

CRAZY CLIMATE

'My father bought his land through hard work, but the river took it...'

Champa's story



Champa outside her home in Bangladesh



Bangladeshi villagers wade through floodwaters to get clean water

Champa Hatun is 12 and is afraid of the river. She lives in Bangladesh, southeast Asia, with her parents and four brothers and sisters. They live in a tiny one-room hut on the River Ganges. They lost their land and home when the river flooded.

Leaving home

Bangladesh gets flooded more often than any other country in the world. The land is very flat. Scientists think that if global warming continues and the sea levels rise by 45cm, 10 per cent of it will be under water. If that happens, 5.5 million people would have to find somewhere else to live – that's equivalent to almost the whole population of Scotland.*

The floods in 2004 and 2007 caused lots of damage. Like Champa, many people had to move because their homes were destroyed. Scientists think that by 2050 climate change will make more than 1 billion people around the world leave their homes.

Champa has got used to her new home but doesn't want to move again. She wants climate change to stop. 'We don't know where we'll go when the river reaches this place. We'll have to move again.'

Food and clean water

In Bangladesh, Christian Aid works with families who have been affected by floods. It gives them food and helps to make the water clean and safe to drink, because when floodwater gets in the wells it makes the drinking water dirty. Christian Aid helps villages rebuild homes and lends families money so they can buy seeds to replace crops lost in the floods.

Christian Aid also helps families prepare for future floods, building shelters that are raised off the ground, so people have a safe place to go when the floods come. People can also learn first aid skills and how to warn others that the floods are coming. These things can help save many lives.

Champa's family borrowed money so they could rent some land to grow rice and to pay for Champa and her brothers and sisters to go to school. Champa wants to finish school so that she can earn some money and help her family 'by making sure we have a safe place to live'.

* Scotland's estimated population on 30 June 2006 was 5,116,900 (figure from the General Register Office for Scotland).

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Fatimata's story

'People and animals die because it's too hot.'



Best friends – Aissata (left) and Fatimata (right)



Drought makes the earth dry and cracked

Fatimata Louty Ba is 12 and her best friend Aissata Abdourahmane Sall is 11. They think the hardest thing about living in northern Senegal, west Africa, is the heat and wind. Senegal has not had much rain for the last 30 years and lots of trees have been chopped down to use as firewood. Without trees, the healthy soil gets blown away, and crops don't grow well. Farmers now find it very hard to earn a living and families often do not have enough to eat.

Changing land

Some of the older people remember a time when the land looked very different. Houleymata Diallo, 60, says. 'As time has gone by, the trees have gone.'

Abdoulaye Noliaye, 57, was a farmer before the drought came and the trees were chopped down. He thinks more of the land is turning to desert. 'The desert... gives us lots of sun, causing lots of wind to blow, taking all the nutrients [goodness] from the soil.' He is now president of a local group that protects the earth. Christian Aid helps the group learn how to plant and care for trees.

Planting trees

Trees are helpful because they...

- **balance the gases:** trees soak up gases, like CO₂, which cause global warming, and make other gases, like oxygen, which people need to breathe
- **bring rain:** trees 'breathe out' oxygen and water vapour. The water vapour collects in the air to form clouds. And clouds bring rain!
- **produce fruit:** such as mangos and lemons, giving farmers food for their families and something to sell
- **keep healthy soil in place:** trees help hold the soil in place and stop the wind from blowing it away
- **stop the land from becoming desert:** trees help keep water in the ground.