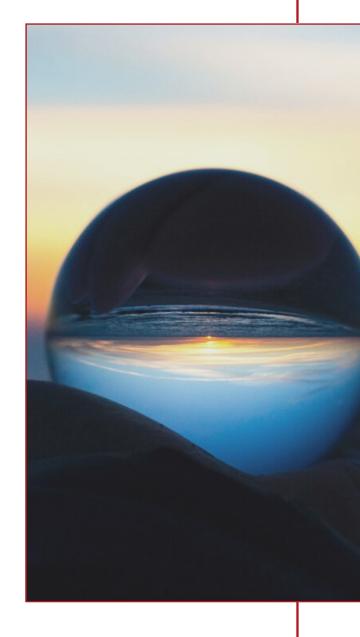
GLOBAL INNOVATION FORUM

## OUTPUT REPORT 2022

Local innovation in displacement contexts





## INTRODUCTION

As Denmark's largest international NGO working in 40 countries across the globe in some of the most difficult situations and in emerging economies, and with a reach to more than 5,7 million displaced and vulnerable people, the Danish Refugee Council is well-positioned to seek new ways of responding to these challenges. We cannot however do this alone. This is why we embark on a journey each year to set the stage for new ways of addressing the challenges posed to displacement-affected people and communities.

# Global Innovation Forum 2022

## DRC

## Local Innovation in Displacement Contexts

In November 2022 the third annual edition of the Danish Refugee Council Global Forum was delivered. Together with collaborators, speakers, participants, colleagues and partners, DRC joined in for a one-day event, the culmination of an innovation journey, to explore challenges, successes and learnings for local innovation in displacement contexts. With the ethos of collaborative action in mind, on November 29th we sought to draw together a range of actors who do not commonly share the same platform. The DRC Global Innovation Forum 2022 on Local Innovation in Humanitarian Contexts - an event that spotlights and empowers local innovators in humanitarian contexts, igniting global conversations around social innovation and building new local-to-global partnerships. A unique event designed to experiment with connecting innovation missions with local power and global pull.

This Output Report outlines the Global Innovation Forum 2022 journey and provides a summary of the inspiring and interesting speeches, discussions and workshops that took place and, of course, our key takeaways.

**PIBE** 

Programme Innovation & Business Engagement



## **THANK YOU**

## To all participants & contributors

We would like to extend a big thank you to all speakers, collaborators, ambassadors, participants and colleagues for their valuable contributions to this co-creative learning and innovation journey.

On the DRC Global Innovation Forum website, you will find more information and recordings of the Global Innovation Forum journey 2022. With any comments or questions regarding the journey, the Global Forum or this report, please reach out to innovationforum@drc.ngo.

## EXPLORING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO DISPLACEMENT ISSUES



"We have our role to play as an international humanitarian organization. Sometimes our role is to lead the response, and sometimes it's our role to empower others to do so in DRC. We are committed to localization. This means recognizing the role of local actors and the role they play in responding to the needs of people affected by conflicts and displacements."

Charlotte Slente, DRC Secretary General

## ABOUT THE GLOBAL INNOVATION FORUM

- 3rd Annual Edition
- Collaborative Action
- Building Local to Global Partnerships



The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) holds this annual event to address pressing transnational issues that affect displaced populations and the humanitarian sector. The event brings together actors to make DRC and the sector smarter and more accountable, reflecting on popular themes in the sphere and innovations regarding identified issues.

The DRC Global Innovation Forum 2022 was held with a focus on local innovation in displacement contexts. The objective of the event was to better understand why actors should engage in local innovation and how supportive networks can be developed. In addition, the event aimed to provide a platform for local innovators to share their experiences and insights.

The discussions touched on the need for supportive networks that can help local innovators overcome the challenges they face. Participants explored ways in which these networks can be developed and strengthened, and discussed the role that governments, humanitarian organizations, and the private sector can play in supporting local innovation.

The Global Innovation Forum 2022 was a valuable opportunity for participants to engage with local innovators and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with local innovation in displacement contexts. The event also provided a platform for participants to engage in discussions about the role that supportive networks can play in promoting local innovation and improving the lives of displaced populations.

In 2020, the focus was on climate change and environmental degradation. In 2021, the event explored the connection between digitalization and forced displacement. With experts and practitioners, the event examined the present and future of digitalization and displacement. More information can be found at the forum website.

