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POLICY BRIEF

Climate-linked mobility

A key to development

Aimée-Noël Mbiyozo and Margaret Monyani

Development actors and funders are beginning to acknowledge that climate-linked mobility must be included in development programmes. However, interventions and funding remain inadequate. In Africa, mobilising adaptation financing and implementing strategies face multiple barriers. This policy brief analyses the obstacles to maximising the continent's climate-mobility opportunities. It emphasises the critical role of mobility in climate adaptation and recommends entry points and approaches for sustainable development.

Key findings

- Climate-linked mobility presents both opportunities and challenges for development. When safe, voluntary and orderly, it can enhance development by promoting agglomeration, skills exchanges and remittances. If unmanaged, forced and unsafe, it poses a considerable threat to sustainable development.
- While development actors and financiers increasingly recognise the importance of climate-linked mobility as a development programme of action, interventions and funding to avert, minimise and address climate mobility remain insufficient.
- Climate change significantly impacts development. It costs Africa up to US$15 billion annually and a loss of 5% – 15% of GDP per capita growth.
- Adaptation funding is increasing but remains inconsistent and falls short of the required investment. Only one-third of climate funding for Africa goes towards adaptation; most is in debt instruments.
- Existing adaptation finance frameworks do not explicitly reference climate-linked mobility, which hinders large-scale financial action. Only a small volume of funding and projects explicitly address climate mobility.
- A lack of institutional knowledge, legal and policy frameworks, wrong instruments, lack of local involvement and political will pose major barriers to scaling up climate mobility funding and action.
- Financing climate-linked mobility requires a variety of instruments that complement each other to maximise impact and form a balanced risk portfolio.

Recommendations

Development actors:

- Mainstream climate-linked mobility considerations across programming and funding. Upskill institutions about the cross-sectoral impacts of climate mobility, develop strategies to address it and increase the necessary human and financial resources.
- Leverage and expand existing institutional strengths and expertise to include measures such as climate-resilient infrastructure, early-warning systems, nature-based solutions, water solutions and green livelihoods.
- Prioritise areas severely impacted by climate change and displacement, particularly in fragile and low-income countries.
- Increase the amount of funding directed to climate mobility measures and use a range of flexible instruments to address the context-specific needs of beneficiaries.
- Develop partnerships between development and migration actors to share research and data, and implement mobility interventions.

National governments:

- Treat climate mobility as a development issue and mainstream it throughout relevant sectors including housing, water, livelihoods, services and infrastructure.
- Effective action requires political leadership and coordinated, coherent whole-of-government, whole-of-society responses. Leaders should reject anti-migrant agendas that harm development.
- Identify and pursue adaptation funding opportunities and translate them into implementable projects. Establish a comprehensive and transparent tracking system to monitor climate finance flows, ensuring accurate data on disbursement and impact.
- Adopt and operationalise international climate change and mobility frameworks. This will unlock more funding potential from development funders.
- Empower local communities to lead solutions, including providing them with necessary access to forecasting, data and information.

Introduction

Climate change is significantly impacting Africa's development and economic growth. According to the 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 6th Assessment Report, Africa has already suffered extensive losses and damage, such as biodiversity loss, water scarcity, reduced food production, loss of life and reduced economic growth.[1] According to the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA), more than 54 million individuals in Africa experienced storms, droughts, wildfires, floods and landslides between January 2021 and September 2022.[2]

Climate change is emerging as a leading migration driver in Africa.[3] It is changing the frequency, intensity, duration and locations of both slow- and sudden-onset impacts and posing threats to people, ecosystems and development.[4] It disrupts livelihoods and systems and increasingly contributes directly and indirectly to displacement and migration within countries and across borders. According to the 2022 IPCC report, if global temperatures warm by 1.7°C, 17 – 40 million people in sub-Saharan Africa could migrate internally by 2050. If temperatures warm by 2.5°C, that figure could increase to 56 – 86 million. Climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, undermining development gains and future progress.[5]

Addressing climate-linked mobility is crucial for sustainable development and economic growth

Addressing climate-linked mobility is crucial for sustainable development and economic growth. This requires effective climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, robust legal and policy frameworks and inclusive planning and financing mechanisms that can support the needs of vulnerable communities. It presents both development opportunities and challenges. When migration is safe, voluntary and orderly it can enhance development by promoting agglomeration, skills exchange and remittances. If unmanaged, forced, and unsafe, it poses a considerable threat to sustainable development.

