

Module 3 Animation

In this e-learning course, we look at different types of human mobility in the context of climate change.

The first mobility type we look at is migration.

How and why people migrate varies greatly.

For example, some leave voluntarily and others have no choice.

Some leave their home temporarily, others leave permanently, and others move within their home country.

Some people migrate across borders.

The exact form that mobility takes with regard to destination and the length of time migrants will stay there depends on a range of factors.

In drought prone areas, for example, some household members may migrate temporarily to diversify the family's livelihood and to become less dependent on the weather.

But in areas that are at risk of sea level rise, it is more common for whole households to migrate permanently.

To uncover some of these nuances, let's look at the case of a family from northern Ghana.

Meet the Nurudong family.

This family consists of the father, mother, and their five children.

They run a small scale farm in northern Ghana.

The eldest son and daughter, Sonuo and Tieme, have finished secondary school.

However, they cannot continue their education because it is too expensive.

Instead, they are now helping their parents on the farm.

Meanwhile, the youngest siblings are still in school.

Recently, droughts have been affecting northern Ghana with greater frequency.

When this happens, the crop yields are low.

During such years, many families in northern Ghana cannot produce enough food to last until the next harvest.

This is also the case for the Nurudong family.

In 2020, for example, the Nurudongs harvested just enough to feed the family for eight months.

In this situation, to avoid hunger, it was clear that they would need to buy food.

After the harvest period in October, there is less farm work to do until the rains return in April or May.

During these months, people usually take a well-deserved rest from the intense farming season.

They repair their houses and take care of their livestock.

However, this year that was not possible for the Nurudongs.

The family needed money to buy food.

The problem they faced is that the opportunities for finding a job in rural areas in northern Ghana are limited.

Therefore, the family decided that Sonuo and Tieme should temporarily migrate to southern Ghana, where there are better opportunities to earn some money.

They left a few weeks after the harvest.

Sonuo went to work on the farm of a relative who had permanently settled in southern Ghana.

Meanwhile, Tieme moved to the city of Kumasi.

Here she worked as a waitress in a restaurant.

After six months of work, they returned with some savings.

They were just in time for the rainy season when work on the farm started again.

With the savings, the family was able to buy food and bridge the months until the next harvest.

In the media and in policy, migration is often seen as a problem.

The experiences of the Nurudong family show that migration can also be an effective way to cope with hardships such as food shortages caused by drought.