## THIS YEAR WE DECIDED TO

## GO LOCAL

Building on the successes of previous years, we have decided to make the 2022 Forum more inclusive of local and field-led perspectives than ever before. Local actors will be centerstage as we elaborate on including local communities, building self-sustainable capacities, and creating innovative systems that work.

DRCs strategy 2025 was born with a strong commitment to how we localize our work, engage and partner locally, how to work with what's there already, how we better engage locally - and importantly with and for affected people.

DRC commits to support people affected by conflict and displacement by building self-sustainable local capacities and sustainable local development into our programming and operations. To leverage, inspire and explore both the center and edge of Going Local, with a strong focus on what, how and with whom (affected people included), in this year's journey, we want to explore how locally-led and locally-oriented innovation can support the achievement of the two DRC Strategy 2025 Breakthroughs: increasing protection and enhancing inclusion of displacement affected communities.

In this year's journey, we wanted to pay particular focus to help local innovations, ideas, successes and winning case stories travel up the steep attention ladder, using the global scene at the DRC Global Forum on Local Innovation in Displacement in November 2022. We held intentions to build on the strong foundations and networks created through both 2020 (climate and environmental degradation) and 2021 (digital divide) events, also representing two strategy components (Go Green and Go Digital) and linking directly with several other key components of Strategy 2025.

We engaged this year's journey with the expectation and hope that the locally-led ideation journeys have the potential and ambition to kickstart new alliances; forge new and needed ideas; and advance forward-looking efforts that address climate, digitalization, and localization as these relate to local displacement challenges today. With a shrinking humanitarian space, looking for novel and feasible opportunities is itself important; further adding a locally anchored innovation process to spark global debate makes for an exemplary process that other actors in the field can follow and learn from.

## THE IDEATION JOURNEY

## Activities leading to the forum

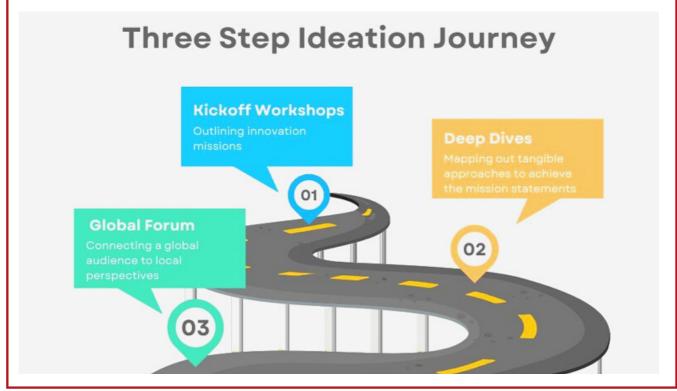
The Global Innovation Forum 2022 was a culmination of a journey taken up by the Danish Refugee Council that brought together practitioners and change makers, the humanitarian sector, and the start-up community with leading DRC experts into a series of events and workshops exploring the intersection of local innovation and forced displacement. The Global Innovation Forum highlighted the insights gathered in the journey leading up to it and opened up the conversation and calls to action to the humanitarian sector and other actors searching for ways to better respond to supporting local agents in areas of forced displacement.

During July and August, the DRC Programme Innovation & Business Engagement Unit, together with regional, country and thematic experts, engaged to be challenged by the future. This took the form of kickoff & deep dive workshops which gave a platform for unlikely actors to come together, identify an overarching issue in the region, create a mission statement and work towards addressing that mission. These vital Innovation Missions helped, and will continue to help, convene allies to tackle challenges within humanitarian sector, while forming the basis of conversation at the Global Innovation Forum.

## 1ST. THREE KICKOFF WORKSHOPS

2ND. THREE DEEP DIVE WORKSHOPS

3RD. THE DRC GLOBAL INNOVATION FORUM



## **SEGMENT 1**

## **KEYNOTE SPEECHES**

Inspiring words were shared by our three keynotes on their thoughts on local innovation

### **Keynotes:**

Charlotte Slente - Danish Refugee Council Kennedy Odede - Shining Hope for Communities Reem Goussous - Village Capital





"We need to work more together and be inspired by the perspectives outside of our own sphere of work.

Today we are going to explore lessons learned and take a peek into the future. We look for what is on the horizon and we connect people from around joint missions to do better for and will displacement affect people?

