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# How climate change creates the movement of people? Testimonies from across the world

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10th EMN Educational Seminar on Migration  
Wednesday 19 June 2024

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@ClimateOutreach | [climateoutreach.org](https://climateoutreach.org)



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# Helping you tell great climate stories

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# What we'll cover today

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## 1

Introduction to climate driven migration and migration concepts

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## 2

Testimonies from across the world

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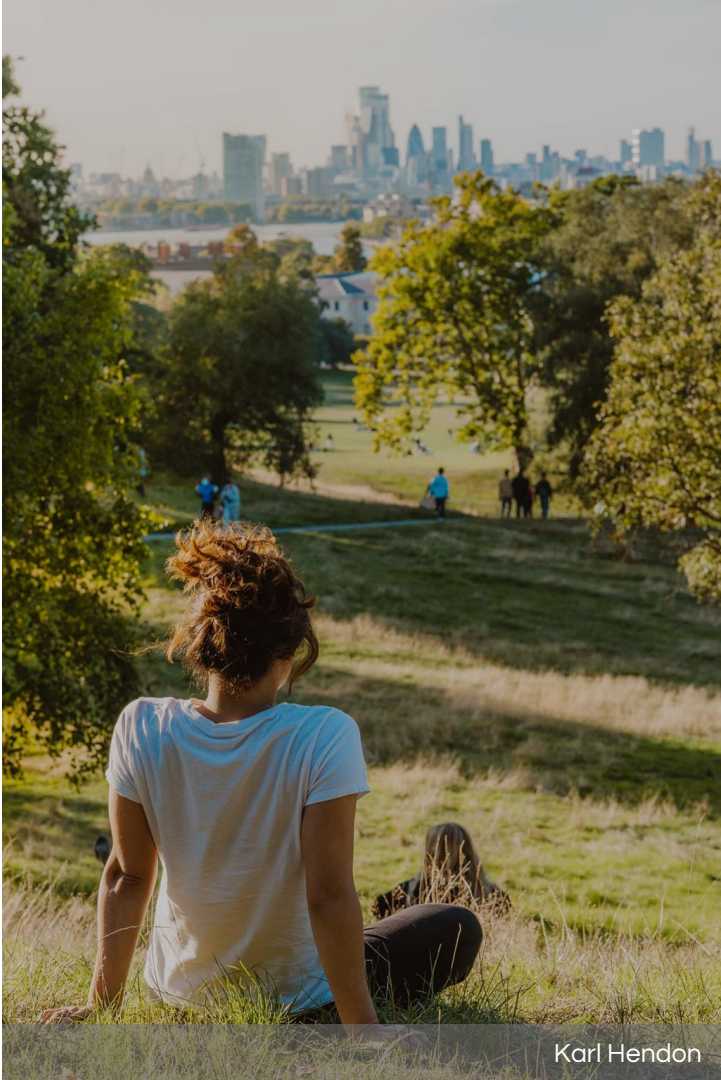
## 3

Interconnections: climate justice and migrant justice

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## 4

Dangerous narratives and creating new narratives





# Why do you care about climate change?

*Answer the question on [sli.do](#)*



# Climate-driven migration

## Climate change is impacting patterns of human migration

- Mostly in the global south, where most of the extreme weather events are happening, such as droughts and heavy rainfall
- Wealthier countries have the resources to invest heavily in protecting their citizens, whereas developing countries struggle

## Terminology

- Avoiding “climate migrant/refugee”
- “Climate-linked mobility” and “human movement” can usually refer to most types of movement
- “Climate-linked displacement” should only be used to refer to situations of extreme forced movement
- “Climate-linked migration” can be used to refer to many types of movement – but shouldn’t be used to describe situations of extreme forced displacement



# Climate-driven migration

## Most climate-linked movement is internal

- Media reports often suggest that large numbers of people will cross international borders, in reality, most people move short distances within their own country
- When people are displaced by sudden climate-related disasters (floods, storms) they tend to move the shortest distance to find safety.
- When people move due to slowly unfolding climate-related events (drought, desertification) they often move to nearby towns and cities to find work

## Majority of climate-linked movement happens in the global south

- As climate impacts accelerate this means that most climate-related displacement (upwards of 90%) takes place in the global south

