international refugee regime and understand the many facets of forced displacement, both locally and globally. IINE is the largest resettlement organization in the New England area and has grown rapidly in the past years, but like many similar organizations, they have faced high burnout rates and staff turnover as case workers report stress and frustration with their role in the US resettlement system. The goal of this partnership is to increase knowledge about forced displacement amongst resettlement staff, develop a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by forcibly displaced persons in the New England area and identify strategies that will help IINE staff in providing support to refugee communities. We held six exploratory workshops in May and June 2024 on topics ranging from race and gender in refugee resettlement to secondary trauma and stress. Our team is currently analyzing data drawn from surveys, focus group discussions, and exit interviews to identify the most and least successful aspects of the program. We are grateful that data analysis for this project is being led by Noah Veloz, a CFD summer fellow specializing in qualitative research. Noah is a PhD candidate at Wheelock College whose research focuses on education for adult refugees. We will be revising our curriculum for a second cohort with the goal of publishing training materials and teaching tools as well as papers about the needs of resettlement organizations, best practices in training staff, and the collaborative project more generally.



Learning through Engagement with Complex Systems

We concluded our second offering of the Summer School in Belgrade, Serbia in June 2024, and the third version of our Border Studies Program will be offered in spring semester 2025. Our research assesses the effectiveness of these programs by analyzing surveys of students and collaborators, exit interviews, and discussion groups. In the initial presentation of the research at the International Studies Association Annual Conference in San Francisco in April, 2024, Carrie Preston and Marina Lazetic developed a framework we call “learning through engagement with complex systems” to describe these programs. This framework emphasizes the features of the program that ask students to engage with governmental institutions, civil society organizations, and security management systems to recognize how these diverse systems work together (or fail to do so) as they seek to manage migrants or people on the move. Our framework also diverts attention from the “student experience” centered in the common paradigms of experiential learning, field work, and service learning. With the support of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), we have two undergraduate researchers working on the project, analyzing data, and conducting literature reviews: Liam Reynolds and Pranjal Kumar. Baiden Wright and Marina Lazetic are also engaged with curriculum development and data analysis, and the team plans additional presentations and publications.

Maternal Welfare and Sexual and Reproductive Health of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan

In times of conflict and crisis, women and children are often among the most affected. For decades Afghan women and their families have been forced to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere, including in neighboring countries like Pakistan. This displacement has had a profound impact on their survival, particularly in terms of maternal and sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Currently Pakistan hosts an estimated 3 million Afghan refugees and recent policies by the Government of Pakistan have, once again, created tremendous uncertainty and anxiety for Afghan refugees in the country.

To develop a deeper understanding of the health challenges faced by Afghan women in Pakistan, we have carried out a systematic review of literature focusing on SRH of Afghan refugee women. This systematic review synthesized existing evidence related to the maternal welfare and SRH of Afghan women and infants in Pakistan by systematically examining peer-reviewed literature from online databases published between 2000 and the present. Articles were selected for inclusion in this review based on specific predetermined inclusion criteria. The goal was to create a comprehensive review of the current state of research and identify gaps in the present literature, thereby establishing a clear framework around the existing data.

This review identified a set of articles related to this subject published between 2002-2004, indicating an increased interest in research on Afghan refugees in the years following 9/11. However, there was a notable decrease in funded research after 2010 suggesting a subsequent decline in interest in this subject. Additionally, the SRH conditions for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, as well as the stigma surrounding reproductive health, have improved over time when compared to past conditions and to conditions in Afghanistan. However, despite these improvements, social norms continue to prevent many women from visiting doctors alone or deciding when their health warrants a doctor's attention, and many barriers remain to achieving proper care.

This review mapped the complete extent of research published on the maternal welfare and SRH of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, provided a roadmap for future researchers and policymakers to identify missing information, and determined the next steps for addressing challenges related to SRH.



Summer visiting students at CFD

Ali Alpan, a junior at Emory University, studied how environmental injustice affect refugee communities in Türkiye and analyzed how the topic is discussed in the national media in Türkiye. In particular, he focused on the role refugees and migrant workers play in Türkiye's plastic recycling industry and how the rise in plastic waste imports in the country, compounded by the fragile regulatory framework, exposes vulnerable workers to severe health risks.



