

Lesson Plan: Climate Refugees and Environmental Migration

As a **high school** or **undergraduate Social Sciences, Humanities, or Environmental Sciences** teacher, you can use this set of computer-based tools to help you in teaching about topics such as **Social and Environmental Policy, Climate Change and Human Migration, Climate Refugees/Environmental Migrants, and Climate Justice**.

This lesson plan enables students to learn about human migration caused by climate change, and the term “climate refugees” and its growing significance. The activity provides insights into geographic locations whose existence is threatened by climate change, and communities that are fleeing their homes, resulting in large-scale migration.

Thus, the use of this lesson plan allows you to integrate the teaching of a climate science topic with a core topic in Social Sciences.

Use this lesson plan to help your students find answers to:

- *What are the reasons for human migration?*
- *What are the climate change-related problems that threaten the existence of some regions in the world?*
- *What are the challenges faced by climate refugees/environmental migrants?*
- *What are the measures/policies that governments can adopt to tackle the challenges of climate-related human migration?*

About the Lesson Plan

Grade Level

High school, Undergraduate

Discipline

Social Sciences, Humanities, Environmental Sciences

Topic(s) in Discipline	Climate Change and Human Migration, Climate Refugees, Climate Justice
Climate Topic	Policies, Politics, and Environmental Governance; Climate Refugees; Climate Justice
Location	Many. Includes Alaska, Pacific and Indian Ocean islands, Bangladesh, Sudan, Syria, USA, India
Access	Online
Language(s)	English
Approximate Time Required	120 min

1 Contents

- 1. Reading (15 – 20 min)**

A reading that discusses climate change-related human migration and the term “climate refugees” by describing how climate change is accelerating migration from various parts of Bangladesh to the capital, Dhaka.

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/dec/01/dhaka-city-climate-refugees-reality>
- 2. Classroom/Laboratory activity (~90 min)**

A storymap and an associated activity worksheet to learn about countries and cities that are becoming uninhabitable because of the effects of climate change, and communities that are being forced to leave their homes and migrate to new locations.

Storymap:

<http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2017/climate-migrants/index.html>

Associated activity:

<http://www.thehumanimprint.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Climate-Migrant-Worksheet.pdf>

3. Suggested questions/assignments for learning evaluation

- What are the reasons for human migration?
- What are the climate change-related problems that threaten the existence of some regions in the world?
- What are the challenges faced by climate refugees/environmental migrants?
- What are the measures/policies that governments can adopt to tackle the challenges of climate-related human migration?

2 Step-by-step User Guide



Here is a step-by-step guide to using this lesson plan in the classroom/laboratory. We have suggested these steps as a possible plan of action. You may customize the lesson plan according to your preferences and requirements.

1. Introduce the topic through a reading

- Introduce the topic of refugees and human migration.
- Introduce the terms, “environmental migration” and “climate refugees”.
- Discuss the reasons for climate change-related human displacement and the impending climate-refugee crisis by reading an article from The Guardian, “[Dhaka: the city where climate refugees are already a reality](#)”.

This article will help you provide an actual example of the climate-refugee crisis by describing how climate change in Bangladesh is causing large-scale migration of residents from different parts of

the country to the capital, Dhaka. Students can also learn about how cities such as Dhaka may struggle to support the large number of incoming environmental migrants.

The article “Dhaka: the city where climate refugees are already a reality”, from The Guardian, is available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/dec/01/dhaka-city-climate-refugees-reality>.

2. Conduct a classroom/laboratory activity

Now, explore the topic in more detail through mapmaking and visualization techniques by using the storymap tool, “Climate Migrants”, and an associated activity worksheet, “Climate Migrants”.

In this activity, students will learn about several regions and communities affected by climate change. Students will understand and discuss the various climate change-related problems such as inundation, erosion, drought and desertification, conflict, and the strain on resources caused by the resulting human migration. A wide range of geographic locations including Alaska, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, and Syria are provided as examples.

- Access esri’s storymap visualization tool “[Climate Migrants](http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2017/climate-migrants/index.html)” at <http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2017/climate-migrants/index.html>.
- Download the activity sheet “[Climate Migrants](http://www.thehumanimprint.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Climate-Migrant-Worksheet.pdf)”, from The Human Imprint. The activity sheet is available at <http://www.thehumanimprint.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Climate-Migrant-Worksheet.pdf>.
- Facilitate a detailed exploration and discussion of the responses to the questions in the worksheet, with the help of the storymap tool.

3. Questions/Assignments

Use the tools and the concepts learned so far to discuss and determine answers to the following questions:

- *What are the reasons for human migration?*
- *What are the climate change-related problems that threaten the existence of some regions in the world?*

- *What are the challenges faced by climate refugees/environmental migrants?*
- *What are the measures/policies that governments can adopt to tackle the challenges of climate-related human migration?*

3 Learning Outcomes

The tools in this lesson plan will enable students to:

- identify climate change-related threats to the existence of some regions in the world
- describe the problem of environmental migration and the term, “climate refugee”
- discuss the challenges faced by climate refugees
- enumerate the problems caused by large-scale human migration
- propose policies to handle the challenges posed by climate change-related migration

4 Additional Resources



If you or your students would like to explore the topic further, these additional resources will be useful.

1. Teaching Module

A teaching module, “A Global Challenge: ‘Climate Refugees’” from the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility: <http://www.morningsidecenter.org/teachable-moment/lessons/global-challenge-climate-refugees>

5 Credits/Copyrights

All the teaching tools in our collated list are owned by the corresponding creators/authors/organizations as listed on their websites. Please view the individual copyright and ownership details for each tool by following the individual links provided.

We have selected and analyzed the tools that align with the overall objective of our project and have provided the corresponding links. We do not claim ownership of or responsibility/liability for any of the listed tools.

1. Reading, “Dhaka: The city where climate refugees are already a reality” [The Guardian](#)
2. Classroom/Laboratory Activity [esri](#);
[The Human Imprint](#)
3. Additional Resources [Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility](#)