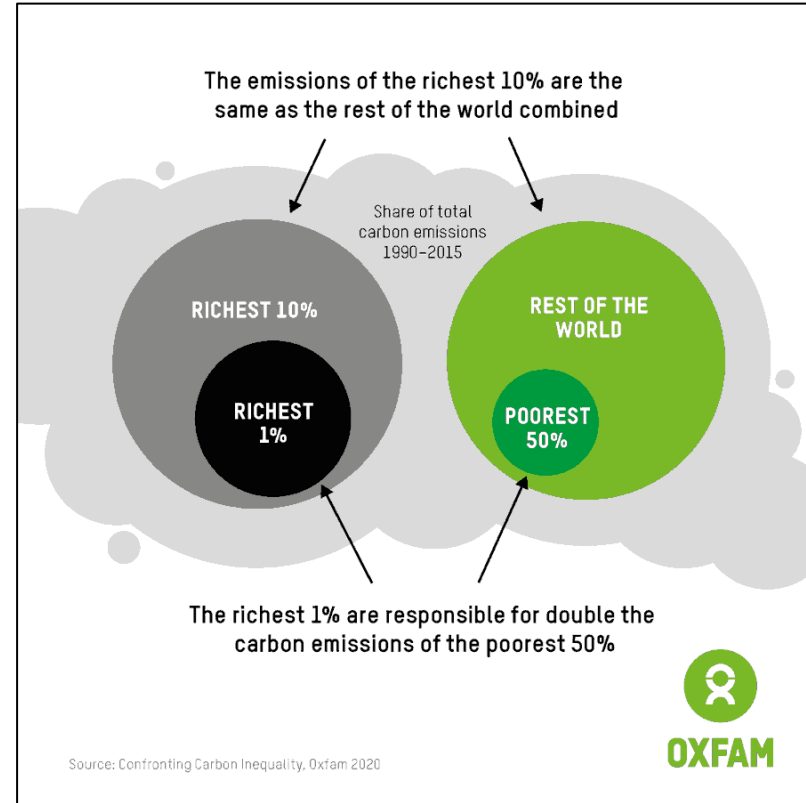
# Video

*Climate Change and the Migrant Crisis*

*(N.b. - avoid using 'migrant crisis' as a term, leans into dangerous narratives)*

# The climate crisis is...

- Impacting the lives of those **least responsible** for causing it
- Who are also poorer and **less powerful with least resources** to cope with the effects
- Who – if a justice approach is not used – could experience the **triple injustice** of 'solutions' entrenching poverty, inequality and creating more sacrifice zones



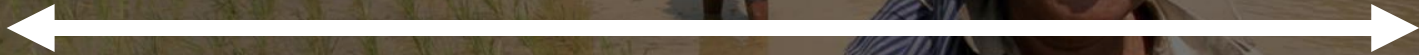


# Migration concepts



"Cambodia - Working in the rice paddies" (CC BY 2.0)  
by DFAT photo library

MIGRATION



DISPLACEMENT

"Cambodia - Working in the rice paddies" (CC BY 2.0)  
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INTERNAL

CROSS  
BORDER

"Cambodia - Working in the rice paddies" (CC BY 2.0)  
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# DRIVERS

- Economic
- Political
- Social
- Environmental

"Cambodia - Working in the rice paddies" (CC BY 2.0)  
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# Migration as climate adaptation

The concept of 'migration as climate adaptation' has emerged as a way of allowing and equipping people to use migration as a way of creating climate resilience.

This strategy recognises that, in some circumstances, people may move as a way to mitigate the risks and uncertainties associated with climate-related disruptions.

The concept also recognises that there are some climate change impacts that are difficult or impossible to adapt to in-situ.

Not all patterns of climate-related movement should be seen as resilience enhancing. Instances of forced displacement in the context of climate-related disasters should not be described as such.