While development actors and funders increasingly recognise the importance of climate-linked mobility, interventions and funding to avert, minimise and address it remain inadequate.[6] The extent to which development actors and financiers are incorporating climate mobility into their plans, funding and programmes is still limited. Efforts to mobilise adaptation financing and implement strategies and instruments in Africa have been slow and face many barriers.[7]

This policy brief explores climate-linked mobility and the barriers that have prevented development actors from maximising the opportunities it offers in Africa. It presents an overview of the nexus between climate change, mobility and development before exploring how climate finance approaches have addressed climate-linked mobility. It details some of the barriers that prevent more effective action and argues that mobility is a critical aspect of climate adaptation necessary to achieve sustainable development.

Climate change, mobility, and development

This policy brief applies the term climate-linked mobility. It includes three types of human mobility as identified by the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change:[8]

- Displacement – predominantly forced movement, usually short-term and within a country
- Migration – voluntary movement either internally or across borders, short-term, temporary or permanent
- Planned relocation – assisted movement, usually carried out by a state to protect people from risks.

The distinctions are not always clear. Mobility is a complex topic that covers a wide range of multifaceted and interlinked factors, making it difficult to identify climate change as the sole migration driver.[9] New conceptual frameworks are being developed to better explain the relationship between climate and migration, but disentangling climate impacts from other drivers remains challenging.[10]

Environmental changes stress social, economic, and political systems, exacerbating vulnerabilities and inequalities and hindering future progress. The degree to

which they lead to displacement or migration depends on the exposure and vulnerability of a particular community or individual. They are more likely to trigger forced migration or involuntary immobility where people are more vulnerable and have less capacity to adapt.

Climate change is a 'fragility amplifier', with the most marginalised people in the most fragile countries suffering the worst effects. In the context of sustainable development, impacts are exacerbating disparities in health, income, gender, employment and security.

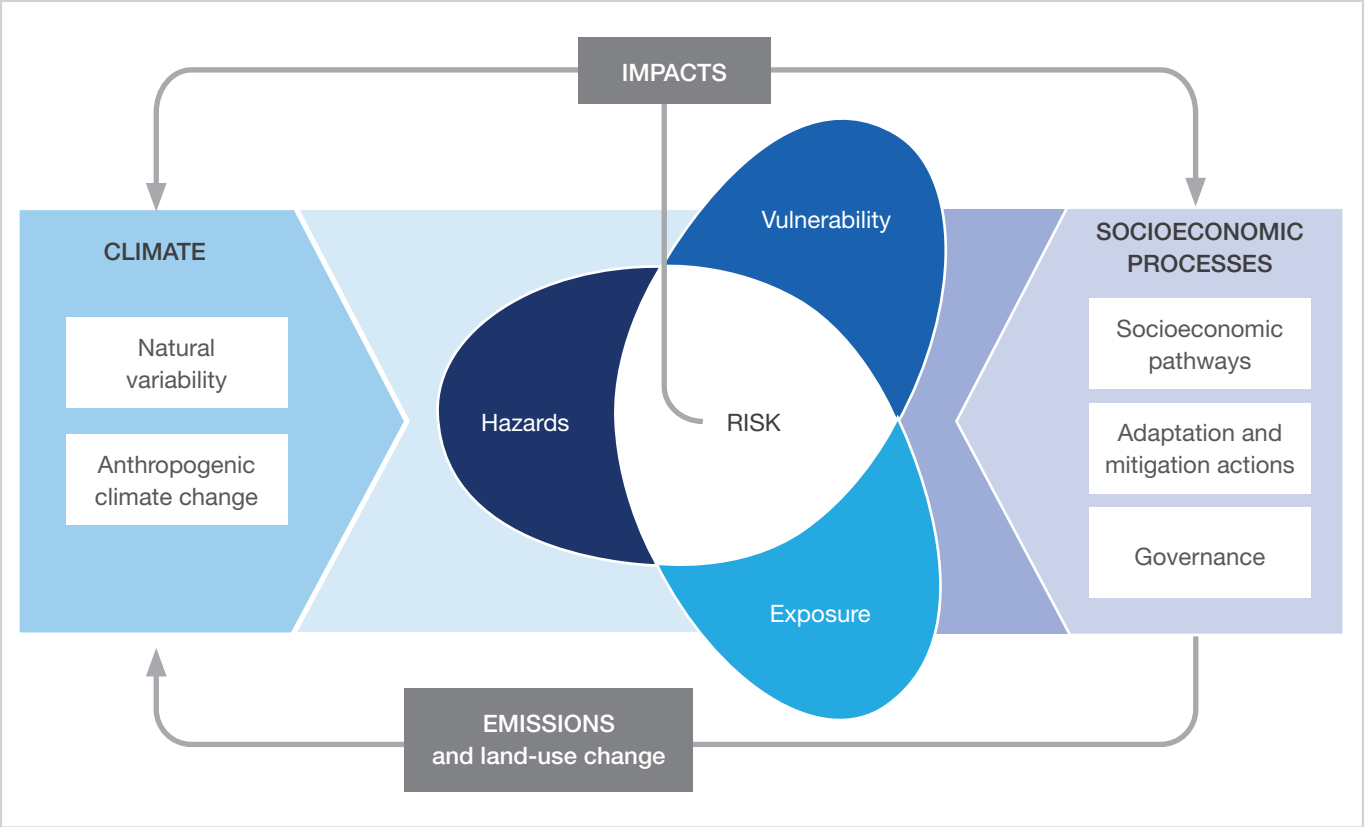
Climate adaptation is directly linked to development. Whereas Africa has only contributed 3% of historical global carbon emissions, according to the African Development Bank (AfDB), climate-related disasters cost the continent up to US$15 billion annually, and the continent has been losing between 5% and 15% of GDP per capita growth due to climate change.[11] Building adaptive capacity against climate change impacts is critical to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.[12]

