

Good afternoon!

My name is Johannes and my PhD started right here. I know, someone had to do it!

Now you thought climate migration means migrating to a more agreeable climate. Not so!

This is the Tulun Atoll in the Pacific.

On this atoll sea level has risen so much that the islanders are already evacuating and leaving their island.

John Schellnhuber, eminent scientist and senior advisor to the German government, once said:

“When we talk about a one metre rise in global sea level we are also talking about 500 million people who are going to have to look for new homes. So far we don’t have any instruments to manage this.”

A few years ago I thought about this: if we don’t have any instruments to manage this, why don’t I create one?! I know, very modest.

At the time I considered Australia a fitting place for such a PhD study.

Australia has few people, much land, many cultures, and is a major per capita contributor to the climate migration issue.

I was sure the Australian people would be sympathetic to climate migrants.

And so I came.

I quickly found I was not the only one researching this, and that there was a lively debate going on in the research community.

During my literature review I discovered that this debate was dominated by academics and needed to be informed by climate migrants.

So I designed a humanitarian research project with a strong emphasis on field research and meeting climate migrants.

After a pilot study on the Tulun Atoll I also did other case studies:

- In Bolivia I studied drought and migration.
- In Bangladesh and India I studied cyclones and migration to slums.
- In the Maldives I observed a small island state experiment with artificially raised concrete islands.
- And in the Philippines I studied resettlement villages for typhoon flood victims.

The findings are fascinating.

If you want to know more, you can read my thesis.

Two things I can say:

Finding number 1:

Climate migrants appear to want to stay in their countries - if at all possible.

This makes adaptation measures in their countries an urgent priority.

Finding number 2:

Some climate migration cannot be prevented by mitigation or adaptation.

So it actually makes a lot of sense to tackle this issue before it evolves into a full-blown humanitarian disaster.

In short, disasters destroy development, preparedness protects progress.

And preparedness is what my PhD thesis aims to promote.

In concluding I want to thank World Vision for significant research support.

Thank you for your attention!

[END]

Errata concerning video presentation online:

@ 0:33 (0:58) “small island **state**” should say: “On this **atoll** sea level...”.