



“I feel re-energised and optimistic!”

Participants at this year’s Summer Academy wrestled through the complexities of climate change, international law and protection in the migration nexus. After one week full of debates on the subject of “Protecting environmental migrants: Creating new policy and institutional frameworks”, we spoke with five participants.

Will we ever see an international framework providing better protection for environmental migrants?

Ritumbra Manuvie, India:

The international systems are more or less in place at international, regional and national level in the form of human rights and humanitarian law frameworks. What we need is a commitment and realisation that migration is not always a national security threat; rather, since time immemorial migration has been a way to protect and preserve human life and civilisations. Our ancestors migrated to make the current political world we have, and the future will take its own course of migration. Climate change not only reminds us that we have one world for collective destruction, but also takes us towards one world of harmonisation.

Michelle Lueck, United States:

The issue is growing in importance and urgency with increasing environmental and social changes, but currently governments have their plates full with so many pressing issues. Hopefully we will see a framework, but it is unclear when.

Hannah Smith, United Kingdom:

I think we have moved the ball just a bit further down the field this week.

What is urgently needed to get there?

Hannah Smith, United Kingdom:

Climate vulnerability assessments that combine biophysical and socio-economic data at the national level are key.

Aschale Siyoum, Ethiopia:

What is needed is to convince policymakers of the impact of environmental and climate change on human mobility to get them to rethink their policies. We also need to develop a mechanism to enforce the existing international framework and further develop regional cooperation.

Architesh Panda, India:

Two things are urgently needed to get there. First, UNFCCC, the institution dealing with the political global climate change negotiations (COPs), should agree on the issue and put an international institutional framework in place. Second, policymakers should realise that climate-induced migration is a real challenge for economic development and should work towards making policies at national level.

Michelle Lueck, United States:

I think that willingness is key. Willingness of governments, which can be encouraged by dedicated and passionate researchers and practitioners keeping the issue at the forefront of policymakers' attention.

Your take-home from the Summer Academy?

Aschale Siyoum, Ethiopia:

After the Summer Academy I will go home with the idea of thinking bigger beyond communities and national borders in order to address the issue of environmental migration and also with the need to move from knowledge to action in order to help those affected by environmental change.

Michelle Lueck, United States:

My take-home is that there is a strong and dedicated group of individuals who are ready to address this issue at every level of government and that our continued research and work is important and can be put to good use.

Hannah Smith, United Kingdom:

I feel re-energised and optimistic. It has changed the debate for me a bit and I am looking forward to taking this back to the organisations I work with in the UK.