Adaptation requires significant social, cultural, physical and economic resources. Some of the most climate-vulnerable countries in Africa already face extreme poverty and food insecurity, conflict, weak governance and rule of law, large institutional deficits and undiversified agriculture-based economies.[13] They have limited capacity to build and maintain infrastructure, regulate natural resource usage, preserve ecosystems, resolve conflict, implement long-term planning, attract international funding or engage in diplomacy.[14]

Africa has been losing between 5% and 15% of GDP per capita growth due to climate change

Climate adaptation and development are distinct but overlapping fields and there are important differences between the ways in which practitioners approach and report on their work. This policy brief does not

Chart 1: Risk of climate-related impacts results from the interaction of climate-related hazards with the vulnerability and exposure of human and natural systems



Source: IPCC, 2014

have the scope to engage with these important distinctions and treat adaptation and development as interrelated and mutually supportive, specifically relating to vulnerable communities, where efforts to increase adaptive capacity are intertwined with development.[15] Development and adaptation actors are becoming increasingly convinced of the links and agree that an integrated approach is necessary.[16]

Climate change offers opportunities to build resilient infrastructure, institutions and systems that help communities adapt and advance development agendas.[17] Development measures that enhance socio-economic conditions are paramount to reducing vulnerability to climate impacts and reducing forced immobility or displacement.

Mobility is an important adaptation strategy, allowing people to escape harm or danger. Families can diversify income sources, acquire new skills, increase autonomy and spread household risk through migration. Financial and social remittances from family members play a critical role in development, including enabling adaptive measures.[18] Migration can also alleviate competition over diminishing resources in source communities.