Jack Dano, a 2nd-year undergraduate student at the University of St Andrews in Scotland focused on studying why refugee settlements are located in climatically vulnerable land and what social and physical factors contribute to this. His project aimed to provide a holistic narrative that maps climate threats among displaced populations in Bangladesh while contextualizing environmental vulnerability by incorporating historical and social constraints, highlighting the intersection of complex social, physical, and climatic factors that lead to increased vulnerability of refugees to climate change and extreme weather events. Specifically, the study examined how the geographic and environmental characteristics of Cox's Bazar—a low-elevation coastal region prone to flooding, storms, and sea level rise—compound the risks faced by the Rohingya. Using ArcGIS, Jack's work illustrated the overlap between multiple different climatic events and how these vulnerabilities compound and intensify one another.



Partnership with Institute of Humanitarian Studies in Azare, Nigeria

CFD has partnered with the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health, Nigerian National Universities Commission, and the Federal University of Health Sciences in Azare to establish the Institute of Humanitarian Studies – a first of its kind institution in West Africa to bring together scholars, students, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners from diverse disciplines in the humanities, social, health and natural sciences, engineering, and policy to develop novel, contextually relevant, and sustainable solutions to humanitarian challenges in Nigeria and the Sahel region. The Institute of Humanitarian Studies will have both a teaching (Masters and PhD) and a research arm and will also serve as a regional hub for student and scholar exchange. It will also provide a venue for seminars, conferences and symposia on complex challenges in displacement and humanitarian emergencies in the region. Prof. Zaman will serve as the first chair of the international advisory board of the new institute.

IMISCOE Membership

CFD is proud to be the first university in North America to join the International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE) – the largest global network of scholars focused on migration. CFD's application for membership was unanimously approved during the 2024 spring meeting in Istanbul. The 2024 Spring conference – organized by MIREKOC center at Koc University also featured a plenary talk by CFD Director Muhammad Zaman on healthcare challenges faced by migrants and stateless communities and a talk by Assoc. Director Carrie Preston on displaced performance and advocacy.

Book Publications

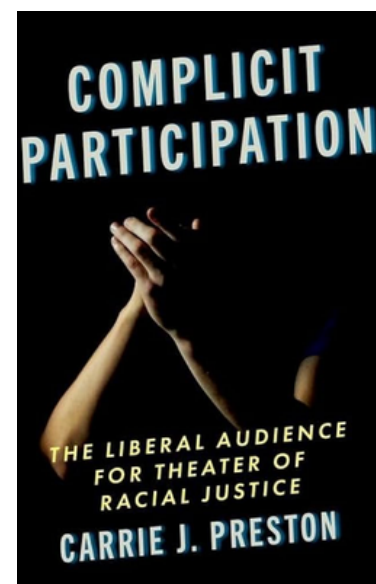
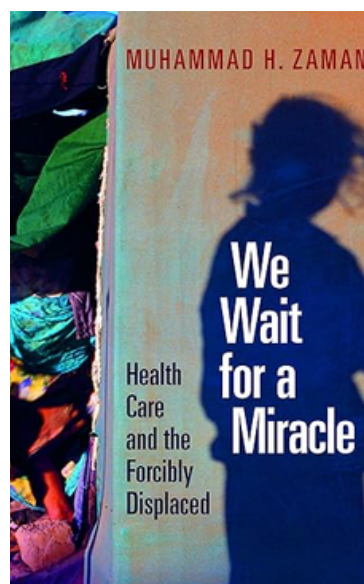
We Wait for a Miracle: Health Care and the Forcibly Displaced

Muhammad H. Zaman

Around the world, millions are forcibly displaced by conflict, climate change, and persecution. Some cross international borders, while others are displaced within their own countries. In *We Wait for a Miracle*, Muhammad H. Zaman shares poignant stories across continents to highlight the health care experiences of refugees and forced migrants. For many of these people, health risks unfortunately become part of the fabric of everyday life as they navigate new countries that treat them with varying degrees of care and indifference.

