



From the current editors in 2012

Forced Migration Review (FMR) has had a long period to test and prove itself, unlike many other relatively narrowly defined projects. It still aims, as it has done from its start in 1987, to stimulate debate and provide a forum for disseminating experience, analysis, lessons and reflection in relation to refugees, IDPs and stateless people. And to achieve this it still involves a very broad range of those engaged in what has become known as 'forced migration', including forced migrants themselves.

Feedback from readers over the years leads us to believe that FMR has proved itself as a useful forum for which there is a continuing need. We see evidence of this in the stream of articles submitted for publication in each issue; in the continuing willingness of donors to support the publication of FMR; in the constant requests for FMR; in the positive feedback we receive from readers; and in the fact that there is never any difficulty in finding new themes that seem to resonate with readers and writers alike. We also see it in the way that readers have welcomed how FMR has developed technically: available in English, Spanish, Arabic and French, in audio, online, in new formats like the 'expanded listing', suitable for reading on mobile devices from our new website, and free in all these forms online on our own site and other open access sites as well as in print – and with a presence on Twitter and Facebook.

The motivation for putting together a 25th anniversary collection of articles is to take stock and look to the future. Just as we are inviting a number of past contributors to write for this 25th Anniversary collection, here are our thoughts on a few of the challenges we currently face in producing FMR:

- Although there has been a great increase in the number of evaluations and reviews of the effects and modalities of programming, there is still no great willingness to write about what has not worked, what policy or practice has proved unsuccessful, or indeed what thinking or analysis has turned out less helpful than expected. FMR would willingly publish more of this.
- Some of the themes and issues that are notionally mainstreamed in our field receive too little attention in the submissions we receive, despite our attempts to stimulate or request their presence. We are concerned, in particular, that there is so little gender analysis or comment present in the wide range of submissions

we receive. And that disability, age, consultation and accountability rarely get any substantial coverage unless they are the subject of a specific themed issue of the magazine.

- We have observed a disappointing downgrading of the commitment to communication of the kind that is embodied in FMR – despite the hunger for the products that is obvious to us from the response to FMR. This is most evident in the apparent reduction in budgets for communications and learning. We appreciate that agencies have had to make some hard decisions when facing difficult economic times in the past few years but question why this budget-line is apparently so readily expendable. In our view, communicating experience and lessons helps people learn, develop better policies and programmes and put funding to better or smarter use. To cut support for these activities is short-sighted.
- We struggle to give voices to displaced and stateless people themselves. Some FMR authors are currently or have been displaced, and we encourage others to express the experiences of forced migrants using their words. But we have not found the ways that enable us to more consistently publish submissions from displaced and stateless people that fit with the 'style' of the magazine. If you have found ways to do this better, we'd welcome your advice.

It is a credit to those who identified the potential for a newsletter/magazine that would bring together experience, policy and analysis that the Refugee Participation Network newsletter (subsequently Forced Migration Review) has flourished for 25 years. It is a credit to those who have worked on it that they (and we) have made it work. And it is a credit to all those who have written for it, acted as advisors on themes or to the editors, funded it, distributed it and shared it with colleagues, policymakers, students and others.

We know that the need for FMR is still there and we are committed to continuing to make our contribution to improving the lives of forced migrants and stateless people.

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