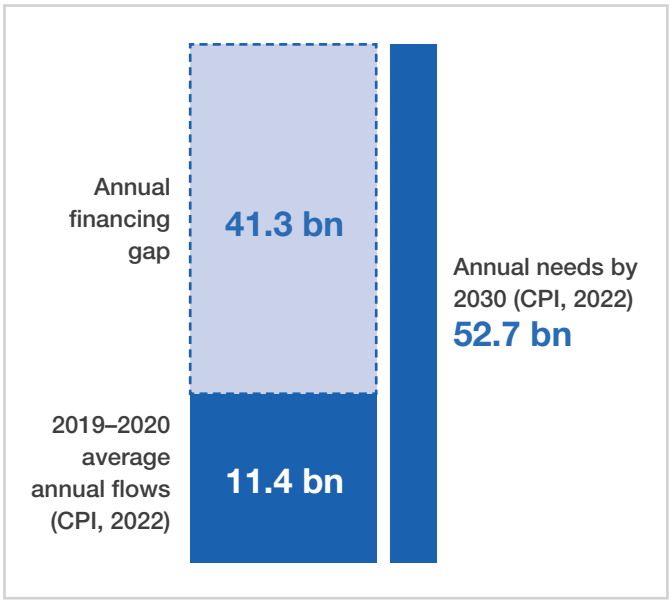
Climate mobility financing in Africa

Climate financing in Africa has been biased towards mitigation over adaptation. While adaptation funding has increased since 2016, it remains inconsistent and falls short of the required investment.[19] The fact that bilateral, multilateral and private sector investments have prioritised mitigation makes it even more difficult to mobilise domestic financial resources.

A GCA analysis of the Nationally Determined Contributions of 51 African countries indicates that until at least 2030 there will be a gap of US$579 billion in adaptation funding. In 2019 and 2020 Africa received an average of US$29.5 billion in total climate finance, only 39% (about US$11.4 billion) of it was allocated to adaptation.[20] Most of the financing provided has been in the form of debt instruments.

No single funding source can cover all climate mobility requirements; it requires a combination of national, multilateral, bilateral, and private sources.[21] Domestic national funding comes primarily from government budgets, loans and instruments such as bonds,

Chart 2: Adaptation finance commitment (US$) vs need in Africa



Source: GCA, 2022

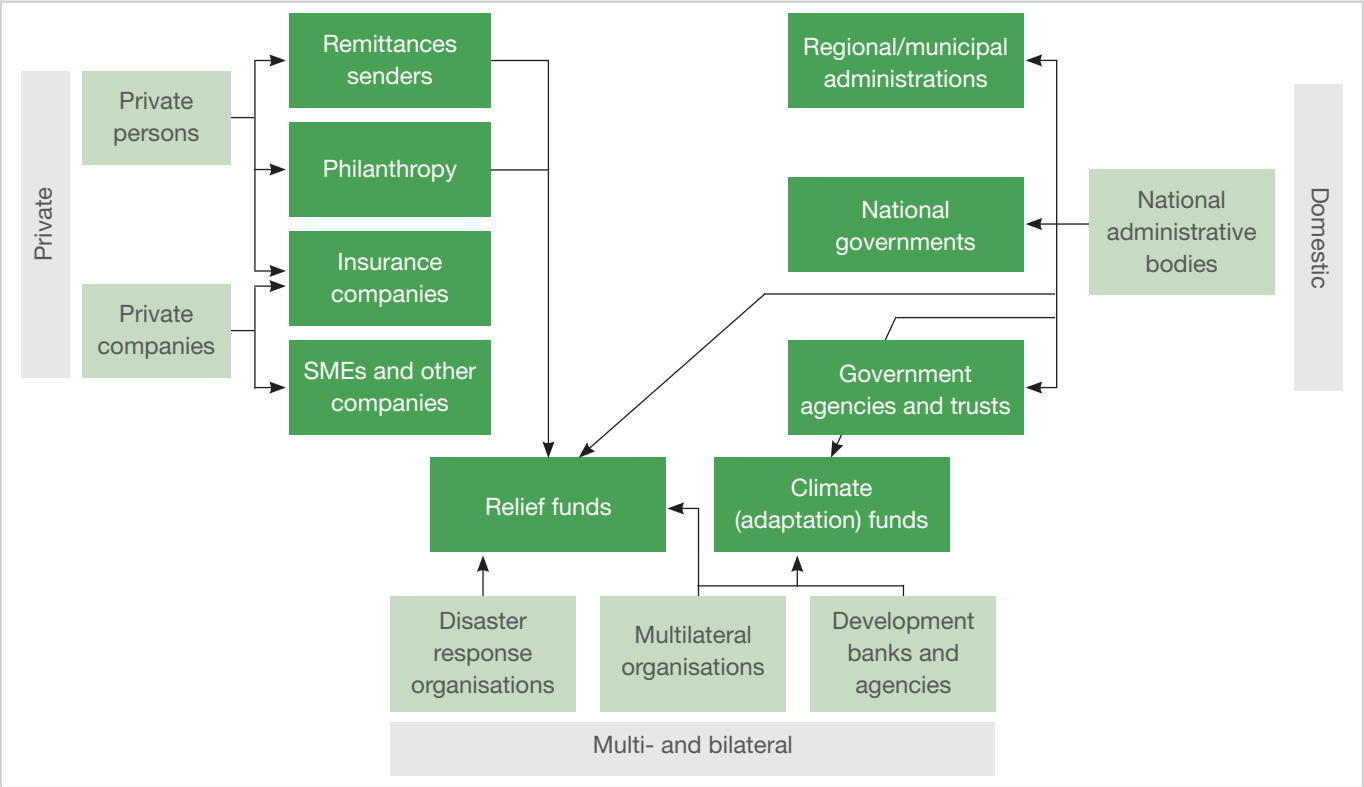
insurance and social protection programmes. Multilateral and bilateral funding comes predominantly through climate funds, development banks and agencies and disaster response organisations.

