

Climate change impacts: Bolivia

Rosario lives with her family in the community of Santa Rosa, in the extreme northeast of Bolivia. The Amazon is their home. Previously, many trees were cut down for wood or to open up land for farming. The community is now reforesting native species and making use of the wood and fruits in a sustainable way.

However, the climate has changed. Extreme and uncontrolled floods have hit the area with devastating results. Rosario and her community frequently talk about climate change, how it is affecting them and what can be done.

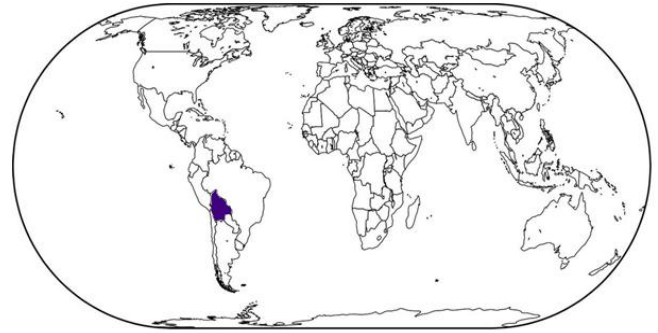
Rosario reflects:

“In the past it was cooler during the day... but now there is more extreme heat and the sun is burning more strongly. For everyone it is a challenge to find the right way of cropping because the weather has changed so much.

We see the main issue is deforestation – this is affecting us all and is impacting on the climate. We are reforesting the land that was destroyed in the past, and we are trying to plant different species and create a balance to ensure we are not contributing to climate change.”

Rosario’s community is standing up and doing their part but they also believe that everybody should be getting involved in this issue – especially governments.

“We expect everybody, especially governments, to discuss it a lot at summits and events, but at the moment we don’t see enough results. This is what is worrying.”



Map adapted from:
http://www.geography.org.uk/downloads/GA_REMapsEckertIV.pdf



Credit: Mark Bushnell/Oxfam

Impacts of climate change

Bolivia is particularly vulnerable to climate change. Poorer people are most affected by it and Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America, with 8% of the population living in extreme poverty¹. Bolivia is also one of the most bio-diverse countries in the world, with many ecosystems that are susceptible to the impacts of climate change. More than half of the country is covered by the Amazon rainforest, where high levels of deforestation have increased the area’s vulnerability to flooding.

In recent years, Bolivia has been one of the countries most affected by natural disasters. Poor communities throughout Bolivia are already experiencing the consequences of climate change: less food security, glacial retreat affecting water availability, more frequent and more intense natural disasters, an increase in mosquito-borne diseases and more forest fires².

¹Percentage of the population living on less than \$1.90 a day at 2011 international prices - World Bank Open Data (2012): <http://data.worldbank.org/>

²Bolivia, Climate change, poverty and adaptation, Oxfam International (2009): <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bolivia-climate-change-adaptation-0911.pdf>

Climate change impacts: Philippines

Llanging (20) lives in Bagumbayan, a farming community on the south island of Mindanao. She loved attending school and was planning to become a vet until unexpected extremes in weather meant that her family's harvest failed and her parents did not make enough money for her to continue her studies.

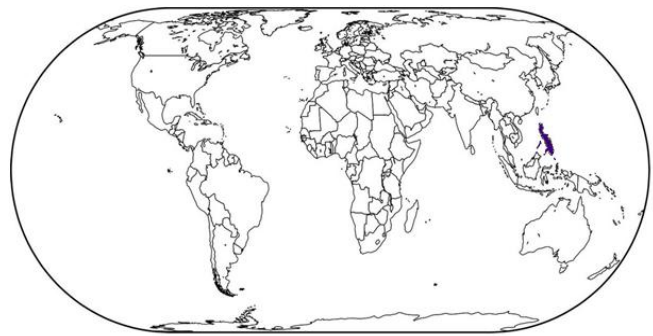
Despite this setback, she is using her energy to support her community in the fight against climate change. Working with groups of young people, she helps to raise voices and concerns to the local government and other people who have the power to make change happen.

Llanging reflects:

“Climate change is a big concern for young people like me. If it's hard to plant and grow crops now, what about the next few decades? What about when we're trying to grow enough food to survive the longer dry spells in the future?”

As a youth leader, I'm inspired to call for other young people to act on climate change as we know for a fact that we will be the ones directly affected by climate change as it worsens in the future – so all of us should do something to care for our environment.

It is important for us to talk with the people in power – the government officials – so they will know what our issues are.”



Map adapted from:

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Credit: Mark Bushnell/Oxfam

Impacts of climate change

The Philippines is one of the countries which has been hardest hit by climate change and, as everywhere, it is the poorer members of communities who are most affected. In the Philippines, 13% of people live in extreme poverty*. The country is regularly struck by typhoons but increasing evidence suggests that these storms are getting stronger and will happen more frequently as a result of climate change. More extreme weather and more natural disasters mean more hunger.

In Mindanao, the second-largest and southernmost major island in the archipelago, most rural families are subsistence farmers who struggle to grow enough food and are particularly vulnerable to changes in the weather. Women are especially at risk, as they traditionally have less education, property and say in decisions that affect them.

