

CLIMATE EMERGENCY & MIGRATIONS



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INTRODUCTION

This material has been created to be given to young people before attending the Climate Emergency and Migrations workshop to facilitate better understanding and engagement.

It is important that young people are aware of climate change because the future of the planet also depends on their actions.

Engaging young people is important because they have the energy, creativity and determination to bring about meaningful change.

The workshop is carried out as part of the Don't call it change (DOCC) project, in partnership with YouNet APS (Italy), Organization Earth (Greece), European Association World - Our Home (Latvia) and Dolnoslaska Federacja Organizacji Pozarzadowych (Poland).

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What is the climate crisis?



Climate crisis is a term that describes global warming, climate change, and its consequences.



The term has been used to describe the threat of global warming to the planet and to advocate for accelerating efforts to mitigate climate change.



The effects of climate change are sometimes described in terms similar to climate CHANGE, such as:

- **"climate catastrophe"** (used in reference to a documentary made by David Attenborough in 2019 and the 2019–2020 Australian bushfire season)
- **"climate emergency"** (11,000 warning letters from scientists in BioScience, and The Guardian, both 2019)
- **"global warming"** (Richard A. Betts, Met Office UK, 2018)





Climate change has a direct impact on the younger generation and can affect the environment, economy and quality of life. And yet...how can young people get involved?



- **Education and awareness** – a first step is to learn about climate change and share the knowledge with family, friends and the communities where they come from.



- **Civic engagement** – participation in movements promoting action to combat climate change.



- **Influence through social media** – young people can use their voice on social media platforms to draw attention to climate change and the need for immediate action.



- **Responsible consumption** – people can opt for sustainable, recyclable products and support brands and companies that have sustainable practices.

What are the causes? climate change?

The main causes of climate change are related to human activities and their impact on the global climate system. Among the most important causes are:

Greenhouse gas emissions: One of the main causes of climate change is the excessive emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere. The most common GHGs are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrogen oxide (NO_x) and perfluorinated hydrocarbons (HFCs). These gases form a "blanket" in the atmosphere, which absorbs heat and prevents it from dissipating, thus leading to global warming and major climate change.

Deforestation and land-use changes: Deforestation and land-use changes, such as the conversion of forests to agricultural or urban land, lead to the release of carbon stocks accumulated in vegetation and soil. These changes exacerbate the climate crisis, as forests play a crucial role in absorbing CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Plastic production and management: Plastic production, especially from petrochemical sources, is energy-intensive and can release greenhouse gases in the process. Also, improper management of plastic waste leads to its accumulation in the environment, which can affect ecosystems and biodiversity.

Industrial and transport pollution: Pollutant emissions from industry, power plants and road transport contribute to air quality deterioration and global warming.



Climate
CHANGE



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Combating climate change requires coordinated and sustained action at global, national, community and individual levels.
- Here are some key solutions to address this complex issue:



THE TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGIES



PROTECTING FORESTS AND RESTORING ECOSYSTEMS



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION



ENGAGING IN AWARENESS AND ACTION ACTIVITIES



PROMOTING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGES



RISING TEMPERATURES



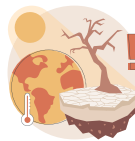
MELTING OF GLACIERS AND ICE CAPS



SEA LEVEL RISE



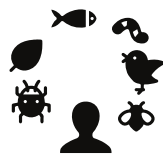
OCEAN ACIDIFICATION



EXTREME WEATHER PHENOMENA



LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY



CHANGES IN ECOSYSTEMS AND SPECIES DISTRIBUTION



CHANGES IN PRECIPITATION PATTERNS



THREATS TO AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY



IMPACT ON HEALTH

RISING TEMPERATURES



They have increased steadily over the last century due to the increased greenhouse effect. This leads to more frequent and more intense heat waves, which poses a health risk to vulnerable populations and puts pressure on ecosystems and agriculture.

Global average temperatures have risen significantly since the industrial revolution, and the last decade (2011-2020) was the warmest decade on record. Of the 20 warmest years, 19 have occurred since 2000.

Today, the global average temperature is **0.95 to 1.20°C** higher than at the end of the 19th century. Scientists believe that a **2°C** increase over pre-industrial levels represents a threshold with dangerous and catastrophic consequences for the climate and environment. This is why the international community agrees that global warming must remain well below a **2°C** increase.

The concept of average annual temperature for the entire globe may seem strange. After all, right now, the highest and lowest temperatures on Earth are probably more than **55°C** apart.



SOME RECORD TEMPERATURES



In the last 69 years, in **Romania**, the highest temperature was recorded in July 2007, which was **42.6°C**.

At the opposite pole, the coldest day was in January 2017 in Sibiu, when the thermometer dropped to **-29.0°C**.