Across widely varied local systems, countries of origin, health concerns, and other contexts, Zaman finds that barriers to health care share these key factors: trust, social network, efficiency of the health system, and the regulatory framework of the host environment. A combination of these factors explains difficulties in accessing health care across the geographic and geopolitical spectrum and challenges the existing global public health framework, which is based entirely on local context. In moving stories that span seven countries—Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Colombia, and Venezuela—Zaman shares the everyday struggles of refugees, the internally displaced, and the stateless in accessing the health care they need.

This unique look at an urgent global challenge addresses the issue of access for populations that are currently in distress due to civil war, economic collapse, or a conflict driven by external state actors. Organic social networks and trust, rather than top-down policies, are often what save the lives of migrants, refugees, and the stateless. Focusing on that trust—and its deficit—in camps, urban slums, hospitals, and clinics, Zaman combines personal and journalistic accounts of refugees with broad systemic analysis on global health care access to compare problems and solutions in different regions and provide holistic policy and practice recommendations for refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless populations.



Complicit Participation: The Liberal Audience for Theater of Racial Justice

Carrie J. Preston

In this incisive critique of the ways performances of allyship can further entrench white privilege, author Carrie J. Preston analyses her own complicit participation and that of other audience members and theater professionals, deftly examining the prevailing framework through which white liberals participate in antiracist theater and institutional “diversity, equity, and inclusion” initiatives. The book addresses immersive, documentary, site-specific, experimental, street, and popular theatre in chapters on Jean Genet's *The Blacks*, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's *An Octoroon*, George C. Wolfe's *Shuffle Along*, Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*, Anna Deavere Smith's *Notes from the Field*, and Claudia Rankine's *The White Card*. Far from abandoning the work to dismantle institutionalized racism, Preston seeks to reveal the contradictions and complicities at the heart of allyship as a crucial step toward full and radical participation in theaters of racial justice.



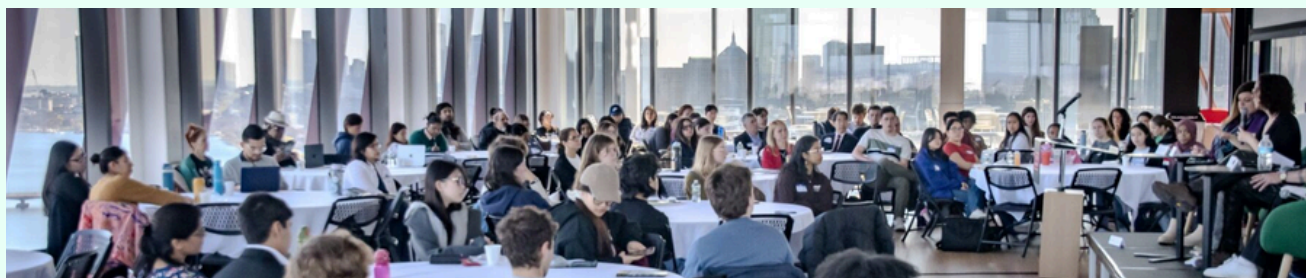
Events and Initiatives

Annual Conference: The Future of Borders

CFD hosted its second annual conference from April 23-24, 2024. The theme of this year's conference was "The Future of Borders", focusing specifically on interdisciplinary perspectives on research, pedagogy, and engagement. The conference brought together 200 scholars, students, artists, and activists over its two days of programming. The conference featured keynote speaker T. Alexander Aleinikoff, Dean of The New School for Social Research and Director of the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility.

The first day of the conference was held at Boston University's Center for Computing and Data Science. In addition to the keynote presentation, events of the first day included a panel discussion engaging with transformations of identity and belonging, as well as two engaging workshops; the first workshop covered public writing, and the second focused on engaging with community collaborators. The first day also brought together nine members of CFD's affiliate faculty for a book exhibition which coincided with a book sale during the conference's lunch break. Day One concluded with Suitcase Stories, an art exhibition that invited four individuals whose lives had been affected by migration and displacement to tell their stories before an audience.