This year, we explore how local innovators changemakers and new partnerships can improve the lives of displacement-affected communities."

## **CHARLOTTE SLENTE**

Danish Refugee Council Secretary General

- A sustainable future for displaced people begins by putting those effected front and centre in the response efforts.
- Even in the face of huge challenges and adversity, with more than 100 million people forcefully displaced in 2022, we see resilience from front lines to contribute to the humanitarian response.
- As a sector we need to better understand how global and local partnerships can facilitate change and empower local change agents.



"In the community it felt like I
was useless, but later on in life I
started reflecting on what I can
do for the urban poor
community. So we bought a
soccer ball started SHOFCO."

"Just listen to the community, they know best."

## **KENNEDY ODEDE**

Founder of SHOFCO, Kenya's largest grassroots organisation & author of New York Times best-seller.

- Anyone can make a difference within a community. All they need to do is listen to the needs and the pain points of the community and work with them to resolve the issues.
- Even without capital, sparking a positive change in a community can gain momentum and lead to large social benefits.
- Creating a structure where you can engage the community and empower the local people to take action and contribute to a cause themselves is key to resolving socioeconomic problems in a community.



"We're big advocates for investors who support alternative growth markets... There has been a lot of conversation recently about the dangers of growing at all costs, and commentators have criticized Silicon Valley's culture of niche scaling and even coined a term the foie gras effect to describe the way that investors who are hungry for high-value patients and opportunities and the force-feeding cash to entrepreneurs."

## **REEM GOUSSOUS**

CGO at Village Capital, former MD of Endeavor Jordan & member of the DRC Jordan RYSE Project High Level Board of Experts

- When directing products towards the refugee population it is important to distinguish if it is replicable across many diverse contexts or context-specific. The product must also be flexible to adapt to the evolving needs of these displaced peoples.
- When investing we must not forget that "adventure investing" is not about maximising profits. It is about developing and distributing a product that serves a particular need, which can then grow to be financially sustainable.
- Venture capitalist money should be a means to an end and not an end to itself. Investing in "Zebras" (firms that are both profitable and work to improve society) that aim for sustainable as opposed to exponential growth.

## **SEGMENT 2**

## REFUGEE INNOVATORS

Global stories of entrepreneurs affected by displacement issues

#### Innovators:

Cecile Pango - Women for Action,
Malawi
Emmanuel Lomoro - Generous Designs
Africa, Uganda
Hana Ganji & Andriana Theochari Global Girl Media, Greece
Walter Liewald - Consulado Civico de
Venezuela en Valparaíso, Venezuela
Nasrat Khalid - Aseel, Afganistan/USA



## **ABOUT**Refugee Innovators

Aside from our keynote speakers, the Global Innovation Forum hoped to empower local entrepreneurs by giving the stage to those affected by forced displacement first-hand. We heard examples, stories and the sharing of lived experiences from those communities the forum aims to empower giving substance to the discussion beyond theoretic or organisational underpinnings. Situated around the globe, each innovator tells a story of how they are fighting for the betterment of their community in the context of forced displacement. We invite you to read their stories.

# SPOTLIGHTING INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS TO CREATE SOLUTIONS IN DISPLACEMENT CONTEXTS



This session focused on the local innovators and innovations that we seek to support – spotlighting the individuals working to make a change in contexts affected by forced displacement. Innovators working in contexts of forced displacement and crises will take the stage and share their experiences and initiatives. This session was organized in partnership with the Response Innovation Lab, UNHCR's Innovation Service, and DRC's Diaspora Program.



"We will help over 100 women throughout the next year. Each woman will learn about aquaponics, fish farming and vegetable cultivation."

"International actors can act as a stepping stone for refugee innovators to enhance their organisations network and put them on the track to further their reach and social impact"

## **CECILE PANGO**

Founder and director of the organization Women for Action, Director of Refugee Led Organization Network in Malawi and African Refugee Network Steering Committee member representing Malawi.

### Cecile says:

Women for Action is a women-led, non-profit, organization made up of women and girls from diverse backgrounds. Our mission is to support women and youth in economic empowerment and entrepreneurship as well as gender equality for all. Together we can help marginalized women and children.

Women for Action collaborates on a regular basis with international organisations to achieve their goals. Working with partners such as the Norwegian Consulate, Oxfam, and Save the Children they managed to develop this project within Malawi.

