

'Future-Proofing' Refugee Self-Reliance

Pilot Research on Refugee Self-Reliance Programming and Climate Risks



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I WONDER WHY
WE KEEP MAKING
THE SAME MISTAKES

ALWAYS
LOCK THIS
DOOR!

MISTAKES

MISTAKES

MISTAKES

MISTAKES

MISTAKES

MISTAKE

REWARD
FOR
SUCCESS

BETJE

South Sudan battles a four-year flood

Unrelenting rain is keeping rivers and wetlands at record highs throughout the year, with devastating consequences

By Harriet Barber, GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY REPORTER
31 January 2023 • 1:38pm

In South Sudan, a new front line of climate change after historic flooding

World News anchor David Muir on hundreds of thousands displaced by floods.



'Uncharted territory': South Sudan's four years of flooding

by Nick Perry



CLIMATE | SOUTH SUDAN
South Sudan floods: A forgotten catastrophe

Isaac Mugabi
07/14/2023

Water from floods that destroyed entire villages and displaced thousands in 2019 still remains — and plans to drain it have stalled. Villagers have given up hope that they will soon return to their submerged homes.

'Biblical' flooding in South Sudan displaces hundreds of thousands

f X e

The climate crisis has triggered 'biblical' flooding in South Sudan displacing hundreds of thousands of residents. CNN's Clarissa Ward reports.

06:28 - Source: [CNN](#)

What is a climate risk?

(Not just a weather event!)

The culmination of the interactions between:

- hazards (e.g. flooding),
- exposure (e.g. people and assets being present in places where they could be harmed), and
- vulnerability (e.g. the likelihood of being adversely affected).

