

DISPLACEMENT AND CLIMATE

THE DISPLACEMENT CONTINUUM

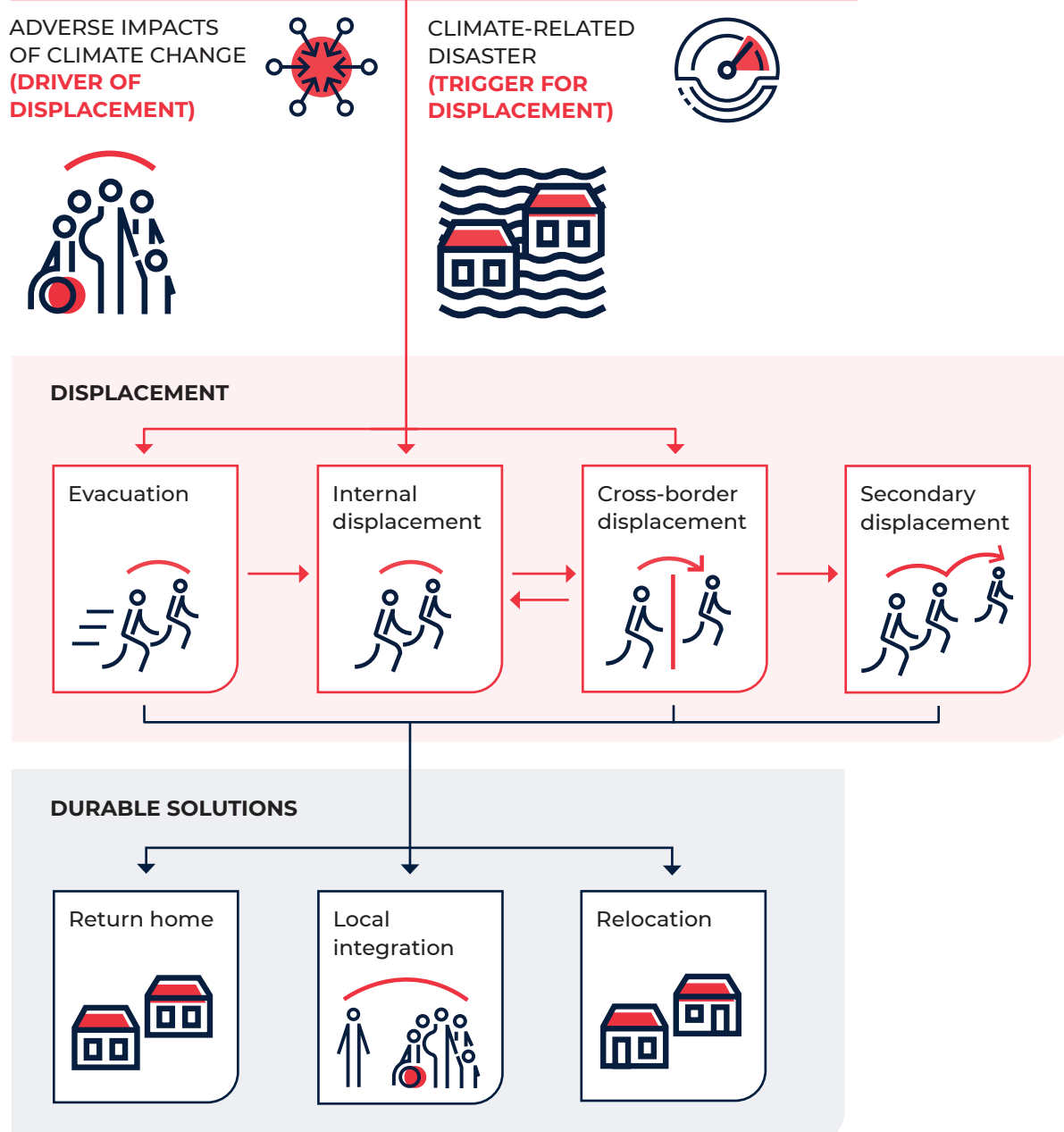
Climate
Training



For many people the experience of displacement is not a linear process. Rather it can involve transitioning in and out of different phases of displacement—within and between countries—until a durable solution is found. This is often referred to as the **displacement continuum**, and every individual will have their own unique journey.



For key concepts and terms please refer to Fact Sheets 1 & 2



Displacement and climate: the displacement continuum

When does displacement begin?

Situations of displacement usually occur following a **trigger for displacement** – a direct or immediate event or situation which forces a person to leave their home or usual place of residence. In the context of climate change these triggers may be a sudden-onset climate-related disaster, such as a flood or cyclone, or may be a slow onset event, caused by longer term changes in weather patterns resulting from climate change, such as desertification or sea level rise.