The conference's second day was held in the common room of the Kilachand Honors College. This day welcomed three panels. The first session of the day discussed the weaponization of border technologies; the second session, entitled "No Futures, No Borders", explored the future of borders and borderlands as extensions of the carceral state; and the third session invited artists engaged with borders and migration to share their work, followed by a conversation about the impact of artistic engagement with borderlands. Aside from the panel conversations, Day Two also featured the inaugural launch of the CFD magazine, as well as student poster presentations over lunch.





Interdisciplinary Summer School on Forced Displacement

Building upon the success of its inaugural program last year, CFD held its second annual Interdisciplinary Summer School on Forced Displacement from May 26 to June 8, 2024 at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade, Serbia. The program, co-organized and co-facilitated by CFD researchers and partners at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Belgrade, brought together 18 students — half from BU and half from the University of Belgrade — for two weeks of intensive seminars on the evolving landscape of movement in a unique and geo-politically significant migration region.

The central aims of the program included fostering a vibrant space for students from different regional contexts and backgrounds to engage in comparative analysis and discussion of forced migration patterns and their consequences in contested border regions, while also creating a hub for academic scholars and non-academic practitioners to bridge the gap between their sectors, exchanging knowledge and designing projects to enrich their pedagogical, research, and aid work on forced displacement.



As with last year, the first week of the program consisted in a set of seminars and discussions facilitated by scholars, NGO-representatives, government officials, and artists on themes ranging from Western Balkan-EU relations in border control; obstacles to asylum in the legal system; formal detention spaces and border squats; people smuggling and the criminalization of humanitarian rescue; unaccompanied minors on the move; and engaged research with vulnerable populations. But in a major re-design this year, the second week of the program saw students moving outside the classroom to intern with local Belgrade NGOs in their work with or on behalf of displaced populations in the Western Balkans. Split into small, mixed groups, students learned further about the institutional frameworks, legal structures, and humanitarian assistance programs that structure the lives of people on the move, while also gaining practical, hands-on experience providing legal aid, supporting housing for minors on the move, doing independent research for asylum cases, working at an organization that provides assistance for displaced victims of gender based violence, and more. In combination, the program constituted a uniquely interdisciplinary and cross-sector approach to student learning and academic research in a vital area, one that CFD is excited to continue developing in the coming years.



Partnership with the National Academy of Sciences

CFD and Committee on Human Rights (CHR) at the National Academy of Sciences, Medicine and Engineering organized a second workshop in May 2024 on STEM Education and Forced Displacement. This workshop discussed the outcome of the first workshop in March 2023 and focused on student and instructor experience in teaching courses focused on forced displacement. Instructors from BU, UC Irvine and Drexel shared their experiences as well as responses from students. BU Students who had taken the course during Spring 2024 also talked about the value of the course in their own learning and academic journey. The workshop also focused on the next steps to scale the effort including creation of a national program and global network that will provide resources (lecture materials, problems sets, videos, podcasts and interviews) to institutions from across the world to create customized courses in various STEM disciplines that interface with challenges faced by forcibly displaced persons.



Boston Book Festival



The Center on Forced Displacement partnered with the 15th Annual Boston Book Festival on October 14th, 2023 with a panel titled "Refugees: The Harrowing Path to Home". The panel included four authors including Saket Soni, a prominent labor organizer; historian Carly Goodman, climate journalist Jake Bittle and BU CFD Director Muhammad Zaman. The panel was moderated by BU Professor of the Practice and Director of BU African Studies Center Mark Storella. With over a hundred attendees, and standing room only, the session focused on complex issues around migration and displacement, and the role of creative non-fiction in helping us understand the myriad challenges faced by those who are forcibly displaced. CFD plans to continue its partnership with Boston Book Festival – one of the preeminent book and literature festivals in the country.