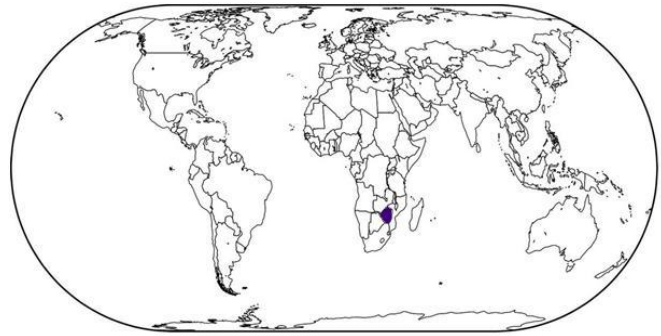
*Percentage of the population living on less than \$1.90 a day at 2011 international prices - World Bank Open Data (2012): <http://data.worldbank.org/>

Climate change impacts: Zimbabwe

Ipaishe, comes from a long line of farmers living in the Gutu district of southern Zimbabwe. Rainfall is becoming increasingly erratic in Zimbabwe making it hard for farmers like Ipaishe to predict when to plant their food crops.

“Our land was fertile and we used to get good harvests but then the weather changed, the rain became really erratic. You work and work but get nothing back if there’s no water.”

Ipaishe, along with other women in her community, is taking part in an irrigation project, trying to adapt and continue to grow crops despite the decreasing rainfall. These women are using their experience to campaign for support for farmers with climate change adaptation techniques. This will help to ensure farmers in Zimbabwe can grow enough food to feed themselves – whatever the weather.



Map adapted from:
http://www.geography.org.uk/downloads/GA_REMapsEckertIV.pdf



Image info: Ipaishe inspects her field of wheat, not yet ready for harvest.

Credit: Annie Bungeroth/Oxfam

Ipaishe reflects:

“Over the last ten years the climate has changed. If the rains are too little, it affects our way of life. If the rains are more than we need, then it drastically affects our life as well. We had a time where there was a lot of rain and all of our crops were destroyed and so we couldn’t harvest any food. Another time the rains came as normal but went very early, and the crops wilted and died due to the heat.

Looking at the problem we currently face, we all have a responsibility. It starts from us as farmers – we should stop cutting down and burning trees. Then we will be able to share our concerns with the people in charge so they can begin to solve the problems.”

Impacts of climate change

In Zimbabwe, climate change is affecting many people’s lives, particularly the poorer members of communities. Climate change is having an impact through changes in Zimbabwe’s temperature and rainfall patterns, as well as an increasing frequency and intensity of drought and flooding.

In Gutu district, in southern Zimbabwe, it is dry and dusty with very low rainfall. Erratic and decreasing rainfall makes it hard for farmers to predict when to plant. Without the rains, nothing grows and people go hungry.

Climate change impacts: United Kingdom

Liz is a small holding farmer who lives on the Somerset Levels in southern England. As a result of excessive rainfall in December 2013, huge areas of the land were flooded. Liz had to sell her poultry, sheep and pigs early and faced several evacuation orders from her house. She and her family had to move their furniture and other possessions to the first floor of their house to protect them from water damage. Homes and farms in her area were under water for over two months.

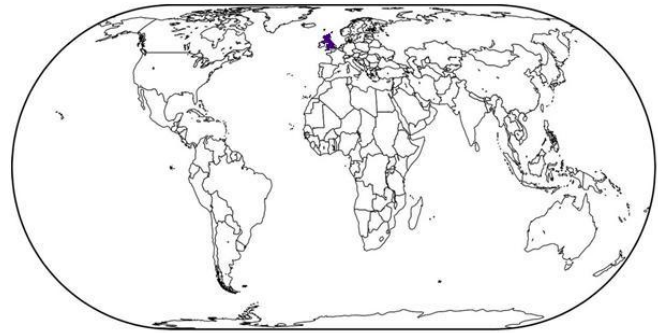
While it's not unusual for the Somerset Levels to flood, the winter flooding of 2013/14 was exceptionally bad. Liz has joined a local cluster group, set up after the floods, whose Chair is on the Flooding on the Levels Action Group (FLAG). These cluster groups are working to ensure that local voices are heard for the government's future flood protection plans.

Liz reflects:

"We have to accept that the climate has changed. We're getting wetter, warmer winters; we're getting extreme weather that we've never got before.

The devastation of all the houses with the water lapping around them and the people gone and children's toys floating away. I was just overwhelmed. I've never seen anything like it. It has made me feel very insecure. It's very easy to say it's a devastating effect but it really does cloud the rest of your life that these things are out of your control.

I think it's very important for people to get together, to all be singing from the same hymn sheet, raising their voices saying we want people that can act to listen."



Map adapted from:
http://www.geography.org.uk/downloads/GA_REMapsEckertIV.pdf



Image info: Liz sits outside her home on top of sandbags placed to protect their home.

Credit: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam

Impacts of climate change

In early 2014, more than 5,000 properties and thousands of hectares of farmland across England and Wales were flooded during the wettest winter since records began in 1776. The Met Office said there could be a link between the record rainfall and climate change, and called for more research. Flooding affects poorer people more than richer people because, for example, their homes and possessions are less likely to be insured.

Farmers have warned that the changing weather patterns could bring new challenges for growing and producing food.