In the last 74 years, in **Italy**, the highest temperature was recorded in August 1999, in Palermo Bocadifalco, the record temperature being **45.2°C**.

In March 2005, **-23.0°C** was recorded in Dobbiaco, the lowest temperature recorded in this time frame.



In the last 74 years in **Greece**, the highest temperature was recorded in July 1977 as **48.0°C**.

In January 2012, the lowest temperature was **-25.5°C**.

In the last 72 years, in **Poland**, the highest temperature was recorded in March 2022, with a temperature of **37.4°C** reported.

In January 2021, the lowest temperature was also recorded, this being **-25.4°C**.



In the last 74 years, in **Latvia**, the highest temperature was recorded in July 2021, with a temperature of **33.7°C** reported.

Also in 2021, in February, the lowest temperature was also recorded, this being **-27.4°C**.



According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Guinness World Record, the highest global temperature was recorded in the USA in July 1913 as: **56.7°C**.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Guinness World Records, the lowest global temperature was recorded in Antarctica in July 1983 as: **-89.2°C**.





CONSEQUENCES OF EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS



Wildfires - heat waves often trigger extremely violent wildfires that affect entire communities, destroying homes and harming health through smoke inhalation. In addition, the impact on ecosystems is such that some never recover.



Floods - as temperatures rise, they cause more water to evaporate from land and oceans, changes in the amount and frequency of heavy rainfall can in turn affect the amount and frequency of floods. Low-lying lowland areas located near rivers, lagoons or lakes are prone to flooding when water levels rise. This phenomenon also applies to coastal areas, where seawater can be brought inland by strong winds, tides and tsunamis.



Climate migration - according to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, an annual average of 21.5 million people were forcibly displaced each year between 2008 and 2016 due to extreme weather events.



Hunger and malnutrition - extreme weather events also have a negative impact on agriculture and food production, limiting in certain circumstances including access to food. Climate change also affects the nutritional values of food.

IMPACT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES ON MIGRATIONS

Human migration as a result of environmental change is not a new phenomenon. People have always moved from one place to another for many reasons.

However, the environment has always been a particular trigger for forced displacement in human history and migration has been one of the earliest strategies for coping with life-threatening environmental crises.

In the pre-industrial period, these mass movements were mainly due to natural environmental degradation or destruction, including weather events such as hurricanes or storms causing major floods, or due to a lack of natural resources.

In the twentieth century, the nature and extent of migration due to environmental factors changed substantially due to the rapid degradation of the environment as a result of global climate change, which is mainly attributable to anthropogenic causes.



WHY IS CLIMATE MIGRATION ON THE RISE?

Climate migration occurs when people leave their homes due to extreme weather events, including floods, heat waves, droughts, and wildfires, as well as slower-moving climate challenges such as rising seas and intensifying water stress.

This form of migration is increasing because the world has not been able to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and halt global average temperature rise, which leads to more climate disasters.



WHY IS CLIMATE MIGRATION ON THE RISE?



- **Sea-Level Rise:** Coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise caused by global warming. As sea levels increase, low-lying coastal communities may face regular flooding and even permanent inundation, forcing residents to relocate.



- **Extreme Weather Events:** More frequent and severe storms, hurricanes, and wildfires can destroy homes and infrastructure, making it necessary for people to move to safer areas.



- **Drought and Desertification:** Prolonged droughts and desertification can make agricultural lands unproductive, leading to food insecurity and prompting people to seek more hospitable regions.



- **Temperature Extremes:** Rising temperatures can lead to heatwaves and health risks, especially in urban areas, potentially driving people to migrate to cooler regions.



- **Loss of Livelihoods:** Changes in ecosystems and declining natural resources can threaten livelihoods, particularly in rural areas, pushing people to migrate in search of new economic opportunities.

WHY IS CLIMATE MIGRATION ON THE RISE?

Most climate migration is projected to occur within a country's borders (internal), but cross-border migration will also rise.

In some instances, extremes combined with other factors, such as natural subsidence and oil and gas activities, are displacing entire communities, forcing them to find refugees in different parts of their country or journey across borders.

Some researchers project that drought-driven migration in particular could triple this century if international efforts fail to address the growing climate crisis.



CLIMATE MIGRANTS ARE NOT LEGALLY CONSIDERED REFUGEES

Latin America, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa are among the regions most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and could see large increases in both internal and cross-border migration as a result.

More than half of the developing world's population lives in these three regions, and many live in vulnerable areas, some of which are already experiencing climate-driven migration crises.

The World Bank estimates that **these regions could altogether produce 143 million internal climate migrants by 2050.**



CLIMATE MIGRANTS ARE NOT LEGALLY CONSIDERED REFUGEES ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE LAW

The media and advocacy groups often refer to climate migrants, people on the move in relation to drought, floods, storms, as “climate refugees”.