Open Houses

CFD hosted two open houses during the 2023-2024 school year. The fall semester open house was held in October, and the spring semester open house was held in February. For each session, CFD welcomed students, staff, faculty, and other members of the BU community to the CFD office space in an effort to share the Center's work with a broader campus audience. Both open houses were very well attended and provided an opportunity for community members to learn about upcoming events at the center, ways to engage in CFD's research, and identify areas for new collaborations.



Open House



Book Talks

Book Talks

During 2023-2024, CFD was honored to co-sponsor a number of book talks that focused on a variety of issues related to forced displacement. Authors from diverse disciplines including history, political science, sociology, international relations, public health, and biomedical engineering shared not only their findings but also about their own journeys as authors in different genres.

Cambridge Science Festival

Cambridge Science Festival is one of the largest science festivals in the US that attracts tens of thousands of attendees from all walks of life. The Center on Forced Displacement was fortunate to partner with the CSF in September 2023 at the MIT Museum to talk about the role of science and scientists in addressing complex challenges faced by forcibly displaced persons. Professor Allison Dennis (BU Computing and Data Sciences) and Professor Devin Bowes (University of South Carolina) talked about their research on health equity, the ethical challenges facing scientists, and how science and engineering can tackle complex, multi-faceted, and long-ranging issues faced by forcibly displaced persons.



Cambridge Science Festival



CFD Summer Fellows

Our Summer Fellows Program offers BU graduate students enrolled in programs across Boston University an opportunity to engage in intensive interdisciplinary research, writing, and project-development on topics related to forced displacement. Our 10-week fellowship program includes a stipend and mentorship provided by researchers and affiliate faculty, along with support and guidance throughout the project design and implementation phase. During the summer 2024 session we offered two different fellowship tracks:

- Track 1: This fellowship track is designed to support graduate students seeking financial and logistical support to work on their own ongoing project
- Track 2: This fellowship track is designed to support students who want to work on existing CFD research projects and gain additional skills and experience. This track offers a possibility of extension of the fellowship beyond the summer term for interested and qualified students who wish to continue working on their assigned project.

During the bi-weekly meetings attended by CFD fellows, faculty and staff, discussion focuses on a variety of topics including ethical engagement with displaced people and other vulnerable groups, qualitative coding, community-engaged research, writing for research and publication, interdisciplinary research design, connecting projects with larger concepts of forced displacement – and much more!

Mohit Tamta

Mohit Tamta (he/him) is a Ph.D. candidate in Social Work and a CFD graduate fellow. He holds a Bachelor and Master of Arts in Sociology from Delhi University and a Master of Social Work with a Macro Concentration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Originally from Dehradun, Uttarakhand, Mohit's identity has driven him to pursue his research working on the caste system and housing insecurity in India. Initially studying engineering, Mohit felt pressured to pursue conventional academic tracks like his peers. Like a frog in a well, he was confined to what he knew instead of following his passion. During his gap year, Mohit discovered his interest in politics and pivoted his career to studying social issues. He is currently working on the socioeconomic impact of the caste system in New Delhi, unveiling Dalit perspectives and evictions in Delhi's informal settlement. Growing up singing and dancing, Mohit is a classically trained vocalist and Zumba instructor in his free time. As a CFD Graduate Fellow, Mohit hopes to continue researching housing insecurity in India and the role of displacement and evictions in policy and government.



Jessica Barmine

Jessica Barmine, a third-year medical student at Boston University, spent her research block working with Imkaan, a non-profit organization dedicated to the wellness of women and children in stateless communities in Karachi, Pakistan. Jessica spent the first portion of her research block building a holistic understanding of the services that Imkaan offers in the law, primary care, maternity and mental health clinics serving the Machar Colony. She interviewed doctors, midwives, nurses and lawyers about their roles and the challenges they face in delivering services. To further explore the health ecosystem of Machar, she conducted focus groups with traditional birth attendants, toured unlicensed clinics, interviewed administrators of government projects, and visited the community's substance use rehab center. She documented the health of the community and belief systems regarding access to health care. Working with Imkaan, she helped to review health data collection materials and formulate a grant proposal. She plans to continue to work with Imkaan to design healthcare delivery projects in the Machar Colony.