- IPCC



REFUGEES' & IDPs' EXPOSURE TO CLIMATE RELATED HAZARDS

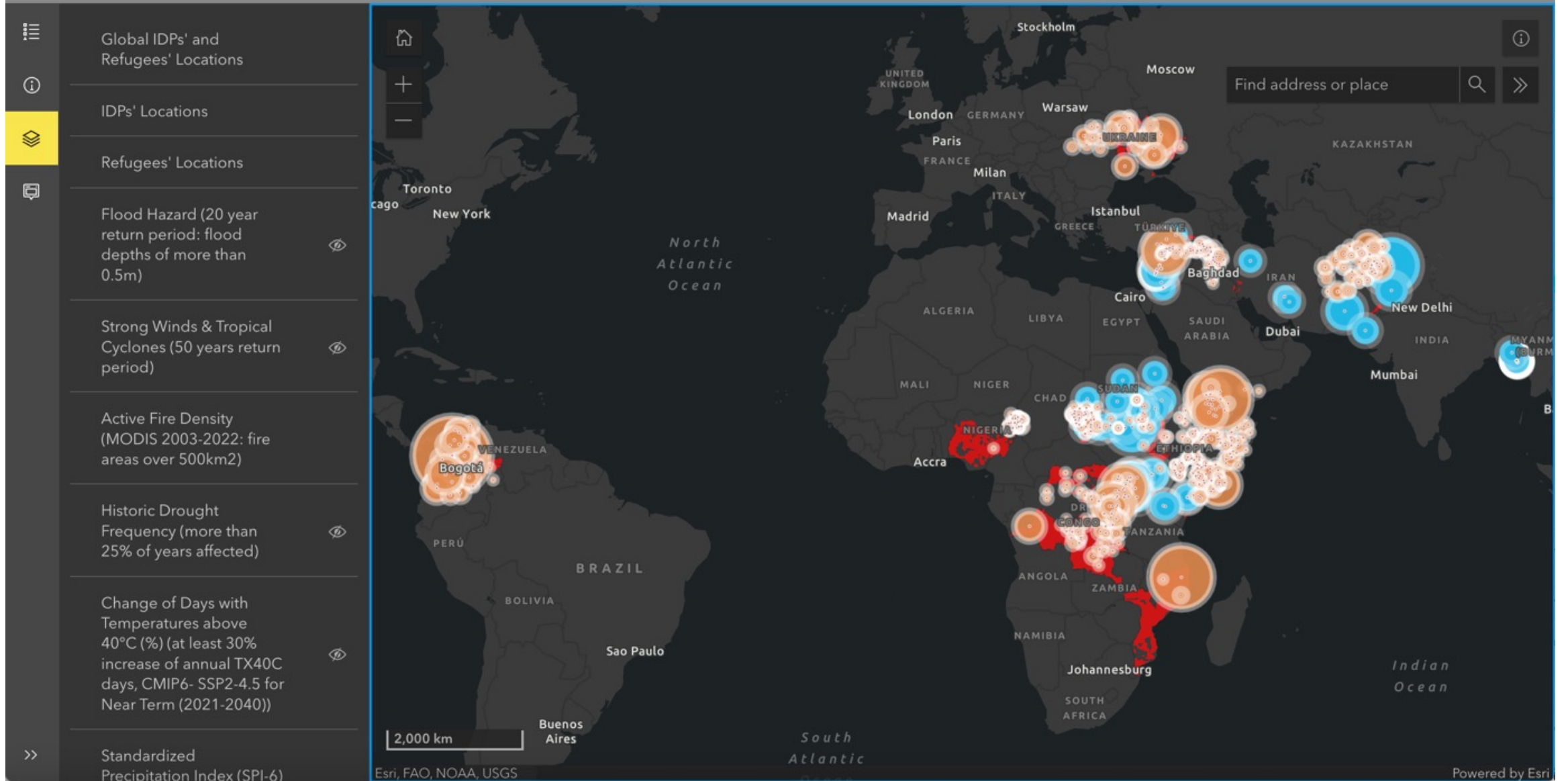


Figure 1. Overview of Online, Interactive Mapping Tool Documenting Refugees' (blue) and IDPs' (orange) Exposure to Climate Related Hazards. Source: Red Cross Climate Centre

Displaced people's exposure to hazards

- High level of exposure to severe weather events for already displaced populations
 - Many IDPs and refugees are already experiencing multiple hazards and are projected to experience more
 - Likelihood of ongoing displacement
 - Precarious livelihoods
 - Of the over 43 million displaced people analysed in this study across 691 sites, 99% of people were exposed to at least one hazard, and only 7 total sites were not in a hazard area.
 - High risk of compounding/cascading events in many sites due to multiple hazards
- Particular vulnerability of IDPs
 - IDPs in two-thirds of the top IDP-hosting countries are living in areas that are already flood-exposed – and projected to face increased extreme rainfall conditions

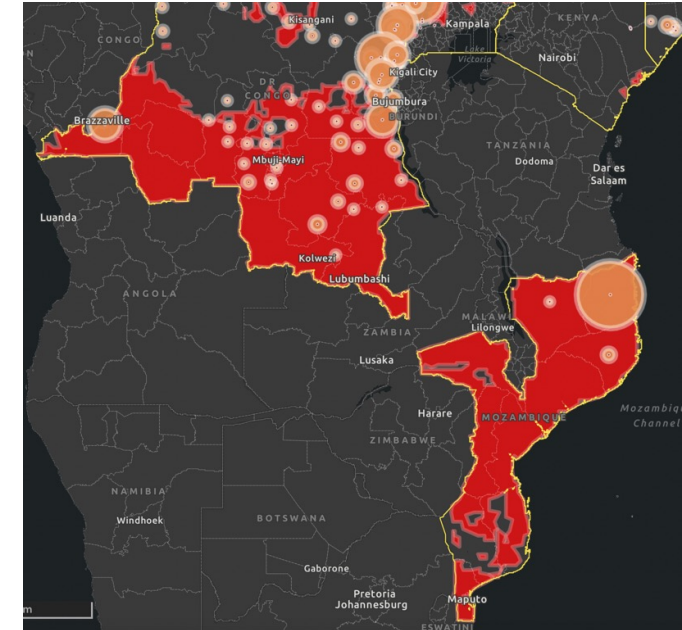
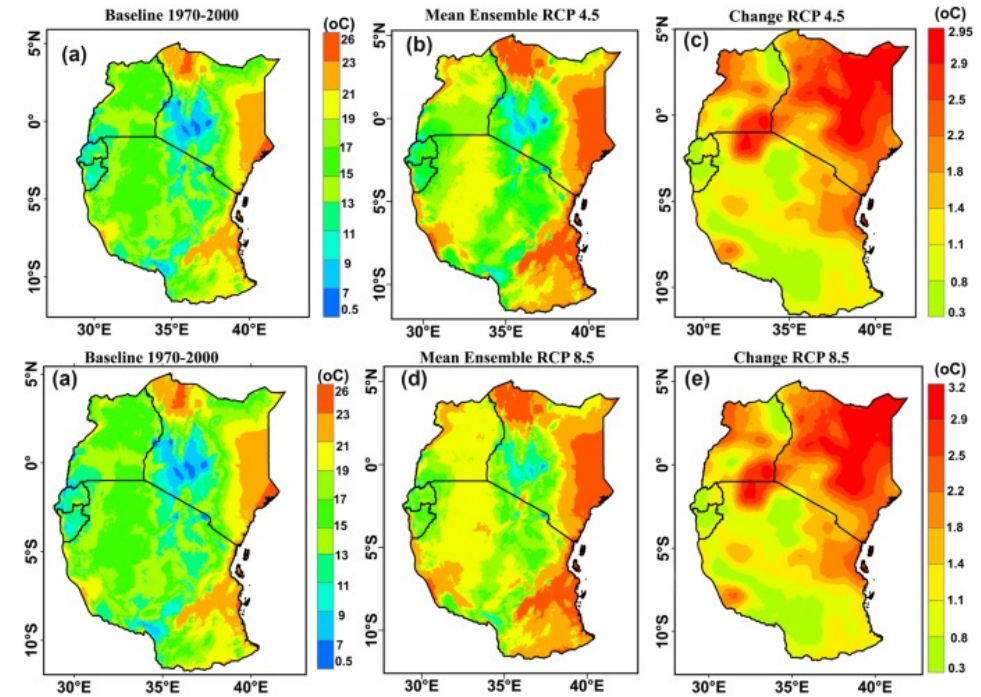