However, these people are not legally considered refugees.

‘Refugee’ is a legal term which has a very specific meaning centering on a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”

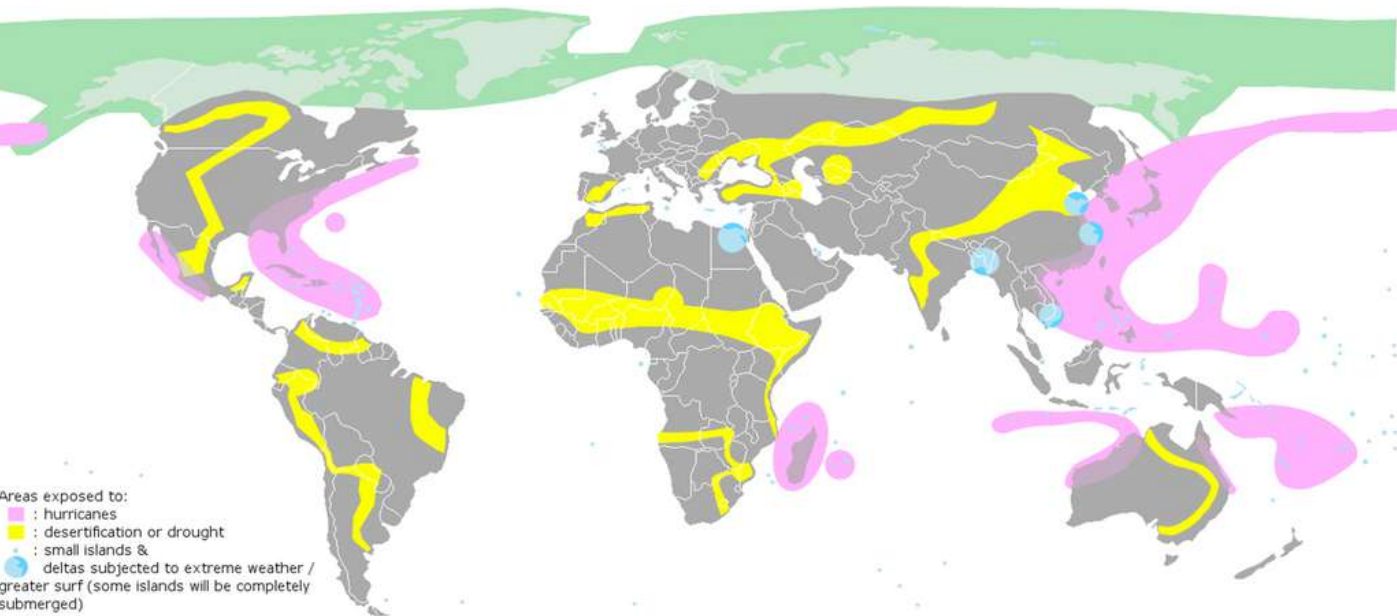
According to this convention, people leaving their countries for reasons related to climate stressors may not be considered refugees because the Convention does not recognize the environment as a persecuting agent.



Climate migrants are people who leave their homes because of climate stressors

Climate stressors, such as changing rainfall, heavy flooding, and sea level rise, put pressure on people to leave their homes and livelihoods behind. It makes their homes uninhabitable.

These people could live anywhere in the world ranging from the Pacific island states such as Kiribati and Tuvalu that are dealing with sea-level rise, to farmers in countries in West Africa who cannot cultivate their crops or raise livestock anymore because of drought and flooding.



THE VULNERABLE ARE MOST LIKELY TO FEEL PRESSURE TO MIGRATE

Countries with a combination of low adaptive capacities, vulnerable geographies and fragile ecosystems (such as small island states, the Sahel Belt and low-lying mega deltas) will face the question:

Do I stay or do I go?

At the same time, it is often the poorest and most vulnerable who do not have the resources or capacity to leave their homes.