# We think in stories.

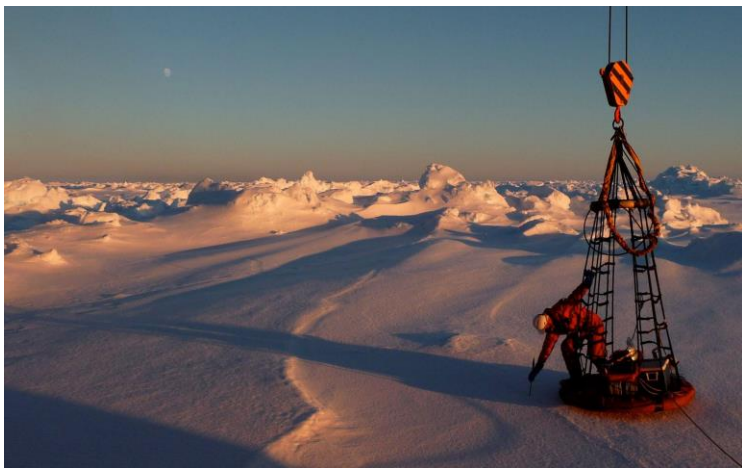


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AI prompt: "give me the best images about climate change"



# The changing climate story



Kenneth Mankoff

This is a science story. It's complex and remote.



SoStock

This is a people story. It's about all of us.



# The changing climate story



Supratim Bhattacharjee / Climate Visuals

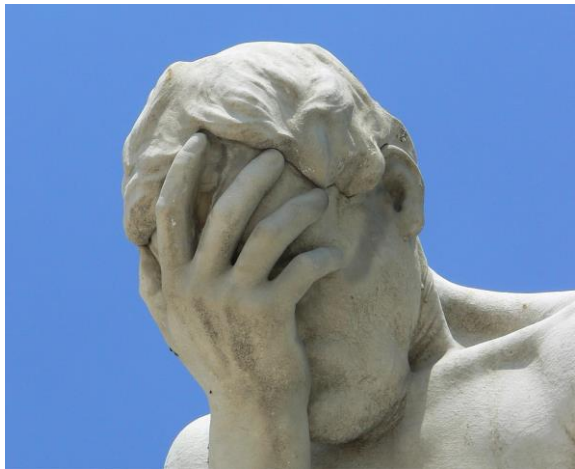
The damage is done.



Avijit Ghosh / Climate Visuals

We all play our part in what happens next.

# The changing climate story



What can people *really* do?

Look at what people are  
*already doing*



# Testimonies from around the world





# Mexico

Drought and cross-  
border migration

"Orgullo" (CC BY 2.0) by ibz\_omar



"Times have changed ... the rain is coming later now, so we produce less. The only solution is to go away, at least for a while. Each year I'm working for three to five months in Wyoming. That's my main source of income"



**Miguel**  
**Hueyotlipan,**  
**Mexico**

"Times have changed ... the rain is coming later now, so we produce less. The only solution is to go away, at least for a while. Each year I'm working for three to five months in Wyoming. That's my main source of income"

**Drought and  
rainfall variability**

"Times have changed ... the rain is coming later now, so we produce less. The only solution is to go away, at least for a while. Each year I'm working for three to five months in Wyoming. That's my main source of income"

Seasonal and  
circular  
migration



"Times have changed ... the rain is coming later now, so we produce less. The only solution is to go away, at least for a while. Each year I'm working for three to five months in Wyoming. That's my main source of income"

Cross border  
and internal  
migration

"Times have changed ... the rain is coming later now, so we produce less. The only solution is to go away, at least for a while. Each year I'm working for three to five months in Wyoming. That's my main source of income"

**Climate-linked  
migration and  
labour markets**

# Somalia

Drought, conflict and  
displacement



"Imvepi Refugee Camp" (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by UNMISS  
MEDIA

“And since there was the war, we did not receive any support from the government. Therefore, there are combined factors that made us suffer: droughts and war. If war did not exist, then we might have been able to stay, but now that the land is looted, there is no way for us to claim it.”

# Elderly farmer Nakivale Settlement, Uganda

“And since there was the war, we did not receive any support from the government. Therefore, there are combined factors that made us suffer: droughts and war. If war did not exist, then we might have been able to stay, but now that the land is looted, there is no way for us to claim it.”

**Existing  
vulnerability**



“And since there was the war, we did not receive any support from the government. Therefore, there are combined factors that made us suffer: droughts and war. If war did not exist, then we might have been able to stay, but now that the land is looted, there is no way for us to claim it.”

