

Could Climate Change Keep Kids Out of School? A Q&A with Environmental Sociologist and Demographer, Heather Randell

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SESYNC Postdoctoral Fellow, Heather Randell

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Education is seen as a key tool for building resilience to climate change in the developing world. But new research shows that climate change could also make it harder to keep kids in school and ensure they get the best out of their time in the classroom.

[Heather Randell](#) [1], a postdoctoral fellow at the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC) studies the relationships between environmental change, development, and human health and wellbeing. Her research focuses on the social processes underlying migration, the links between development and rural livelihoods, and the social and health impacts of environmental change.

In the November issue of [Global Environmental Change](#) [2], Randell and co-author Clark Gray of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, published the results of a study on how climate variability competes with schooling in Ethiopia and could lower adaptive capacity for generations. “Investments in education serve as an important pathway out of poverty,” they write, “yet reduced agricultural productivity due to droughts or temperature shocks may affect educational attainment if children receive poorer nutrition during early childhood, are required to participate in household income generation during schooling ages, or if households can no longer pay for school-related expenses.”

SESYNC fellow Lisa Palmer talked with Randell about the study, why it’s important, and what comes next. The Wilson Center published an edited excerpt of their conversation on the [New Security Beat](#)

[blog](#) [3].

Associated SESYNC Researcher(s):

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Audience:

[Researcher](#) [5]

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[2] <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378016302643>

[3] <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2016/11/climate-change-kids-school-qa-environmental-sociologist-demographer-heat-her-randell/>

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