Darya Nemati

Darya Nemati (she/her) is an Occupational Therapy Doctoral Candidate at Boston University and a CFD Graduate Fellow. Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, she received her Bachelor of Public Health from the University of Pennsylvania, where she found her passion in supporting immigrant communities. As a daughter to immigrant parents, Darya has always had a personal connection with her Italian and Iranian background. At the University of Pennsylvania, Darya served as the President of the Penn Persian Society, sharing Persian culture with her community. While interning at the Nationality Service Center, Darya worked with the resettlement team and noticed a gap in the immigrant transition process. Through occupational therapy, Darya is rethinking cultural orientation, concentrating on how occupational therapy could fit into the immigration resettlement process. As a CFD graduate fellow, Darya's research explores what the current cultural orientation program does not provide immigrant communities. Taking a holistic approach, she focuses on her client's mental and emotional health to help them create a steady life in the US. Outside work, Darya enjoys spending time in the sun, reading, and hanging out with ducks.



Rula Chatila

Rula Chatila is one of the Center on Forced Displacement's graduate fellows and a student at Boston University pursuing a Master of Public Health with a functional certificate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. At the CFD, she investigated antimicrobial resistance in wastewater in the context of global health and informal urban settings. Specifically, she developed context-specific protocols, identified replicable methods, and conducted literature reviews to assess antimicrobial resistance through statistical testing and wastewater analysis. Rula is deeply committed to using epidemiological study and biostatistical analysis to ameliorate global public health conditions. Specifically, she aims to understand the underlying mechanics of antibiotic resistance and how they contribute to disease in complex refugee settings.





Nina Martinez

Nina Martinez is one of the Center on Forced Displacement’s graduate fellows, completing visual research around migrant communities in Massachusetts and in Manila, Philippines. She recently graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design with a Master of Fine Arts in Illustration after completing her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communication from the University of the Philippines Diliman. Her MFA thesis, “Absence Leaves a Mark: Illustrating Filipino Migrant Stories,” tells the stories of migrants living in Little Manila, Queens, New York while acknowledging the anonymity required to protect her subjects. At the CFD, Nina continues to expand on this idea with her project “Illustrating the Periphery: Visual Research (Around) Migrant Communities” and the comic format.

Nina sets out to show illustration’s ability to be both informative and protective, and at a time when photo doctors increasingly use Artificial Intelligence to spread disinformation, she underlines illustration’s humanity. To others wanting to work in her field, she recommends caring about the subjects of your work, acting more as a collaborator than a mere observer, and letting the process of creation and discovery lead the thesis of your work. Outside of her work as an illustrator, researcher, and journalist, Nina enjoys sewing, woodworking, and playing video games.



Excerpts from
“Absence Leaves a Mark”

