

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOBILITY

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Holistic institutional frameworks are needed to assist people with adapting to environmental change, either in-place or by providing mobility options. Such frameworks also need to help those who become displaced, those who remain behind, and those who host newcomers. They should incorporate all dimensions of mobility, capitalize on the existing development potential of migration, allow funding to be designated to adaptive mobility, enhance regional cooperation in addressing the consequences of environmental change, and facilitate an enabling environment for data collection, analysis, and research around the environment-mobility nexus.¹

Institutional frameworks can be conceptualized as rules and norms lying on a spectrum between more formal (such as constitutions and policies) and more informal (such as taboos and traditions). In the context of mobility related to environmental change, institutional frameworks can reduce risks and amplify potential by providing effective rules, predictability, and enforceability. Yet they can also obstruct positive outcomes when they impede implementation of effective policies and practices. Institutions matter for the environment-mobility nexus along a “life cycle” of the phenomenon—before, during, and after mobility (Martin 2009, 357).²

Based on this life cycle, three critical functions of institutional frameworks can be discerned: (1) mediation of the effects of environmental change on people, (2) influence on decisions to move or stay, and (3) influence on the outcomes of such decisions. Appropriate governance responses need to distinguish between rapid- and slow-onset events and take into account the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of involved communities. They should formulate long-term solutions for three dimensions of the phenomenon: (1) for people to stay in place, where local adaptation options are viable and desirable; (2) support for those who need to move away from risks; (3) assistance for hosts, those staying behind, and people on the move, whether moving voluntarily or displaced by events beyond their control.

Shortcomings of Current Frameworks

Institutional frameworks for addressing migration, displacement, relocation, and entrapment in the context of environmental change are insufficiently developed. Although National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) constitute one central framework for environmental change and mobility issues, Odi-

nose et al. (forthcoming) find that mobility is still inadequately incorporated into them. Better institutional frameworks are especially needed to provide support to those who are not able or willing to leave affected regions (Zickgraf et al. 2016). Rules and norms to support those displaced or migrating in the context of climate change are also insufficient.

In addition, although migration can occasionally be a viable option for adapting to environmental change (Zickgraf et al. 2016), it faces considerable restraints. Despite a surge in regional initiatives, mobility remains at the margins of national adaptation and disaster risk planning in the Pacific (Kagan, forthcoming). Collective action problems of migration governance are salient, revolving around sensitivity of the topic, fragmentation of global institutions, and lack of specific legal frameworks. For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), bilateral initiatives such as temporary mobility schemes offer informal, often nonbinding commitments on labor mobility. Trade agreements that usually provide more binding commitments on the movement of persons have seen a recent increase, yet also face rising opposition. Strengthening the links between labor migration and trade agreements offers the most promising opportunity for vulnerable populations to cope with climate impacts through migratory instruments (Fornale, forthcoming).

In addition to frameworks for migration as adaptation, appropriate frameworks for planned relocation are also missing. This is worrying, since many of the experiences studied so far have proved quite negative (Kagan, forthcoming). Relocation should usually be a measure of last resort, yet when alternatives are not possible, appropriate legal and institutional frameworks are key to safeguarding the inter-

¹This policy brief summarizes major findings and policy implications of a number of working papers commissioned by KNOMAD to improve the understanding of institutional frameworks addressing internal and international migration in the context of environmental change. Note that another KNOMAD policy brief has been published on dimensions of vulnerability and resilience of environmental movements (Martin and Bergmann 2017). There is no one universally agreed-on conceptualization of institutional frameworks. Frequently, they are mixed together with organizations; yet seminal work usually describes organizations as the agents or players and institutions as the rules and norms.

²Understanding the time dimension—before, during and after—is important to address the topic holistically. These categories should not obscure that people will also move temporarily, seasonally, or circularly, and others may be displaced for longer periods or be permanently relocated. In addition, people who are already engaging in migration as a livelihood strategy may change their patterns of mobility as a result of environmental change.

ests of affected populations across all three stages of planned relocation (see table). Frameworks should be established before the need for relocation arises to prevent rushed and inadequate responses. Legal preparedness can provide safeguards against misuse of relocation for political, economic, or commercial reasons and help limit conflicts between customary and state laws. Since relocation can be disruptive and costly in both financial and human terms, it requires well-defined institutional frameworks that establish stable mechanisms for determining when and how to relocate people. As planned relocation is an expensive process, access to sufficient and sustained funding is often challenging yet vital to safeguarding an adequate outcome for concerned populations.