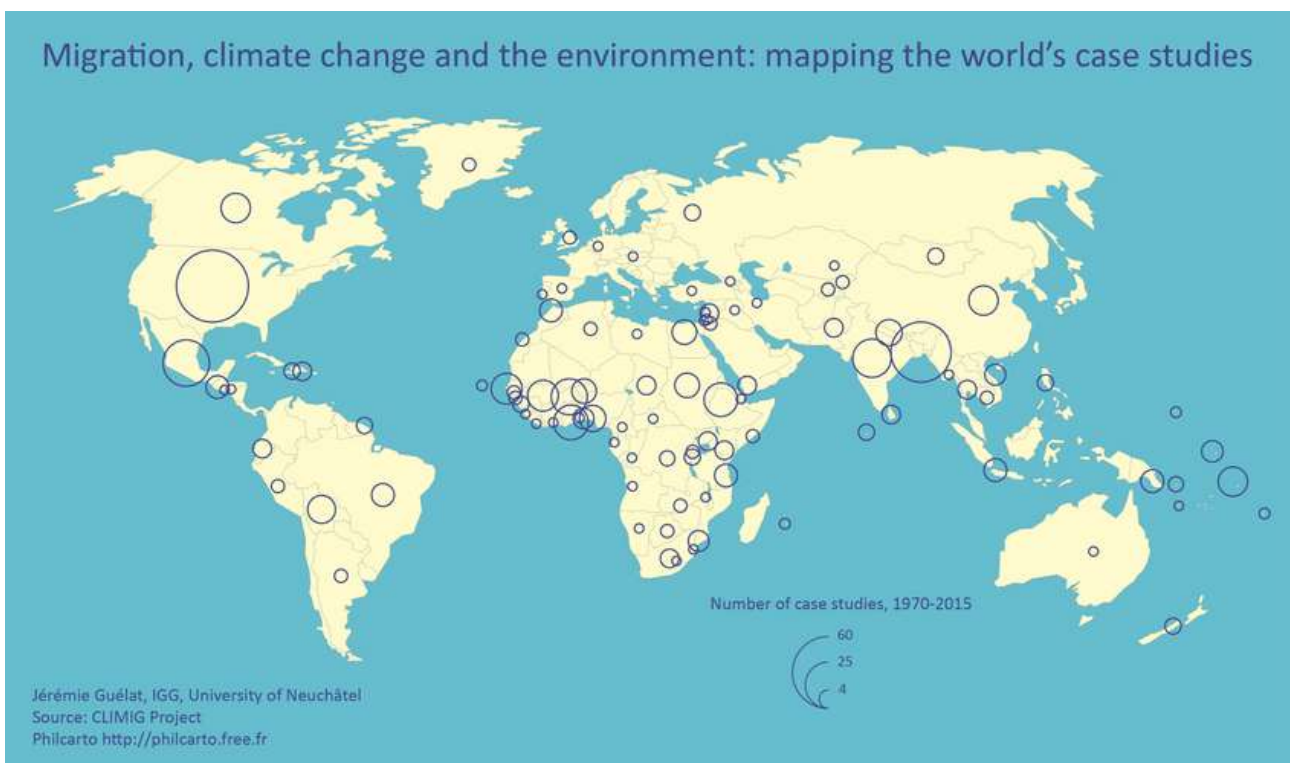


The majority of environmentally-induced migrants are likely to come from rural areas, as their livelihoods often depend on climate sensitive sectors, such as agriculture and fishing.

HIGH DISASTER-RELATED DISPLACEMENT RISK

An average of 25.3 million displacements have been brought on each year since 2008 by sudden-onset disasters alone.

In 2016, 24.2 million new disaster displacements were brought on by sudden-onset natural hazards in 118 countries disaster displacements - outnumbering new displacement associated with conflict and violence by three to one.



Relative to population size, small island states face disproportionately high disaster-related displacement risk. Their mostly low-lying coastal populations tend to be exposed to a range of hazards, particularly cyclones, floods, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis.

KEEP IN MIND

The emissions that cause climate change come from every part of the world and affect everyone, but some countries produce much more than others.

The seven biggest emitters alone (China, the United States of America, India, the European Union, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, and Brazil) accounted for about half of all global greenhouse gas emissions in 2020.



What does our organization do?

Organization Earth is an international awardwinning, non-profit - civil society organization founded in 2010.

Our main purpose is to promote a sustainable way of living by reconnecting humans with nature, and fostering social inclusion.

Our work focuses on offering active learning programmes to develop green skills, community based activities and on promoting nature-based solutions for climate neutral and inclusive cities.



What does our organization do?



**ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENTIAL
EDUCATION**

URBAN GREEN SPACES

**SUPPORT OF VULNERABLE SOCIAL
GROUPS**

**EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL
PROGRAMMES**

HOPE SPORTS



Final note

Dear participant,

The information in this material is only a small part of what the problems that climate change is causing our planet really mean.

The material has been created to give you only some essential information about the climate crisis, but the key point of this workshop will be your contribution, yours and the other participants. We want to hear your views, understand your fears and dreams about our collective future. In the debates that will take place, we will explore diverse ideas and look for creative solutions to protect the environment.

We were delighted to hear that you are interested in taking part in our workshop on this important topic. Each of us plays an important role in the fight to protect the planet and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

We encourage you to be open, prepare your arguments and express your thoughts freely. Until then... we look forward to meeting you at the workshop and starting a positive change.

With love and enthusiasm,
Organization Earth