Private individuals and companies provide philanthropy, insurance and remittances. Remittances are historically the most significant contribution by volume. Blended finance, which uses development financing to mobilise private financing, is a growing source.

Only a small number of projects explicitly address climate mobility in Africa.[22] The International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s broader migration management strategy defines a mobility solution as seeking to avert, minimise and address displacement.[23] Climate mobility solutions involve interventions that help people:

- To stay: Enabling people to stay in place by helping to build resilience to climate impacts. Measures include climate-resilient livelihoods, skills, infrastructure, water management or early warning systems to help minimise and prevent forced displacement.[24]
- To move: Creating an enabling environment to govern and manage migration. Measures may include ensuring legal pathways, investing in new skills and alternative livelihoods or conducting planned relocations where applicable.

Chart 3: Potential sources of climate financing



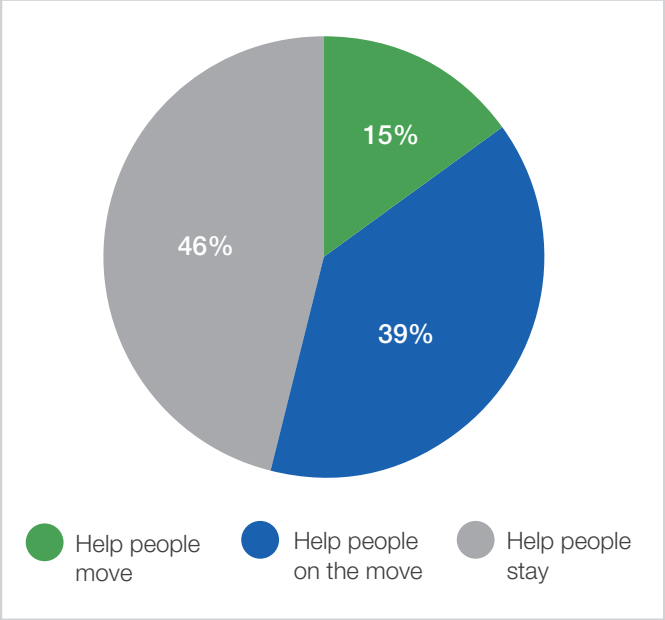
Source: GIZ, 2022

- On the move: Assist and protect people moving voluntarily or removed forcibly and support durable solutions. Measures include helping host communities to prepare by investing in physical and social projects such as climate-resilient infrastructure, green livelihoods and training, microfinancing, housing, healthcare, transport and social benefits. These measures must include people on the move.

It is extremely difficult to estimate funding accurately because there are no clear mobility markers and the climate-mobility nexus is so complex. A non-exhaustive analysis by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) in 2022 identified 54 climate projects funded by major development actors and implementing partners that directly addressed climate mobility.[25] The highest proportion of the projects helped people 'to stay' by building resilience in locations where people have been displaced or are projected to experience climate displacement.

Projects in Africa categorised as 'helping people stay' include development projects that reduce climate exposure through disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, conflict prevention, or support livelihoods and health or encourage participation in climate responses.