Cecile believes that working directly with beneficiaries and community-led organisations is vital and helps ensure that resources and capital move directly from donors to beneficiaries and surrounding communities.



Supported by a grant to invest in machinery Generous Designs Africa has been able to create a sustainable business from within a refugee settlement. To date, the firm has created job opportunities for 70 youths and 30 women. Together they collect waste plastic from their community and upcycle the plastic into bags, cups stationary and other useful products.

## **EMMANUEL LOMORO**

Lomoro Emmanuel,
Founder and CEO of
Generous Designs Africa,
South Sudanese by
nationality and a refugee
in Uganda based in
BidiBidi Refugee
Settlement.

#### **Emmanuel says:**

With the war that occurred in South Sudan, many people were killed and lost their property including my relatives. I sought refuge in Uganda, here in the settlement life where I was faced with different circumstances there was no access to jobs, especially for single women and widows. No access to health facilities, schools, and even the natural environment was a big threat due to pollution.

I noticed a lot of plastic waste in our settlement community that was affecting crop yields and endangering livestock. Many people were burning the plastic as a way of disposal not knowing how toxic this can be for their health. I saw an opportunity to help reduce plastic waste in our community while at the same time giving women an opportunity to generate income to support themselves and their families.



"To date, we have trained 800 girls from resource-poor communities in 8 countries and we run 6 active media projects around the world." (Andriana Theochari)

"[On a GBV project] As a refugee, I have seen much violence...if young people understand and can separate violence from family and societal behaviour they can survive... as I have." (Hana Ganji)

## ANDRIANA THEOCHARI & HANA GANJI

Andriana & Hana work at GlobalGirl Media Greece, with a mission to empower the voices of women and girls in their country.

#### Andriana & Hana say:

Global Girl Media combats racism and sexism, across 6 country 'chapters' around the world, by putting girls behind the camera and at the center of the story.

We empower young women to bring their often-overlooked perspectives onto the global media stage. By turning up the volume of girls' voices globally, GGM promotes freedom of expression and strengthens substantive journalism that addresses historically marginalized voices. We do this while also building self-esteem, leadership capacity, and 21st century skills.

One project in Greece, AGAPE, focuses on GBV towards women since Covid-19. The aim is to raise awareness, shift narratives and provide resources to support the prevention of violence against women. The project utilises media workshops, social media campaigns to engage the otherwise separate communities of refugee and the hosting citizens of Greece.



"What we decided to do is empower those women who are in our community...to share our knowledge, to properly inform and to support other persons who are facing the same issues that they have already fixed."

"We can choose those problems that we can solve, that we want to solve, those we are passionate about and those that stop us from sleeping."

## **WALTER LIEWALD**

Founder of Consulado Civico de Venezuela en Valparaíso, made to ease the burden on the migrant population within Latin America.

#### Walter says:

Inspired to act by the complicated information flow on the migration journey in Latin America, Walter has created this community of residents to ensure the rights of Venezuelans abroad. The community continues to strive and is an important asset for those with struggles within displacement contexts.

Sharing solutions to difficult and often confusing migration and rights-based processes is imperative to fast-tracking the solving of some migration problems. This knowledge has value and can be economized within the displaced community to the advantage of all involved.



"I am incredibly thankful that we have piloted and succeeded at creating a different approach, a different tribe, and a different mindset that has enabled us to support over 350,000 people in the Afghanistan crisis and hundreds of artisans who sold their products to people who would have never been able to access them before."

## **NASRAT KHALID**

Founder of ASEEL, a social impact focused tech start-up which has developed an efficient system for delivering humanitarian aid in the world with 86% of funds going to beneficiaries.

\*Featured by means of a short film detailing the journey of adapting an artisanal webshop to offer emergency support packages.

#### Nasrat says:

Pivoting from its original function as a platform for Afghanistan artisans, Aseel now sells emergency food packages—consisting of staple foods, first aid kits, and other helpful goods—which people from around the world can buy on the company's website or app.

The program was started and tested in Afghanistan with now over \$1M in aid delivered and 450,000 Afghans benefited in just its first 12 months. In addition to being hyper-efficient, the program is transparent and verifiable with every beneficiary getting an ID.

We need to leverage the everyday technology that we are so used to now to help people.