Figure 2. Overview of IDPs' (orange) Exposure to Fire Hazards. Source: Red Cross Climate Centre

'Future-Proofing' Refugee Self-Reliance Programming?

How can the effectiveness of self-reliance programming for refugees be increased given:

- Climate projections in particular regions and countries for the next 10, 20, 30 years and beyond, and
- Existing vulnerabilities and capabilities of refugees and other forcibly displaced people in these areas?



In-Progress Pilot Research

- **'Self-reliance climate risk assessments'**
 - International agencies' livelihoods and self-reliance programming with refugees and IDPs in Eastern/Horn of Africa (currently Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan)
- **Programme types:**
 - Poverty graduation, Market Systems Development, Vocational training
- Was a risk assessment examining climate risks undertaken? Are natural hazards considered in programming? Does programming account for potential maladaptation in the future?



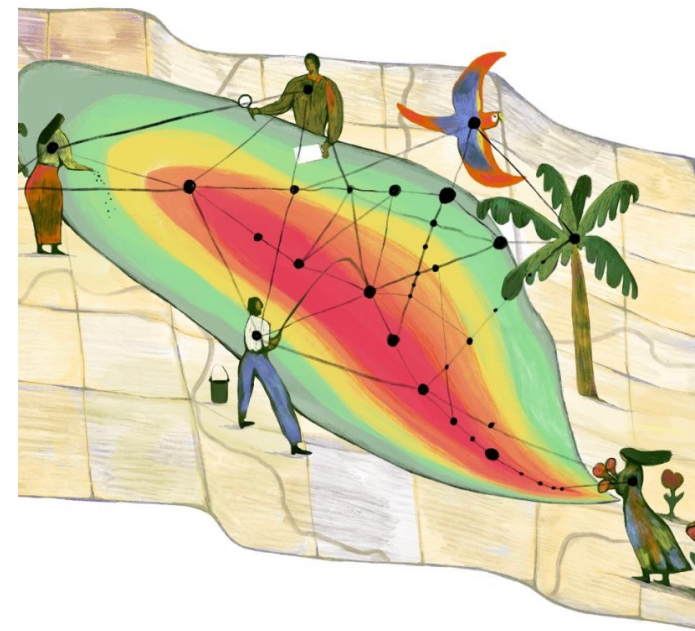
Project aims

- Better understand how climate risks are considered in programme design and implementation
 - Identify future programming needed for displaced people given current climate projections
 - Inform the Self-Reliance Index
- Identify topics and issue areas for a large-scale research grant proposal developed in partnership with agencies