Chart 4: Informational analysis of 54 global climate mobility projects



Source: MPI, 2023

Case study

Microinsurance to protect pastoralists in Kenya and Ethiopia[26]

According to the Kenyan government, 70% of the damage caused by drought between 2008 and 2011 was to livestock.[27] Since 2010 the International Livestock Research Institute has rolled out index-based livestock insurance.

The Kenya Livestock Insurance Program was created to provide pastoralists facing recurrent drought in arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya and Ethiopia with some protection to help reduce instability and prevent forced displacement and irregular migration. In 2012 the programme expanded to the Borana region of Ethiopia and was extended again in 2020 to include a drought index for the Sahel and Horn of Africa.

In 2015 the Kenyan government bought a portion of the scheme to cover vulnerable households. In 2020 the programme sought to reach 65 000 pastoralists, with payouts issued on the basis of a forage availability index.

Investing in climate adaptation measures can reduce vulnerability to climate impacts and in turn forced displacement. However, there is not always a direct correlation. Development does not inherently prevent migration, it often provides resources that increase the ability and aspiration to move.[28] Furthermore, while these projects often address some climate and socioeconomic migration drivers, they do not address other factors, such as conflict or access to services.

Most projects that 'help people stay' target climate hotspots and rely on modelling that predicts climate threats and displacement. Modelling is improving rapidly and can help determine where programmes should focus.[29]

Projects in Africa categorised as 'helping people to move' have mostly been planned relocations, but there have been few, particularly in the context of slow-onset disasters. A 2021 study of 308 global planned relocation cases identified only 19 on the continent.[30] For that reason there are few examples of best practices in ensuring relocations are sustainable and effective over time. Planned relocations require community buy-in and should be voluntary, a last resort and used only where the new location will improve the development prospects of everyone involved.[31]

Case study

Relocations in Ghana yield mixed results[32]

In 2003 the government of Ghana began relocation processes with three communities in the Keta municipality: Vodza, Adzido and Kedzi. Rising sea levels, strong tidal surges, shoreline retreat, coastal erosion and flooding had devastated the communities. The Keta Sea Defense Project was a government-led effort to build a sea defence to reclaim lost land and relocate 1 200 households. Households were relocated between 2003 and 2016 to land and government housing about 1.6km from the coast. The community's previous homes have been inundated with seawater. At the time there was no official policy framework for relocations. Post-relocation assessments revealed both good and bad results. Negative outcomes included breaks in family and cultural ties, human rights violations and dissatisfaction with the new locations.

Some families reported unfair processes and a lack of transparency in determining who would receive resources, inadequate space and a lack of jobs, water, sanitation, education and transportation amenities in their new location. Other reports have indicated positive results including improved educational facilities and housing, less exposure to life-threatening climate hazards and improved healthcare facilities.[33] Some households have refused to move despite recurrent tidal surges and environmental deterioration.

Case study

Uganda water investments for refugees improve community relations[34]

Uganda hosts more than 1.4 million refugees. Many are exposed to poor water supply and sanitation and are resented by local communities because of their access to limited resources. The World Bank and International Finance Corporation partnered with the Ugandan National Water and Sewerage Corporation and the Ministry of Water and Environment to improve access to water supply, integrated water resources management, and water and sanitation service provision in refugee-hosting districts. In addition to investing investment in infrastructure development and planning, the project includes capacity-building for local governments to promote sustainable development and peaceful cohabitation. It benefits more than 1.4 million people, including 99 000 refugees. It increases safe water supply, reduces the distance people must travel to access water and sanitation, secures sustainable water sources and improves sanitary conditions. Local communities also benefit from capacity-building activities focused on land use management, farming and water practices.

Projects in Africa categorised as 'helping people on the move' include some that enable social cohesion and integration and support economic development and access to services for migrants and host communities. Examples include infrastructure upgrades, vocational training, waste management and community saving schemes.