The likelihood of people becoming displaced is increased when one or more **drivers of displacement** are present. These indirectly increase the likelihood of displacement by contributing to the undermining of resilience. They may include for example, the adverse impacts of climate change such as social tension and increasing crime, population growth and urbanisation, exclusion and discrimination or loss of livelihood opportunities linked to shortages of food, water and other resources.



Displacement is not bound by **distance, location or time**:

- ▶ A person may be displaced regardless of how near or far they are from their original location: they may be living close to their original home, or they may have fled hundreds of kilometres away.
- ▶ A displaced person may move within their original country, or across international borders.
- ▶ A displaced person may be staying in a makeshift shelter next to or nearby their original homes, in a camp or informal settlement, they may be living with strangers, friends or family, in a hotel or rental property, or other location.
- ▶ A person may have moved to many different locations during their displacement.
- ▶ A person may be displaced for only a matter of hours or days, for example during an evacuation, or may remain displaced for weeks, months, or even decades.



Case study: Looking beyond evacuation in Fiji

Although many people were displaced during the emergency phase of the 2016 Tropical Cyclone Winston in Fiji, the majority were able to return to their homes within a relatively short period of time. Those who remained displaced tended to stay in their home villages, often with neighbours or relatives, and were able to maintain their social and community support structures. The majority of displaced people were “naturally eager to go back home” and so return was the clear durable solution. Even in a relatively straightforward displacement context, the Fiji Red Cross identified that it was still important to complement official figures on displaced people in evacuation centres, with a more comprehensive view of displacement across all communities. Such assessments revealed that many more people were displaced than initially presumed.

Source: IFRC, Disasters and Displacement in a Changing Climate: Case Studies Asia Pacific National Societies in Action (2020).

Image: Corinne Ambler/IFRC. Fiji, Ra province, Rakiraki, April 2016.

Displacement and climate: the displacement continuum

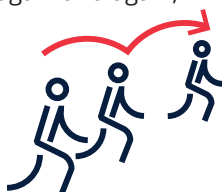
Phases of displacement

People who are displaced experience displacement in different ways. These are often described as phases of displacement, and people may experience one or more of these situations at different times.

Acute displacement is characterized by frantic flight, people taking often desperate measures in search of solutions that frequently prove extremely difficult.



Secondary displacement can occur when people are forced to move again and again, due to further risks such as inadequate access to essential services, lack of livelihood opportunities or due to discrimination and violence.



Cyclical displacement can occur when people are displaced by recurring events, such as seasonal flooding, causing them to experience regular or frequent periods of displacement during each year.



Stable displacement is characterized by a relative 'settling' of people to wait out the crisis. This may be in camps, with host families/communities, or independently.



Protracted displacement occurs when people have been displaced for a long period of time, sometimes years or decades, without immediate prospects of finding a sustainable durable solution.



When does displacement end?

Displacement ends when a voluntary, safe and dignified **durable solution** is found, which allows that individual to return to a "normal" life. This is more than simply finding a suitable physical location. It must be considered in the more holistic context of having access to essential services, as well as economic, social and political rights and freedoms. This should include for example:

- ▶ Long-term safety and security
- ▶ Enjoyment of an adequate standard of living without discrimination
- ▶ Access to livelihoods and employment
- ▶ Effective and accessible mechanisms to restore housing, land and property
- ▶ Access to personal and other documentation without discrimination
- ▶ Family reunification
- ▶ Participation in public affairs without discrimination
- ▶ Access to effective remedies and justice

Options for durable solutions include:

- ▶ **Return and reintegration**, whereby the person returns to their place of origin before the crisis.
- ▶ **Local integration**, whereby the person integrates into the local community to which they located following their displacement.
- ▶ **Relocation**, whereby the person moves to another location within the country and integrates into that community.

Displacement and climate: the displacement continuum

Case study: Early planning for durable solutions in Indonesia

On 28 September 2018, a series of strong earthquakes struck Central Sulawesi province in eastern Indonesia, triggering a tsunami and resulting in liquefaction and landslides. More than 4,300 people died, at least 100,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, and over 170,000 people were displaced. In 2020, nearly two years later, thousands of people were still displaced and continue to live in temporary shelters (called huntaras) or with relatives and the host community. Others had returned to live in houses that remain damaged. COVID-19 also presented a new threat to the already vulnerable displaced people, with particular concern for those living in temporary shelters.

The Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI)—the Indonesian Red Cross—found that taking displacement and durable solutions into consideration during the early stages of a response supported a more nuanced



approach, especially in complex settings. This also helped identify risks of prolonged or protracted displacement early, as well as any possible regulatory or other barriers to durable solutions. Displacement should, however, not only be considered early, but also on an ongoing basis, including with a longer-term multi-year horizon and analysis.

Source: IFRC, Disasters and Displacement in a Changing Climate: Case Studies Asia Pacific National Societies in Action (2020).

Image: Kathy Mueller/IFRC. Sulawesi, Indonesia, 2018.

References and further reading

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