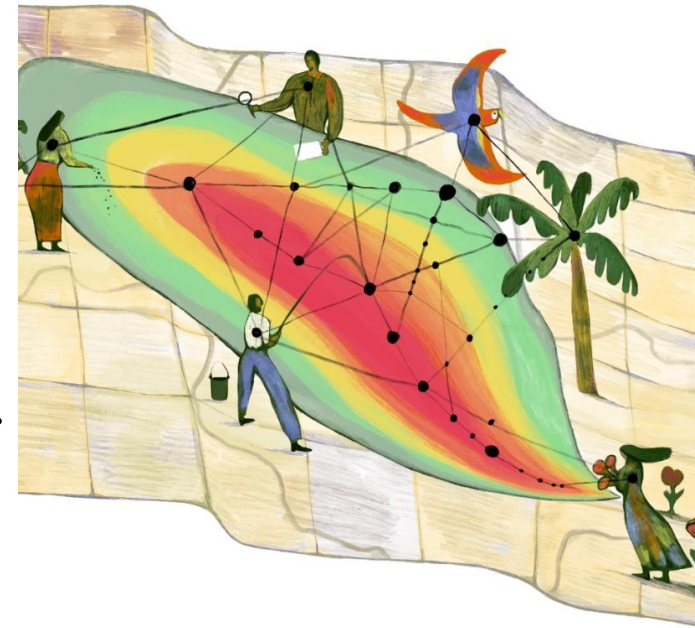
Preliminary findings

- **Common programme adaptations**
 - Drought-resistant seeds in a drought-prone area
 - Fast-growing seed varieties in areas affected by variable rainy seasons
 - Livelihoods diversification/support
- **Risk assessment/matrices that cover climate hazards common in project design**
 - **...But more specificity may improve programme design (and focus on risks)**
 - Moving beyond seasonal forecasts to more regular/localized forecasts
 - More analysis of compound risks (e.g. impact of drought followed by flood)
- **Challenges in obtaining up-to-date forecast information to inform programming**
 - Some reliance on government forecasts, which may not be accurate (or available)
 - Broader challenge of accurate forecasting of particular hazards (e.g. floods)



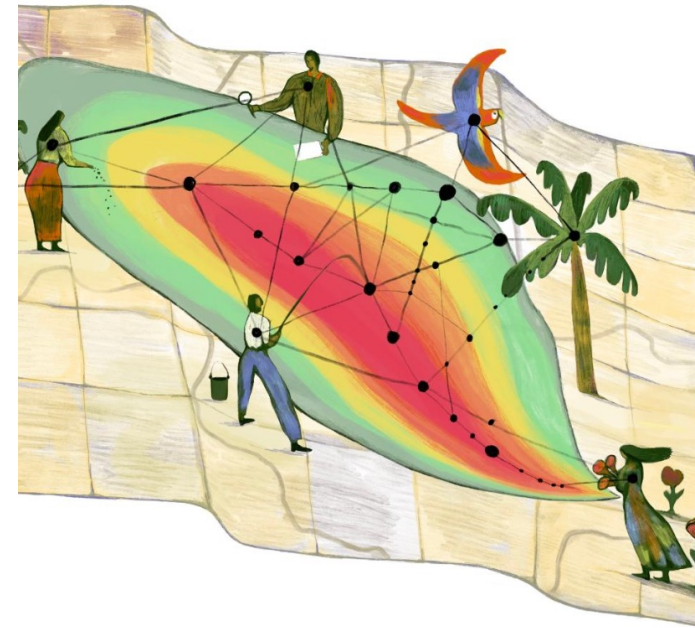
Preliminary findings, ctd.

- **But even when forecasts are provided and hazards are predicted...**
 - Larger-scale response needed than self-reliance programming can offer
 - Is current programming fit-for-purpose in light of (extreme) weather events?
- **Some interventions seen as most helpful are hardest or most expensive**
 - Irrigation services
 - Slow uptake of alternative farming methods, drought-resistant seeds, etc.
- **Concerns over impact of self-reliance programming and people's livelihoods on environmental degradation**
 - Programme emphasis on livelihood outcomes vs. longer-term impact (e.g. drilling boreholes, deforestation for farmland)



