

## Where to Next on climate mobility?

### Mobility solutions

When we speak about mobility solutions, we apply the International Organization for Migration's approach:

- **To avert** - is understood as measures to reduce or avoid the risk of forced and unmanaged migration as much as possible.
- **To minimize** is understood as measures to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration as part of adaptation strategies to climate change and thus, curb the number of people forced to move by providing alternative livelihoods.
- **To address** is understood as measures to prepare for and respond to displacement when it happens, including through ensuring assistance and protection for those on the move due to climate change, and seeking lasting solutions.

### Local engagement

Adaptation is highly localized. Faced with the same climate impacts, community abilities to adapt vary drastically. Solutions should be context-specific, flexible, and adaptable. Each community has unique vulnerabilities and resilience opportunities. Despite this, adaptation responses are often driven internationally and nationally, excluding local governments, community leaders and community members from planning and designing interventions.

Adaptation planning and finance must be inclusive to be successful. Local perceptions on climate change and mobility need to be included in research and evidence production. Failing to engage local leaders and community members can create suspicion and frustration and lower community ownership. Priorities determined internationally or nationally often don't match local needs.

### Youth engagement

Young people must be recognized as change agents. Youth – particularly African youth - are becoming increasingly mobile and often express different perspectives and priorities than adults, yet they are rarely involved in the design and implementation of responses. Youth are keen to be heard and to participate in decision-making processes. This should be enabled wherever possible.

### Planned Relocations

Some communities are becoming uninhabitable as climate impacts increase. Sea-level rise, salinization, acidification, and desertification are already irreversible in some places. In many cases, adaptation measures such as early warning systems or improved infrastructure and technologies can help enable communities to stay and adapt in place. In others, spending on these measures could prove futile.

Pre-emptive systematic relocations to less-vulnerable locations may protect lives, livelihoods and assets from future harm while maintaining community ties. Planned relocation is difficult, particularly if the goal is to reduce fragility and improve people's development prospects. Most individuals and communities have strong place attachment and do not want to leave their livelihoods, communities and

homes, which are often their biggest assets. The lack of positive examples and inherent complexities of planned relocation is all the more reason to proactively and strategically plan pilot cases that can help develop best practices.

Planned relocations should form part of mobility-focused adaptation planning, and finance should be allocated. Early action is imperative to build in adequate time for community buy-in and leadership.

### Maladaptation

Many international climate interventions aimed at reducing vulnerability and helping communities adapt had reverse impacts. Some have inadvertently reinforced, redistributed or created new vulnerabilities. Some interventions that have positively impacted some groups have compounded vulnerabilities for already-marginalized people.

Interventions must have a strong grasp on the current and past socioeconomic and political landscape and be cognizant of which groups will benefit and which are at risk of being excluded. A narrow focus on adjusting to climate impacts without considering these dynamics runs the risk of worsening them.

## Priority areas for intervention:

### Increased funding for mobility solutions

Existing global finance approaches do not make explicit references to climate-linked mobility, which hinders finance action on a large scale. More funding is needed to support action to avert, minimize and address climate-linked mobility.

Finance tends to flow to countries where donors already have a presence, strong institutional capacities, and perceived ability to implement projects successfully. Investors seek sufficiently predictable environments to measure and generate a return on investment and are reluctant to invest in countries with poor policy, institutional and market environments. Financing in fragile and conflict-affected countries is particularly precarious because they lack the institutional strength to absorb funds and implement and measure interventions. Some communities facing fragility lack financial, technology or human resource capacities. Sometimes, funds en route to communities can be siphoned due to corruption.

Climate mobility interventions require flexible and innovative tools. Existing financial products are not ideal, particularly in fragile environments. Investments and loans are not always appropriate. Grants, concessional finance, insurance, and forecast-based financing are more appropriate for fast and flexible disbursement but are more difficult to access.

### Green livelihoods

Stability, opportunities and jobs, livelihoods and basic infrastructure and services in places of origin play pivotal roles in ensuring mobility is an option, not a necessity. Projects to diversify livelihoods, train in climate-resilient skills, create sustainable livelihoods and promote green growth help to address the root causes of vulnerability. These, in turn, minimize forced displacement and involuntary immobility and enable people to remain voluntarily in place or move onward without exacerbating vulnerabilities.

Versatile climate-resilient skills and livelihoods also have significant potential to help people to move from one place to another, become productive in new environments, and continue a development trajectory. Labor mobility schemes and labor migration policies can help facilitate skills mobility, harness the social benefits of migration and improve labor market data and information systems.

Integrated green livelihood projects that include mobility considerations should be formulated to include vulnerable and non-vulnerable populations, including IDPs, women, returnees, youth and diaspora. They should include rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to urban, displacement, and returns.

### Water management

Water is a primary factor driving climate mobility and immobility in Africa, particularly water scarcity. Water interventions that integrate climate mobility are needed, including water and sanitation for basic needs, water for livelihoods and economic development, and protective climate-resilient water infrastructure and alternatives, such as nature-based solutions, to manage water-related risks.

### Climate-resilient Infrastructure

As with the points above, climate-resilient infrastructure at both source and destination will help avert forced displacement and help to accommodate rapid urbanisation in a developmental way. Investing in climate-resilient public infrastructure that enhances access to services and quality of life with a focus on gender, youth and other features that build resilience is a key opportunity and challenge related to human mobility.

### Data and knowledge

The cross-cutting nature of climate-linked human mobility means that data, knowledge, policies and interventions are spread across multiple sectors, such as agriculture, environment, health, labor, security, and development. As a result, data and knowledge are often scattered, and unharmonized or inaccessible.

### Support policy implementation and uptake

Multiple global, regional, subregional, and national frameworks and plans exist that address the links between climate change and human mobility and could significantly strengthen countries' abilities to respond to climate change. Countries and communities would benefit from adopting and operationalizing them.

Effective climate mobility interventions are easier to develop, fund, implement and evaluate if countries have appropriate laws and policies and governments prioritize climate mobility within their climate change adaptation plans.