

“Your Action Today, Our Life Tomorrow”: Youth Power in Shaping Migration in a Changing Climate

Climate change and its adverse impacts increasingly affect if, how, when, and where people migrate worldwide. There is no region in the world that has not seen its population impacted directly, or indirectly, linked to adverse climate impacts. This comes in a world hosting 2.3 billion children and 1.8 billion young people, the largest generation of youth in history (UNDSA). There is increased level of rural to urban migration in cities; population relocation away from rising sea levels in small island states; and the situation is particularly worrying in the least developed countries, whether landlocked or small islands, all hosting a large youth population.

In this context and over the past decade, the links between migration, environment, disasters and climate change have risen on the international policy agenda, in both climate change and migration related multilateral discussions.

Data and research support the growing awareness that the adverse impacts of climate change increasingly contribute directly and indirectly to reshape patterns of migration and displacement, in areas highly populated by young people, and will continue to do so.

The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change in its 6th report of 2022, highlights that "Regions with more youthful populations – such as Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Central America - are both highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, and reliant on agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, and fisheries for livelihoods. (...) In these vulnerable regions, climate change compounds other drivers such as poverty to increase youth out-migration to urban areas or other regions (medium confidence), which can further worsen rural economies."

The year 2022 registered a record number of 32.6 million new internal displacements in the context of disasters ([IDMC 2023](#)). A figure that does not, however, represent the full picture. The data is not disaggregated as it does not distinguish between youth, children, women, disable people or any other vulnerable groups. Also, it does not take into account people currently on the move due to slow onset processes, such as sea-level rise.

Looking at the future, predictions indicate that many more people could be on the move within their own countries in the context of the adverse effects of climate change. The [World Bank](#) projects that, by 2050, without inclusive development and concrete climate action today, over 216 million people, approximately the population of Brazil, could move within their own countries due to the slow-onset impacts of climate change.

Under these certain conditions and circumstances, migration is a livelihood or coping strategy that has the potential to greatly reduce the exposure and vulnerability of young people, their families and communities. Making mobility an option for these vulnerable people gives them an opportunity to multiply and diversify their incomes, secure resources in the face of hazards - including those posed by climate change - and generally enhance their resilience.

The **objective** of this dialogue is:

- Identify the specific needs of youth affected by the impacts of climate change and what does this mean in terms of migration and displacement.
- Discuss how youth can contribute to addressing their needs in the relation to migration in the context of climate change, disasters and environmental degradation, especially slow onset processes.
- The role of migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change for young people.
- Emphasis the role of youth as actors of change in climate change and migration related policy discussions.

The event will serve as a discussion space for representatives from different organizations and youth.

Format

The side event will be held in an online format, entirely in English, without interpretation available. It will take place on 27 November, 3:00pm – 3:45pm, in the Auditorium - Main Hall at the Conference of Youth (COY18).

Guiding questions:

- What are the patterns of young people moving in the context of climate change? How are these different from adults, parents and families? Is the rural-urban pattern an important one?
- Are youth disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change? What does this mean in terms of migration and displacement?
- What can youth do to address the links migration, environment and climate change? How can youth be effective partners in addressing climate change-induced migration?
- What are the barriers that currently exist that hurdle the participation of youth in climate change and migration related discussions?
- What are the existing solutions that allow youth to participate in decision-making on a local level? And what can be done better?

Speakers: Youth, YOUNGO, IOM, UNICEF (tbc), Save the Children (tbc), IFRC (tbc)