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UNU Migration Network Research Symposium
29 September 2025, UNU-MERIT, Maastricht

Final Programme

Monday 29 September

- 9.30-10.00 Arrival and coffee
location: UNU MERIT Conference Room (0.18)
- 10.00-10.15 Opening of the UNU MN Research Symposium
Welcome Note and Introductions.
Prof. Dr. Clemens Kool, Interim Director of UNU MERIT
Prof. Dr. Melissa Siegel, Professor of Migration Studies at UNU-MERIT and Maastricht University and Chair of the UNU Migration Network
- 10.15 – 11.25 Panel Session 1 – Migration and Health
Chair: Charlotte Scheerens
- Presentation 1:* *Sebrin Mohammed Abdullahi and Nidhi Nagabhatla (CRIS) - Unpacking the Nexus: Water Stress, Migration, Gender Inequality, and Health Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa*
- Presentation 2:* *Claudia Abreu Lopes (IIGH) – AI for refugee health*
- Presentation 3:* *Belayneh Fentahun Shibesh and Nidhi Nagabhatla (CRIS) - Weathering the Storm Within: How Climate Change and Mental Health Nexus impacts Migrants and Disciplined People and Communities; additionally, launch of UNU Migration Policy Brief co-authored by Sanae Okamoto (MERIT), Robert Oakes (EHS), Nidhi Nagabhatla (CRIS), Kees van der Geest (former EHS) and Suneetha M. Subramanian (IAS)*
- Q&A
- 11.25 – 11.40 Break
- 11.40 – 13.10 Thematic Session II – Climate and Migration Decisions
Chair: Nidhi Nagabhatla



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Presentation 1: Nicolás Caso (CRIS) - Climate shocks and the aspiration to migrate: The role of livelihood prospects

Presentation 2: Els Bekaert and Ilse Ruyssen (CRIS) - Retain factors in climate-vulnerable regions in West Africa

Presentation 3: Manisha Mukherjee (MERIT) - Climate Change, Social Institutions, and Inequality: Evidence from India

Presentation 4: Ann-Christine Link (EHS) - Climate-related planned relocation

Q&A

13.10 – 13.50 Lunch

13.50 – 14.30 Research Pitch sessions
Chair: Lalaine Siruno

Pitch 1: Rosella Marino (CRIS) – ECOWAS and decolonisation

Pitch 2: Talitha Dubow (MERIT) – ‘Anywhere jobs’ and (im)mobility

Pitch 3: Sanae Youbi (CRIS) – From Ambiguity to Action? Regional Translations of UNFCCC Loss and Damage in the EU and AU

Pitch 4: Tobias Hillenbrand (MERIT) - Rethinking attitudes toward refugee migration: the Deservingness-Capacities Framework

14.30 – 15.40 Thematic Session III – Migration and development
Chair: Ine Lietaert

Presentation 1: Katrin Marchand (MERIT) and Leander Kandilige - Voices from the ground: How migration shapes development in everyday life

Presentation 2: Lalaine Siruno and Melissa Siegel (MERIT) - Irregular migration and remittances: a case study from the Netherlands

Presentation 3: Rashid Sohail Khan and Ilse Ruyssen (CRIS) - The Impact of Parental Migration on Child Labor in Pakistan (online)

Q&A



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15.40 – 15.55 Break

15.55 – 17.05 Thematic Session IV – Migration policies
Chair: Talitha Dubow

Presentation 1: Flor Vandavelde, Polina Koriukina, and Ilse Ruyssen (CRIS) - Denied Departure: Mapping Emigration Bans in Asia and Africa 1960-2023

Presentation 2: Bushra Ebadi (EGOV) - Safeguarding (Digital) Cultural Heritage in Crises: Connecting Communities Beyond Borders and Forced Separation

Pitch 1: Valeska Onken (MERIT) - Approaching the double invisibility of unintended consequences of irregular migration deterrence - insights into causal pathways through qualitative meta-analysis

Pitch 2: Ciara Patterson (MERIT) - Humanitarian Interventions in Camps and Camp-Like Settings: What Works?

17.05 – 18.15 Thematic Session V – Measuring migration
Chair: Melissa Siegel

Presentation 1: Naiara Rodriguez-Peña, Ilse Ruyssen, Nicolas Caso and Polina Koriukina (CRIS) - Developing a global index of migration capabilities: Integrating micro, meso, and macro data into a comprehensive framework (online)

Presentation 2 Kikè Yra Fontona (CRIS) - Empowering Facebook data towards improved estimates of emigration from Africa (online)

Presentation 3: Dan Orendain (CRIS) – Community mapping in Davao city

18.15 – 18.30 Closing and Next Steps

Key points, cross-cutting thematic discussion and closing remarks