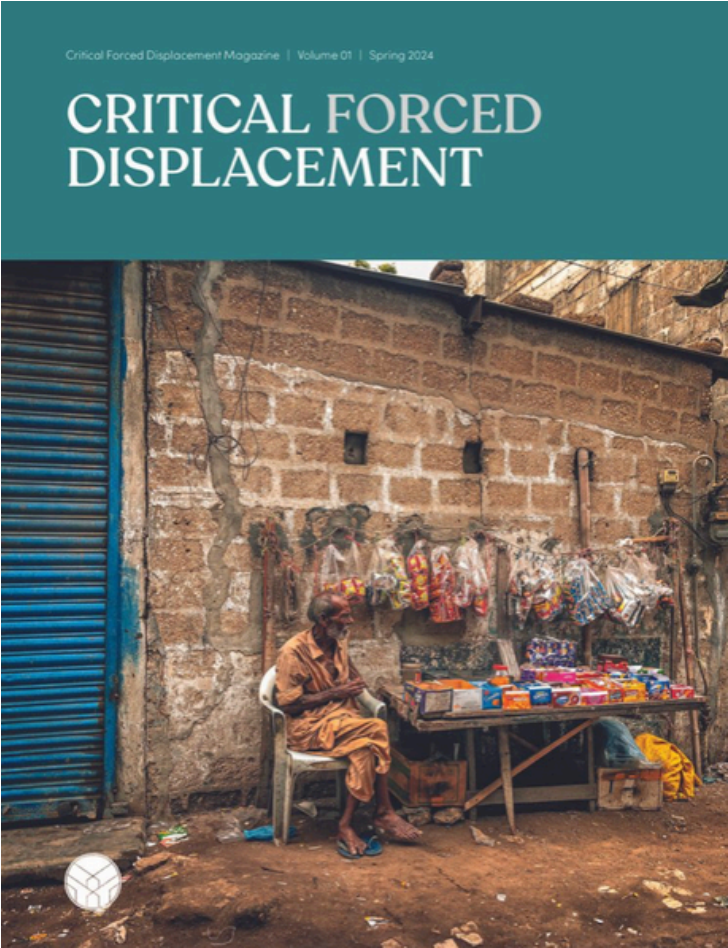


Excerpt from 20 Years of Damayan, an illustrated timeline of the Damayan Migrant Workers Association. Nina Martinez worked with this organization during the completion of her MFA thesis.



CFD Magazine

In spring 2024, the Center on Forced Displacement launched *Critical Forced Displacement*, a multi-genre, open access magazine as a platform to bring global voices of artists, scholars, practitioners, students, community workers and activists on the topic of forced displacement. The magazine – available both in print and in digital form – will be published twice a year. The first issue focused on “borders” and published original essays by humanists, poets, scientists, engineers, social scientists, physicians, students, community workers and artists. It also included a photo essay by Qasim Ali, a stateless artist residing in urban informal settlements in Pakistan. The magazine aims to reach a broad global audience, foster inquiry and debate, celebrate creativity and create a venue for rich debate that captures the complexity of myriad issues around forced displacement. The magazine aims to engage contributors from around the world and will strive to publish original content in multiple languages along with their translations. The second issue is planned for October 2024.





K-12 Workshop on Forced Displacement

In August 2024, CFD, in partnership with Wheelock College of Education and Human Development, hosted a week long workshop for K-12 teachers in the greater Boston area to help them better teach about forced displacement and to work more effectively with children and families affected by forced displacement. The workshop, that brought together twenty elementary, middle, and high school teachers, was an immersive experience designed for teachers engaged in a variety of disciplines and subjects including English language arts, English language development, math, social studies, biology and world languages. During the program, teachers learned about the global refugee and asylum regime, shared their experience and expertise with their peers, and collaborated on projects related to forced displacement that they could practically implement in their schools or classrooms.

The teachers attended lectures, participated in discussions with representatives of a local resettlement agency, attended a film screening on Syrian and Palestinian refugees followed by a Q&A with the director, and engaged in hands on art integration sessions related to forced displacement. These activities helped the teachers to:

- Gain an understanding of the causes, consequences, and dynamics of forced displacement
- Explore teaching methodologies and identify gaps in the area of forced displacement in the classroom
- Work with CFD to develop resources to engage students on topics related to forced displacement
- Develop best practices on how to provide a nurturing and inclusive classroom for students affected by forced displacement
- Connect with experts, practitioners, and fellow educators to exchange ideas, share methodologies, and build a supportive network



During the course of the week, discussions focused on how to compassionately engage with those impacted by forced displacement, the impact of the political rhetoric in media, the financial and structural challenges faced by the school districts, and context and age appropriate teaching materials that foster learning, dialogue, respect and understanding.

Throughout the week, the teachers developed presentations on projects that they wished to implement during the next school year. These projects included adapting existing curricula to include topics related to forced displacement, creating or improving resource libraries with more resources related to forced displacement, developing a directory of community resources for migrant children and families, and developing lesson plans to help students and teachers better welcome migrant children. Teachers received a certificate of completion and professional development points to help support their professional careers. We have offered these teachers opportunities for future collaboration and support, and are looking forward to improving this workshop as we seek to offer it to more schools and educators in the future.





