

# New study reveals attitudes towards climate migrants

June 30 2020, by Jess Fagan

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Credit: Gerd Altmann, Pixabay

A new study from an international team of researchers has looked at how residents in Vietnam and Kenya perceive those forced to migrate because of extreme climates.

The research team, including Dr. Quynh Nguyen from The Australian National University (ANU) say climate-induced migration is becoming

more common.

"Less [developed countries](#) are the most vulnerable to [climate change](#)," Dr. Nguyen said. "We also know most climate change-induced migration—or environmental migration—happens within countries rather than across borders, with people relocating to big cities. This in turn can lead to competition for jobs, put pressure on facilities, and stir existing cultural or ethnic tensions."

The researchers found short term climate events and long-term climate conditions are seen as legitimate reasons to migrate in both countries.

However, the study also showed climate migrants are seen as no more deserving than [economic migrants](#), according to Dr. Nguyen.

"These findings need to be interpreted in the broader socio-economic context of both countries," she said. "Both Vietnam and Kenya are low-income countries in which a lot of people move to cities to improve their economic situation. Because of this, citizens might have a more positive view of economic migration. Whether people have been exposed to many climate migrants could also be a factor. For instance, in Vietnam, residents were significantly less likely to report sympathy towards climate migrants compared to migrants seeking to be reunited with their families."

Dr. Nguyen added, "If residents are less exposed to a certain type of migrant, they might be less welcoming of that group than others with which they are more familiar."

The research has been published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*.

**More information:** Gabriele Spilker et al. Attitudes of urban residents towards environmental migration in Kenya and Vietnam, *Nature Climate*

*Change* (2020). [DOI: 10.1038/s41558-020-0805-1](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-020-0805-1)

Provided by Australian National University

Citation: New study reveals attitudes towards climate migrants (2020, June 30) retrieved 24 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-06-reveals-attitudes-climate-migrants.html>

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