Regardless of where a person is an ability for them to connect with you and get direct assistance from you is very important.

## **SEGMENT 3**

# COLLABORATIVE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

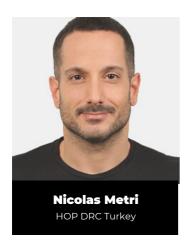
Perspectives from three regional contexts on local missions to address the climate crisis

#### Cases:

Türkiye - Greening the textile industry Afghanistan - Resilience to droughts and floods East Africa - Community-led adaptation to climate change



## TÜRKIYE PANEL











#### Quotes

- "We are at a crossroads in the textile industry in Turkey. Either we need to transform, or the industry is going to displace itself." (Hüdai Kara)
- "If the current agenda is climate change we should be able to compare [metrics]... so the manufacturers are able to compare themselves. This is not available right now." (Levent Bozgeyik)
- "We should understand the issues for every stage of the product life cycle (environmental and social) ... and be able to put a figure on this... So that end users can make informed choices." (Oznur Ozcelik)

The Türkiye session brought together civil society and the private sector for an exploration of how new partnerships and mission-driven innovation can accelerate a more refugee-inclusive and sustainable textile sector in Türkiye.

- While Türkiye has taken a focus on the green agenda within the textile industry, it is very much still in the early stages of development when it comes to environmental optimization.
- Carbon accounting, supply chain tracking and transparency throughout the textile industry need to improve in order to offer a clear perspective of purchase to the end user and make an international offer to brand owners that Türkiye can provide socially and environmentally sound manufacturing processes.
- The textile industry is a fast way of turning informal employment formal for migrants, often by utilising waste production of manufacturers through a recycling process. However, a focus must be placed on ensuring decent and safe working conditions.



## AFGHANISTAN PANEL













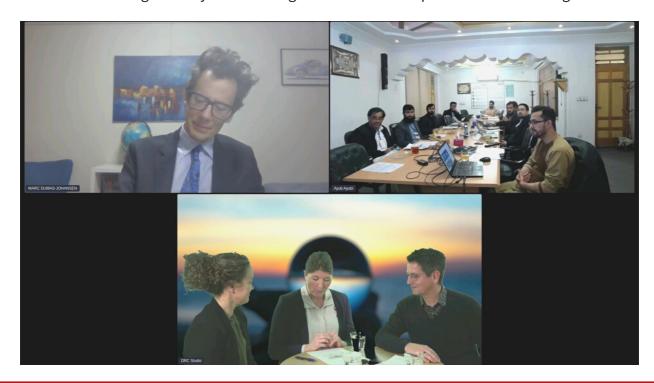


### Quotes

- "Innovation is all about context, how do we work together... we can break innovation, we just need to do it in partnerships." (Peter Vangsbo)
- "From my work with low-cost technologies...we can definitely see an impact. Just because it is low-cost does not mean that it is low-benefit." (Marc Dumas-Johansen)
- "I truly recognise that in Afghanistan climate innovation is an untapped potential." (Ayub Ayubi)
- "There is a dire need to get more investment and entrepreneurship, developing entrepreneurial skills with local farmers in Afghanistan." (Ezattullah Sedigi)

The Afghanistan session spotlighted the need for more innovation in the agriculture and water sectors in Afghanistan and brings together civil society, technical experts and local voices to discuss new ways of addressing climate-related challenges through innovation and partnerships.

- Recurring droughts have a host of compounding issues in Afghanistan from agri-practices, to health, the economy, education, conflicts and more.
- Empower resource-poor farmers in Afghanistan to adapt to changing environmental and climate conditions by improving their livelihoods through innovation
- Drought-resistant crops, small-scale water harvesting infrastructure and clean tech water pumps are just some projects on the cards to alleviate these issues.
- Financing by identifying and making the best use of grants, loans, equity and guarantees to unlock technologies is key to bolstering livelihoods in complex situations like Afghanistan.



# EAST AFRICA & GREAT LAKES PANEL















#### Quotes

- "People have adapted... taking control of communication tools... being able to connect with their communities and their diaspora, creating community groups that they can call upon when there is a crisis." (Mustafa Othman)
- "We've got to get away from innovation being something that we deliver to people and think about it as something we help people to do... the more we are promoting innovation flows, the more we can help people with innovations even when we can't reach them directly" (Simon Levine)
- "This is not about how the external world wants to research or look at, but more so understanding the day-to-day coping mechanisms, and adaptation techniques that are used by communities all over the world, where climate change and conflict intersect." (Harriet Holder)

The East African session examined if there is a place for community-led innovative practices in remote areas where we can learn from communities adapting to challenges stemming from climate change. This panel of innovation hubs and researchers tackle this question, guided by local perspectives.

