Acknowledging and Addressing Climate Change Displacement

Exploring climate change vulnerability and environmental refugees in the Mekong Delta through enquiry based field learning and role play

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SFS strives to create transformative study abroad experiences through field-based learning and research.
Australia – Rainforest Studies
Bhutan – Himalayan Studies
Cambodia – Conservation, Ethics and Environmental Change
Costa Rica – Sustainable Development Studies
Tanzania – Wildlife Management Studies
Panama – Tropical Island Biodiversity Studies
Peru – Biodiversity and Development in the Andes-Amazon
Turks & Caicos Islands – Marine Resource Studies
Environmental Ethics and Development – exploring regional environmental issues drawing upon environmental justice principles and customary norms.
Climate change trends

- Increasing temperatures
- Salt water intrusion
- Changing hydrological cycles
- Land subsidence
- Increasing severity and frequency of storms
- Sea level rise
Estimated that 10 million persons will become displaced in the context of climate change in the Mekong Delta (Mekong Migration Network, 2013)
Introduction of issues and class discussion

- Protection gaps
- Migration/ displacement
- Distributive justice
- Responsibility and accountability
- Intergenerational equity
- Skewed vulnerabilities
- Human rights
- Fairness
- Unequal global distribution of impacts
Climate change vulnerability
Kakonen (2008).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Indicators of Vulnerability</th>
<th>Current Conditions</th>
<th>Potential Future Conditions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exposure:</strong> The extent to which a community comes into contact with climate events or specific climate impacts. This includes areas of residency and resource use exposed to different climate events and impacts. For example, houses near the high-water mark may have high exposure to rising sea levels.</td>
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<td><strong>Sensitivity:</strong> The degree to which a community is negatively affected by changes in climate. Sensitivity is largely determined by the relationship of individuals, households, or a community to resources impacted by climate events, and by the degree of dependency on those resources. For example, if “exposed” farms are a main source of food and income for a community, family, or group of households, then they may have a high degree of sensitivity.</td>
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<td><strong>Adaptive capacity:</strong> The potential or capability of a community to adjust to impacts of changing climate. Adaptive capacity is complex. It may be influenced strongly by a few key characteristics, or by a wide range of social characteristics. For example, a household that has diversified sources of income and supplementary livelihood options will likely have higher adaptive capacity to impacts of climate change than those that do not.</td>
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Wongbusarakum and Loper (2011).
For the peoples of the Mekong Delta, some of whom are highly exposed and highly sensitive to climate changes and have a low adaptive capacity – climate change displacement is not a abstract theory.
Climate Change and Migration Roleplay

Students imagine the livelihood and environmental impacts of climate change affecting a farmer and subsistence fisher in An Giang Province 30 years from now.
Kakonen (2008).
Climate Change and Migration Roleplay

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Considering solutions and perspectives

Stakeholder forum on displacement in the context of climate change with students representing local communities, civil society and national government
Final thoughts

Developing awareness and critical engagement with climate induced migration

Applicability to other regional contexts and potential to focus specifically on legal remedies
References


Mekong Migration Network and Asian Migrant Center. 2013. Climate Change and Migration: Exploring the Impacts of Climate Change on People’s Livelihoods and Migration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS). Mekong Migration Network

Questions?

Gratitude to colleagues at The School for Field Studies, Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia and Can Tho University