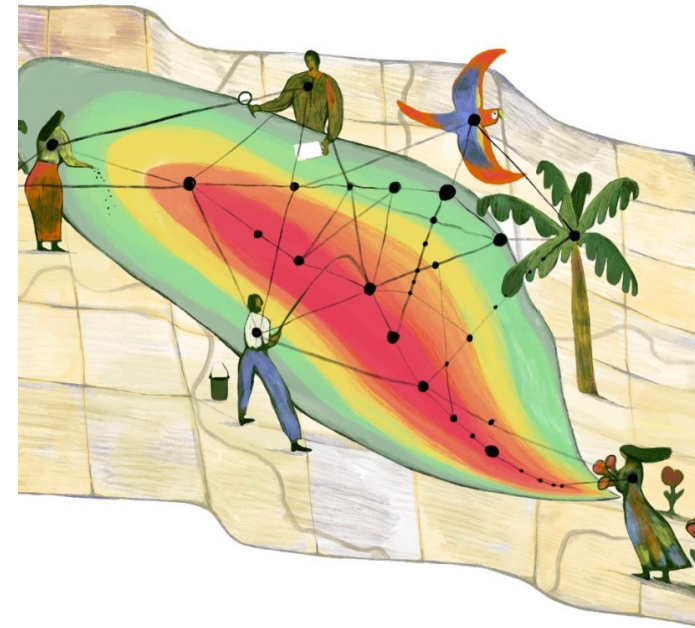
Broader linkages to policy and practice

- **Building on declarations and commitments made at COP28**
 - 'Getting Ahead of Disasters' Charter
 - Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace
 - Ongoing loss and damage agenda
- **UN Secretary-General's Early Warning for All (EW4All) initiative**
 - Aim for everyone on Earth to be covered by early warning systems by 2027
 - Increasing focus on how to include conflict-affected and fragile countries
- **Anticipatory action**
 - Core focus of anticipatory action is on preserving lives and livelihoods
 - Need for more pilots on anticipatory action for displaced people



Outstanding Questions

- Do current adaptations in self-reliance programming fit the type and scale of problems and needs?
- Are donors engaged in economic inclusion, self-reliance, etc., aware of and funding programming related to climate impacts on livelihoods?
- What new ideas or different options for 'future-proofing' self-reliance programming exist that aren't being used (at all/enough)?



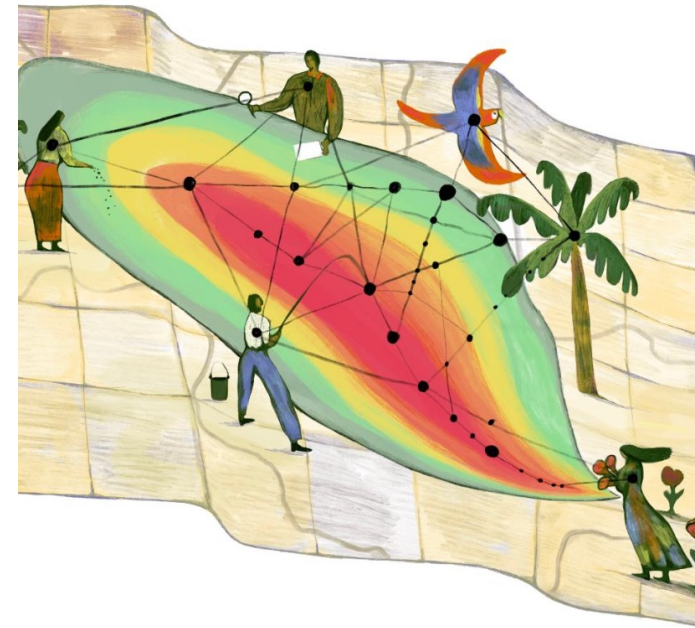
Thank you!

Please be in touch:

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Easton-Calabria, E. (2024) [Examining the role of anticipatory action in complex crises](#). Anticipation Hub.

Jaime, C.; Coughlan de Perez, E.; van Aalst, M.; Easton-Calabria, E. (2024) [Beyond the forecast: knowledge gaps to anticipate disasters in conflict areas with high forced displacement](#). *Environmental Research Letters*.

And stay tuned for forthcoming work:

- Article on refugees and anticipatory action in ODI's Humanitarian Exchange Magazine on 'Climate, Conflict, and Displacement'
- RSRI brief on climate risks and refugees coming out this month!