Barriers

Substantial adaptation progress is happening across Africa. Adaptation finance flows and the number and quality of comprehensive and integrated national adaptation plans are increasing.[35] However, funding and action continue to fall well short. The AfDB estimates the continent must raise US$124 billion annually to adapt and currently receives only US$28 billion.[36] Adaptation flows targeting Africa are billions less than the lowest cost estimates and urgently need to be increased.[37]

While several adaptation finance frameworks have mobility implications, they do not explicitly reference climate-linked mobility, an omission that hinders large-scale financial action.[38]

Lack of institutional knowledge

Many development funders and actors invest in climate action and in mobility programmes; however, these rarely overlap.[39] Efforts to address the links between climate adaptation and mobility are still relatively new.[40] Effective projects addressing climate-linked mobility require extensive local knowledge of climate change, mobility and the nexus between the two. Most development institutions do not have these workstreams and expertise, or the data, training or frameworks to facilitate them.[41]

Development institutions and governments should treat climate mobility as a development issue and mainstream it throughout their departments and programming. This should include educating staff about the cross-sectoral impact of climate mobility, developing strategies to incorporate it in all work areas and increasing the necessary human and financial resources.

Institutions should leverage and expand their existing institutional strengths and expertise to include measures that help people to stay, to move and on the move, including climate-resilient infrastructure, early-warning systems, nature-based solutions, water solutions and green livelihoods.

Legal and policy frameworks

Appropriate legal and policy frameworks are crucial for unlocking funding and programming. Development funders typically support plans that align with national priorities. It is more challenging for them to fund climate-linked mobility interventions that are not national priorities and do not have relevant laws and policies.

As of 2022, 84% of countries had at least one adaptation planning instrument and the quality continues to improve.[42] Many now incorporate quantified and time-bound targets and gender and indigenous considerations. However, only a small number of countries have adaptation instruments

Chart 5: Status of adaptation planning in Africa, 31 August 2022

Source: UNEP, 2022

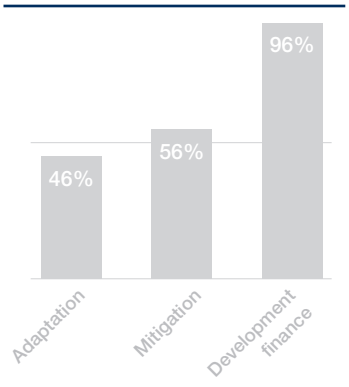
that address climate-linked mobility, especially cross-border movement, and most do not measure community and ecosystem resilience.[43]

Multiple global, regional, sub-regional and national frameworks and plans address the links between climate change and human mobility. National governments should adopt and operationalise these. Translating climate-linked mobility policy and legislative frameworks into national policies will unlock more development assistance. In many cases, this will require technical and financial support from development actors.

Wrong instruments

Climate mobility interventions require flexible and innovative tools. Existing financial products are not ideal, particularly for vulnerable communities. The large portion of adaptation-related financing provided as loans contributes to already-heavy debt burdens. Adaptation finance is also severely underspent.

A 2021 study found the percentage of disbursements that translated into commitments to adaptation projects between 2014 and 2018 was only 46%, compared to mitigation projects (56%) and general development finance (96%).[44] This indicates significant institutional challenges and incorrect instruments. A 2022 study by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusamme- narbeit (GIZ) identified ten financial instruments falling into three risk categories that can could be used effectively to address climate mobility.



PERCENTAGE OF DISBURSEMENTS SPENT

Development funders should use a wider variety of innovative non-debt instruments to finance climate-linked mobility intervention, particularly in vulnerable contexts. These instruments should complement one another to maximise impact and form a balanced risk portfolio.

Lack of local involvement

Proportionately less funding goes to the areas with the highest vulnerabilities and lowest ability to adapt.[45] Development funds tend to flow to countries where donors already have a presence, strong institutional

