New tools needed to effectively and fairly plan relocation of those displaced by climate

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Current approaches for planning relocation for potentially millions of people affected by climate change and related risks are "woefully inadequate" and risk worsening societal inequities, experts wrote in a policy perspective on June 17 in *Science*. Policymakers and scientists need to rethink how they work together to develop, communicate and carry out relocation plans.

"Relocation involves moving people away from risk and into totally new settings," said the team of experts led by Richard Moss. Moss is a Gerhard R. Andlinger Visiting Fellow at Princeton's Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment and a senior scientist at the Joint Global Change Research Institute (JGCRI), a partnership between Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and the University of Maryland.

Relocation "places demands on science and governance... to manage trade-offs across interests, uncertainties in knowledge, and institutional ambiguity created by overlapping jurisdiction, authorities and expertise," the authors wrote. Past policy failures and deep structural inequalities in society have contributed to many of the displaced people being vulnerable in the first place and have frequently excluded them from planning processes, which makes successful relocation even more difficult. An ethical and responsible approach that serves those affected will require a "pluralistic and integrated approach to action-oriented knowledge."

Moss is chair of the Science for Climate Action Network and has participated in national and international assessments such as the IPCC. The other authors include Patrick Michael Reed, a professor of engineering and Antonia Hadjimichael, a postdoctoral researcher, at Cornell University. Co-author Julie Rozenberg is a senior economist at the World Bank.

The authors said that in addition to diversifying knowledge sources and types, government agencies and decisionmakers need to collaborate with scientists to execute strategies under uncertainty. They said it's important that the research community not only identifies good practices in engineering, financial risk, and other technical analyses but also supports social transformation and capacity building that enables relocating communities to get back on their feet.

They said improving governance will require addressing structural inequalities and many perverse incentives that go against societal goals, such as federal policies that inadvertently encourage people to settle in risk-prone areas. Innovations are needed to address organizational silos, poor planning and risk communication, psychological attachments to place, and dependence of local governments on continued occupation of risky areas for tax revenues. The authors suggest incorporating diverse perspectives in problem framing, varying knowledge sources and types, sampling from a range of plausible futures to evaluate decision options, and using trained intermediaries as possible ways to navigate planned relocation in a more responsible and less damaging way. The hope is that the communities that are relocating will thrive after the relocation, but that relies on a transformation in how science is used, what tools are deployed, and how stakeholders are engaged in the processes, according to the authors.

More information: R.H. Moss at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in College Park MD el al., "Planned relocation: pluralistic and integrated science and governance," *Science* (2021). science.sciencemag.org/cgi/doi … 1126/science.abh3256

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