## Complex crises

# Philippines

Typhoon Haiyan and  
sudden displacement



"Tacloban - Boat" (CC BY-NC 2.0) by Claudio Accheri

“We were trapped in the house for two days until someone came and rescued us in a boat, and we were taken to the local gymnasium which was being used as an evacuation centre. It proved impossible to live there as well, so we left after another week and spent the next five weeks staying with relatives.”



# Rosaline Ticala

Philippines,  
Mindanao  
Island

"We were trapped in the house for two days until someone came and rescued us in a boat, and we were taken to the local gymnasium which was being used as an evacuation centre. It proved impossible to live there as well, so we left after another week and spent the next five weeks staying with relatives."

**Sudden  
displacement**

“We were trapped in the house for two days until someone came and rescued us in a boat, and we were taken to the local gymnasium which was being used as an evacuation centre. It proved impossible to live there as well, so we left after another week and spent the next five weeks staying with relatives”.

**Short distance  
displacement**



# Exercise

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Read through the following quote from  
Abdul Zuffar from Bangladesh

In small groups or with a partner, identify and discuss the:

*Climate change impacts*

*Consequence on livelihoods*

*Other issues the situation intersects with*

*Causes of situation*



Abdul Zuffer survived cyclone Aila in 2009, a tropical storm that killed over three hundred people and left a million homeless in Bangladesh:

"The rice season is not at the right time, none of the rains are. And when it does rain, it is far heavier. Everyone is affected. The future will bring more devastating storms" he warns.

"We want to stay here, but it will be difficult. The whole world is responsible. People are using machines everywhere and the world is warming."

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# Take a break!



# Video testimony

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## *The New Face of Climate Change*

*(N.b. using the term 'climate migrant' tends to be avoided)*





## More likely:

- Internal
- Short distance
- Circular
- Rural - urban



## Less likely:

- Cross-border
- Across continents
- En-masse
- Poor - rich



# Migration & climate resilience: opportunity

When in-situ adaptation measures are not able to fully address climate impacts, migration can offer more safety and climate resilience than staying put, and present a number of opportunities.

## → Diversification of livelihoods

By moving, people may be able to access livelihood opportunities that are less threatened by climate change impacts.

## → Access to resources

For example, moving may enable people to access agricultural land or water resources that are less susceptible to climate impacts.

## → Reduced exposure to risks

Migration offers the potential to move out of harm's way and reduce exposure to sudden climate-related impacts such as tropical storms or flooding.

## → Skills transfer

Migrants can bring new skills and knowledge to their destination areas, which can potentially enhance their destination's adaptive capacity.

Video:  
Connecting climate and migrant justice



# Connecting climate & migrant justice

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- Organising around the **right to stay** and the **right to move**
- **The right to stay:** for communities to be supported to thrive, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis
- **The right to move:** safely and with dignity, through legal pathways, when this is not possible



# Connecting climate & migrant justice

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- Connecting movements, sharing skills and building solidarity from the ground up
- Joint campaigns, intersecting demands and collaborative action







Dangerous Narrative  
How to talk about  
climate & migration



## Dangerous narratives:

- Climate advocates — largely in the Global North — as well as policymakers and members of the media may increasingly frame the potential of increased migration as a “threat”, perhaps to incentivise climate action.
- Rather than drive climate action, these messages play into national security narratives that could position militarised borders as the solution to climate impacts and could serve to both delay climate action and deny people’s humanity.



# How are these 'dangerous narratives'?

## Rising seas threaten 'mass exodus on a biblical scale', UN chief warns

António Guterres calls for urgent action as climate-driven rise brings 'torrent of trouble' to almost a billion people



Heavy flooding in Bangkok. The UN chief warned people in major cities across the world faced catastrophic difficulties. Photograph: Matt Hunt/NurPhoto/REX/Shutterstock

THE AUSTRALIAN  
Monday, October 5, 2020

HOME / NATION / DEFENCE

## Climate change 'will induce a mass migrant invasion of Australia'

News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle  
Environment ▶ Climate change Wildlife More