Chart 6: Financial instruments to address climate mobility

Risk reduction	Forecast-based financing	Anticipatory action before event happens. Early action protocols define responses and triggers for disbursements and actions. Upfront measures such as housing, planned evacuations and transport and early warning systems can mitigate higher losses and avoid displacement.
	Remittances	Money or goods and services sent from migrant workers and diaspora members to networks in home countries can finance disaster relief and adaptation or enable mobility. They can also provide a source of income and enable planning.
	Microcredit	Access to credit can help avoid displacement before or after a disaster or threat. Local infrastructure is required for disbursement.
	Bonds	Debt instruments, where the issuer issues a security to a holder, who pays with interest until repaid. Bond structuring can be flexible. Impact bonds tie rates and repayment to development targets. Catastrophe bonds are insurance products in which maturity and payback are linked to a disaster not happening. Diaspora bonds are purchased by diaspora members.
	Grants, loans and loan forgiveness	Larger loans or grants, usually to a governing entity. Often tied to a specific programme. Governments are recipients, but beneficiaries can be individuals. Concessional loans are granted below market rates. Loan forgiveness can be used to reduce indebtedness and free up resources to respond.
Risk retention	Budget contingency	Provides funds budgeted in advance and drawn upon when climate events occur. It can be provided at national, regional or municipal levels and be disbursed using a range of instruments such as small grants, cash and microcredit. It can prevent forced mobility or facilitate necessary mobility.
	Relocation and trust funds	Ongoing fund to act on climate impacts. It can be established collectively by civil society, government, multilaterals and private actors for specific objectives, such as planned relocation. Pledges can be once-off or regular contributions
	Climate land banks	Trusts to hold land assets for relocations as and when needed for climate-vulnerable people. It could include housing. Land swaps allow people to exchange climate-vulnerable land for banked land.
Risk transfer	Insurance and microinsurance	Transfer risk from policy holder to provider. It can be used at micro or macro levels to claim for loss and damage after event. If paid quickly, it can prevent forced displacement or enable relocation. It is more difficult to define for slow-onset impacts.
	Sovereign risk pools	Geographically different entities join to form a collective insurance fund to reduce the risk of sudden or extreme losses caused by a singular event.

Source: GIZ, 2022

capacities, a perceived ability to implement projects successfully and a sufficiently predictable environment that is likely to generate a return on investment.[46] Within countries, funds flow to wealthier people and areas.[47] Some vulnerable communities have high institutional, political and market barriers and need more financial, technological or human resource capacities to advance fundable products.

Framing migration as a threat can deter policymakers and funders from considering it an adaptation strategy

Despite these challenges, local communities have the most relevant expertise and experience, and priorities determined internationally or nationally often do not match local needs.[48] Failing to engage local leaders and community members can create suspicion and frustration and reduce effectiveness. Local governments, community leaders and community members are best positioned to lead local strategies and should guide research and evidence production.[49] Inclusive tools that enable quick and flexible dispersals are imperative.

Political will

Climate-linked mobility has cross-border implications. However, migration is often framed as a burden or security threat and climate adaptation is often perceived as a domestic issue. Framing migration as a threat can deter policymakers and funders from considering it as an adaptation strategy, particularly internationally.

International migration is highly politicised in some African countries. Anti-migrant policies and xenophobic rhetoric are on the rise in some regions. Development actors prefer to avoid politicised or controversial topics.[50] Projects that fund non-citizens are even more contentious and harder to fund, particularly loan products that must be repaid.[51] Policies that focus on restricting or preventing migration can be disruptive and even exacerbate migration drivers.[52] Creating involuntary immobility by trapping people in climate-vulnerable and resource-constrained areas works against development.

Effective climate action requires political leadership and coordinated, coherent whole-of-government, whole-of-society responses. Decision-makers should be educated about the opportunities offered by climate-linked migration and the costs of pushing anti-migrant agendas. Maximising the development potential of climate-linked migration requires solutions that enable safe, orderly and free movement, support integration in new locations, offer safe returns and reintegration for those who seek it and support efforts to improve circumstances and maximise development benefits.

Conclusion

Climate-linked mobility cuts across all levels and sectors and requires new whole-of-society approaches. The case for using migration as a strategic vehicle for inclusive and sustainable development is strong. The opportunity costs of involuntary immobility, loss of livelihood, mass displacement, uncontrolled informal urban growth, rural production losses and the youth brain drain are known.

The economic costs of insufficient action and the benefits of good planning and implementation are significant. As financial flows related to climate adaptation grow and increasingly target climate-vulnerable communities and countries, development actors and governments have an opportunity to increase significantly the scope and scale of climate-linked mobility interventions on the continent. There is a clear imperative to work together to plan strategically and provide sustainable, long-term solutions to climate-linked mobility.

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About the authors

Aimée-Noël Mbiyozo is a Senior Research Consultant at the Institute for Security Studies. She is a migration expert whose research covers a broad range of intersecting issues, including climate change, gender, refugee rights, violent extremism and citizenship.

Margaret Monyani is a Senior Researcher on migration at the Institute for Security Studies. Her areas of interest include migration governance, gender and development.

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