The Importance of Legal and Institutional Frameworks across the Three Stages of Planned Relocation, Adapted from: Georgetown University, UNHCR, and IOM (2017).³

Stage 1: Deciding to relocate a community	Stage 2: Pre-move planning	Stage 3: Implementation of the plan: Before, during, and after relocation
The frameworks determine who makes the decision, who is involved, and what evidence is needed.	The frameworks set out the planning process, including who is in charge and what financial and human resources are needed.	Changes to legal and institutional frameworks may be necessary as a result of the implementation process.

Indeed, the question of funding for mobility as adaptation constitutes an overarching challenge. Although the recognition of migration and relocation as forms of adaptation in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has provided an opening for access to a growing number of funds, climate financing still focuses largely on local adaptation (Kagan, forthcoming).⁴ Bureaucratic obstacles and the difficulty to define adequate mobility interventions constitute considerable challenges.

Finally, institutional frameworks should be informed by improved knowledge about environmental change and mobility, and should facilitate knowledge production. Evidence-based policies and frameworks building on good practices are essential for a topic that is both politically salient and can have large impacts on concerned populations as well as states. Yet, data on the issue is still unsatisfactory, especially concerning the determinants of migration, long-term efficacy of migration as an adaptation mechanism, impacts, and efficacy of strategies to reduce emigration pressures (KNOMAD 2015, 2016). The number of rigorous quantitative studies is limited, and systematic reviews are still not com-

prehensive.

Policy Implications

- Holistic approaches to addressing environmental mobility are needed. There is no one-size-fits-all solution (Zickgraf et al. 2016); identifying those pathways that guarantee the most resilience (local adaptation, or internal or international movement or relocation) will be crucial. No migration is not an option in many regions (Stojanov et al. 2017). However, mobility itself can be a result of vulnerabilities or can increase them (Martin and Bergmann 2017). Institutional frameworks have an important role to play in tapping the potential and assuaging the risks of movement. They need to encourage investment in local adaptation where viable, while allowing for migration or relocation where needed, and supporting those who host, who remain behind, or whose displacement cannot be avoided (Odianose et al., forthcoming).
- National and international institutional frameworks need to incorporate mobility more comprehensively in adaptation responses to address vulnerability and foster resilience. All dimensions of movement need to be included in local, national, and regional planning, as well as in disaster risk management and reduction systems (Odianose et al., forthcoming; Kagan, forthcoming). Environmental mobility should also be incorporated into national labor migration policies, bilateral and regional frameworks such as trade agreements, and employment schemes (Fornale, forthcoming).
- Regional integration, cooperation, and their links with international action should be fostered. Regional frameworks need to allow for targeted cooperation around the issue, especially in regions with historically important intraregional rates of migration such as West Africa (Odianose et al., forthcoming).
- Institutional frameworks should aim to capitalize on the existing development potential of migration. One example is diaspora engagement in sustainable investments in land restoration and resilience. Frameworks such as national policies should also allow remittances to foster adaptation responses. In preparing receiving areas, urban infrastructure and protection mechanisms for both migrants and trapped populations are key; better legislation and humanitarian responses to those displaced by disasters should be based on suggestions by the Nansen Protection Agenda (Bendandi and Venier 2017; Banerjee et al. 2017; Zickgraf et al. 2016; Odianose et al., forthcoming).
- Those in charge of institutional frameworks would gain from greater knowledge of “preexisting and potential

³ A Toolbox on Planned Relocation has been developed, and KNOMAD was a partner in this Georgetown University–led initiative, along with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, and UN University. The table is adapted from this toolbox (Georgetown University, UNHCR, and IOM 2017).

⁴ Funding for mobility has yet to be included in proposals for the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, or the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol.

migration-environment connections" (Bylander 2016, 2). To align frameworks with the perceptions and realities of concerned populations, the role migration plays in livelihoods and which migration options communities prefer needs to be better understood (Zickgraf et al. 2016). When climate migration as adaptation is already occurring, climate resilience can be built through policies targeted to migrant workers and their families. Since better data can inform better practice and frameworks, policies should strive for an enabling environment for data collection, analysis, and research around the environment-mobility nexus (KNOMAD 2014, 2015, 2016).⁵

- States need to develop strategies for tapping new pathways for funding around mobility, such as the growing climate financing for adaptation and mitigation (Kagan, forthcoming; Stojanov et al. 2017). It will be important to develop good interventions conducive to adaptive mobility and to tackle bureaucratic obstacles preventing the inclusion of mobility in such responses. In some cases, states should also consider innovative instruments such as "special adaptation taxes" paid by tourists (Stojanov et al. 2017).

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⁵Including environmental and migration questions in existing national censuses, Demographic and Health Surveys, Living Standards Measurement Surveys, or Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys may be a cost-effective way to answer some of the most pressing questions related to this issue (KNOMAD 2015).

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