### Climate change

This article is more than 2 years old

## Climate change 'will create world's biggest refugee crisis'

Experts warn refugees could number tens of millions in the next decade, and call for a new legal framework to protect the most vulnerable

Matthew Taylor

Thu 2 Nov 2017 17:01 AEDT

DefenseNews

DefenseNews SURFACE NAVY 2023 EXPLORE

Pentagon

## Climate change is now a national security priority for the Pentagon

By Aaron Mehta  
Jan 28, 2021

Facebook Twitter Reddit LinkedIn Email

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What is BBC Future? Future Planet More

HOW TO THINK ABOUT X | COMMENT & ANALYSIS

## Is the world ready for mass migration due to climate change?

Email Twitter Facebook LinkedIn

(Image credit: Alamy)

By Gaia Vince 17th November 2022

# How to communicate

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## VALUE

### **WE HAVE ALWAYS MOVED FOR SAFETY**

Lead with values-based language when talking about people seeking asylum, refugees and migrants.

## VILLAIN

### **SHIFT TO THE PROFITEERS**

Clearly identify which actors drive and benefit - historically and currently - from exploitation and abuse against migrants and refugees.

## VISION

### **RIGHT TO MOVE, RIGHT TO STAY**

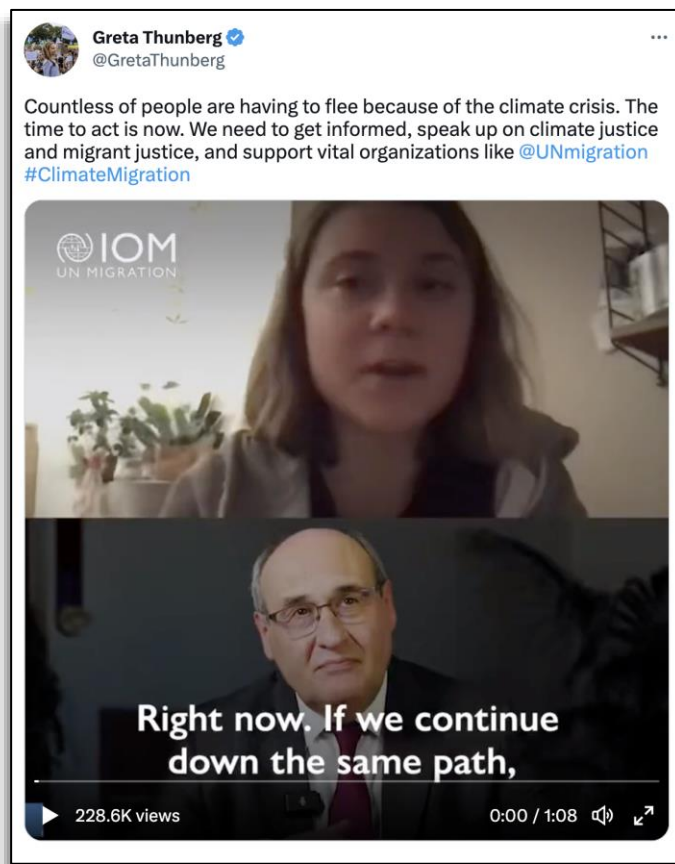
The right to stay - to defend communities from the impacts of climate change, and the right to move - safely and with dignity when this is not possible.

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# Before



# After







## Strategic intervention: creating a supportive environment

- Fund migrant & refugee led organisations to enter the space
- Fund organisations at different stages of their development and thinking
- Support individual champions within organisations
- Offer flexibility, especially to southern organisations
- Show leadership



# Building power across the intersection

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- Solidarity - principles and practice
- Linking the issues: campaigns and comms
- Skill sharing and resource sharing
- Joint campaigns and joint targets



# Exercise - Quiz

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*Please take part in the quiz on [sli.do](#)*

# Resources

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- No borders in Climate Justice [Linktree](#)
  - Indivisible Justice: [Migration & The Climate Crisis Video](#)
  - Climate Migration: [Dangerous Narratives Guide](#)
  - Alex Randall: [Climate & Migration Blog](#)
  - Nathan Akehurst and Petra Molnar: [Border Violence and Security in a Warming World Podcast](#)
  - All resources are on the CJC - [Climate & Migrant Justice Website](#)
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