

# The Systems Forum

Thursday, March 31st 2016, 10.00am – 4.00pm

The Boardroom, Engine Shed, Station Approach, Bristol BS1 6QH  
(One hundred yards from Temple Meads)



As we seek ways of coping with complex global issues and rapidly changing organisations, the UK Systems Society has established the Systems Forum to promote systems ideas in policy and decision making. There is a need across government, business and civil society for ‘joined up’ thinking and new skills to explore the landscape of societal decision making.

Since the birth of modern systems thinking and practice (c. 1946) many theories, philosophies, methodologies, methods and tools have been developed but all are united through a concern to think of the entity as a whole and as a part of a greater whole. The idea of the Systems Forum is to explore how systems science might inform and support policy making - particularly for universal or global scale problems that manifest at local levels.

## Session one: Could systems thinking help with the problems of migration?

Migration is full of uncertainty and of serious concern to international bodies and governments at national and local level. It is an emotional, complex and multi-scale matter that requires a transdisciplinary response. In systems terms this situation can be described as a complex, social ‘mess’ compounded by political, historical and cultural challenges.

For those directly involved at a local or national level, these challenges seem intractable and worsening. In this environment unforeseen consequences may unfold and a culture of blame and even hostility might arise. Conversely there is an opinion that coalesces around the benefits of migration in the shape of new citizens ready to make a positive contribution to our society generating new ideas and creating new opportunities.

The question is, “**Given these circumstances what value have systems ideas in making sense of such complexity?**” In this forum we offer an opportunity to consider two systems perspectives and debate the value of systems thinking and practice as a whole to challenges like migration.

### Speakers

**Gerald Midgley**

**Professor of Systems Thinking and Associate Dean for Research and Enterprise at the University of Hull.**

**Frank Stowell**

**Emeritus Professor of Systems and Information Systems at the University of Portsmouth.**

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POSITION PAPERS in the form of an extended abstract [i.e. a maximum of a single side of A4] are welcome as a means of encouraging debate. Selected contributions will then be invited to submit a fully developed paper for consideration for publishing in the *International Journal of Systems and Society*.

For details of submission please contact us at [info@schumacherinstitute.org.uk](mailto:info@schumacherinstitute.org.uk)

**Fee: £35.00 to include lunch**  
**Please book your place here.**