- East Africa must mitigate climate change effects through early warning systems, climate adaptation, and reforestation. Importantly, there is a growing need to support local adaptation practices to enable sustainable local development, that can thrive in harsh conditions.
- Building the resilience of communities through training, education and awareness raising can help them to be better prepared to cope with the impacts of climate change.
- Enabling innovation within the community is key to moving toward a sustainable future. Moving away from conventional ideas of bringing innovation to communities, and concentrating on the catalysation of ideation within local communities.



## **SEGMENT 4**

# FRAMEWORKS & SUPPORTING ECOSYSTEMS

Masterclass on Mission-driven Innovation

Panel on Humanitarians Supporting Local Innovation



DareDisrupt & Founders of Tomorrow

Response Innovation Labs, Innovation Norway, UNHCR, KAPITA business hub







"If we are the age that we can engineer for one or some outcomes, we can do it for another one [on mass replication of technologies]"

(Thomas Bisballe)

## MASTERCLASS ON MISSION-DRIVEN INNOVATION

#### **Key takeaways**

- Large global issues of climate change, displacement or food shortages permeate our world. We need a way to tackle such huge issues.
- In order to tackle large global issues different actors need to collaborate across various levels to resolve the problem.
- Mission-driven innovation uses this premise to set an overarching goal that multiple organisations, which may not commonly cooperate, can get behind in order to provide solutions to that goal.
- [On quantum computing technology]
   As a society, we are starting to gather the building blocks we need to become sustainable. We just need to put them together with knowledge of social science for the aim of a sustainable future.

"We need to combine the view of stakeholders with very different value systems and accept that there are more than one truths in the story." (Anders Hvid)

# ENABLING LOCAL INNOVATION IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS













#### Quotes

- "When I ask people why they don't collaborate with innovations in the humanitarian sphere, they say we don't know about them, we don't know about the need, we don't speak to each other. So I think we need more conversations cross-sector, like this one today."

  (Theresa Uppstrøm)
- "We need to start partnering with refugee-led and local organisations, because, in the end, they are the best way to identify local challenges and identify solutions." (Nathalie Rami)
- ENABLING LOCAL INNOVATION IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

• "[On successful solutions] for any initiative that wants to attract the markets... private sector partnerships could be amazing for them... allowing more exposure, expanding the range of the solution and so many other aspects." (Mujahed Waisi)

- Platforms, such as the Global Innovation Forum, where local communities have the opportunity to engage with various enabling stakeholders are too seldom held. We need more conversations on how to best support and enable local innovators, what support is needed, when to step in and when to get out of the way.
- Before trying to force new systems of change, new technologies or new markets onto a community, local change-makers should be given the opportunity to create their impact.
- Local solutions are more likely to be sustainable in the long-term as they are driven by the needs and capacities of the local community.
- We need to empower local communities to take ownership of their own recovery and development. They are best placed to understand their own needs and find solutions that work for them.



## **GOING FORWARD**

## Global Innovation Forum 2022

## DRC

The ideas, discussions and presentations from the Global Innovation Forum 2022 will live on in our minds and work at DRC, and through our continued partnership with those involved in the event. In line with the 2025 Strategy of DRC, we continue to plan with the idea of going local routed in our minds and in our initiatives. We are already seeing plans and partnerships stemming from the Forum coming to fruition.

We are deeply grateful for those who have contributed along this exploration, and highly encourage anyone interested to reach out and get involved. We at DRC thank you for your willingness to participate and curiosity in the area of local innovation in displacement contexts. It is our hope that you have benefited from your participation and that together we can strive towards better outcomes for displacement-affected people.

The DRC Global Innovation Forum will be back in 2023 with a new focus that will seek to make the humanitarian sector smarter, more responsive and more accountable to displacement-affected people.

Feel free to reach out if you have any queries. You can reach us at <a href="mailto:innovationforum@drc.ngo">innovationforum@drc.ngo</a>.