Outreach

Campus Partnerships

This year, CFD strengthened its existing campus partnerships, and forged new ones. CFD's community of affiliate faculty is robust, with 44 members representing BU's numerous schools and colleges. Building on strong partnerships with the College of Arts and Sciences, the Pardee School of Global Studies, and the College of Engineering, CFD engaged in research and programming with the Faculty of Computing and Data Science, the Wheelock School of Education, and the School of Public Health. CFD also partnered with BU's writing program. CFD takes much pride in fostering meaningful collaborations with such a wide variety of campus partners, as this allows our work to be truly interdisciplinary.

Podcast

2023-2024 marked the first full year of the CFD podcast "CFD Conversations", as well as its sibling podcast, "Sawyer Bites". "CFD Conversations" highlights discussions about the complexities of forced displacement with researchers, practitioners, and artists, while "Sawyer Bites" highlights key moments from CFD's Sawyer Seminar series in easily digestible, bite-sized pieces. Throughout the course of the year, CFD released six episodes of "CFD Conversations" with plans to increase production in the following year to one episode per month. Both "CFD Conversations" and "Sawyer Bites" are available on all major streaming platforms.

Media

CFD continued its bi-weekly newsletter, advertising center news, including team features, affiliate faculty features, blog posts, and upcoming events to an audience of over 900 subscribers. CFD also used its social media platforms to connect with its community on BU's campus and beyond. CFD posted regularly to its Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn pages throughout the year, and has seen steady growth in its online following.

Seed Grants

In 2023, the Center announced its second annual call for proposals for seed grants in the amount of \$20,000 (led by a team of two or more faculty from different schools/colleges at BU) or \$10,000 (for individual faculty researchers). CFD awarded the seed grants to the applicants whose projects related to forced displacement in one or more of the Center's research areas of focus. We were pleased to provide funding to Dr. Beth Warren's for her project titled "Weaving Identities with Care: Imagining pre-Occupied Palestine through the Eyes of Children" and Dr. Lauer, Dr. Locks, and Dr. Hamer for their project titled "Exploring the Potential for Small Quantity Lipid-Based Nutrient Supplements (SQ-LNS) Programming in Displaced Populations."

Fundraising

Since its founding two years ago, CFD has raised over 3.6 million dollars (direct funding) in external support. Our funding includes grants from the Mellon Foundation and the Wellcome Trust and generous gifts from Richard and Feyza Shipley, Jim and Eileen Rullo, and other donors.





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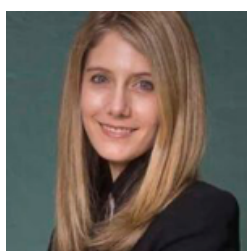
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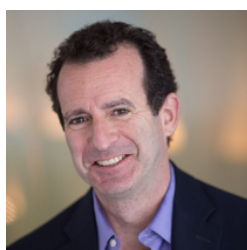
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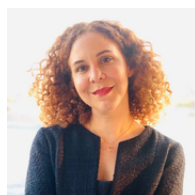
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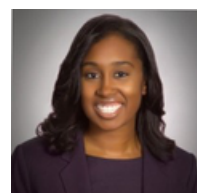
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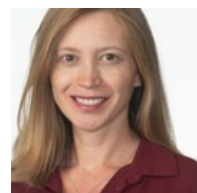
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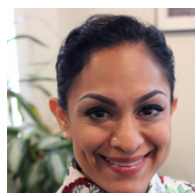
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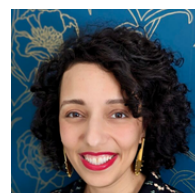
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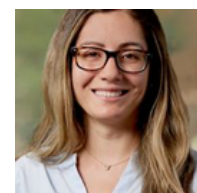
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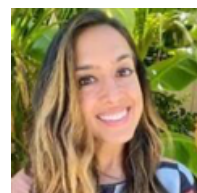
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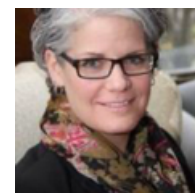
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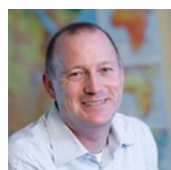
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Contact Us



Website

www.bu.edu/cfd



Email Address

cfd@bu.edu



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