

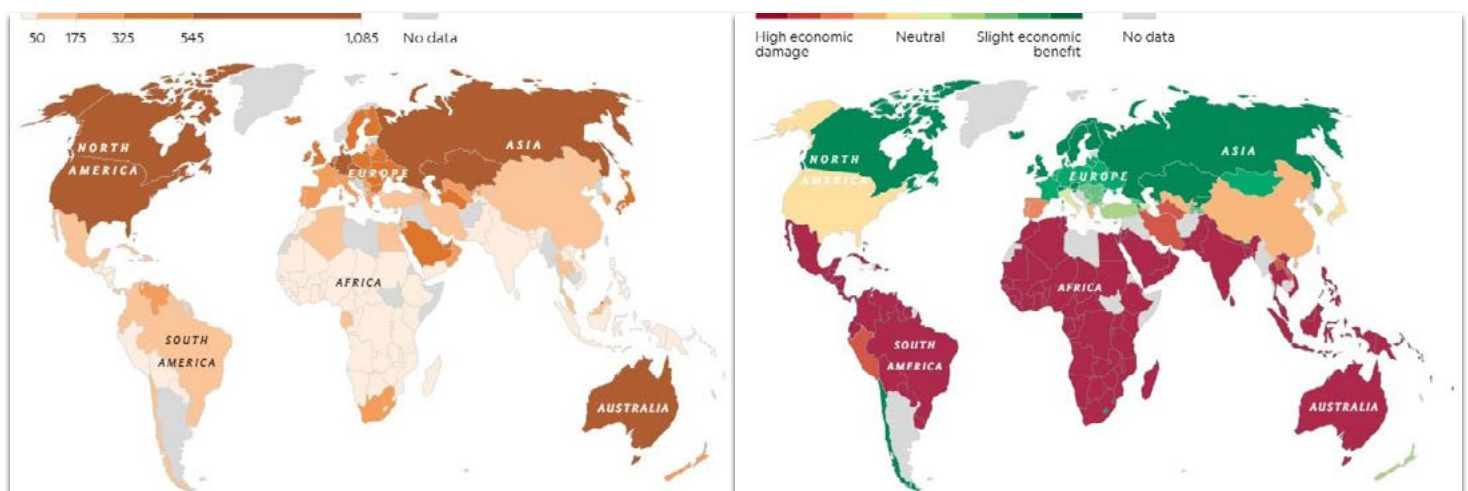
# Countries Most at Risk

Climate change does not affect the planet equally.

Some countries are at a much higher risk of being impacted. For example, near to or south of the equator, where many of the world's poorest countries are located, are more likely to experience the effects of climate change. These countries tend to suffer from more extreme weather events such as hurricanes, flooding and heat waves, which can result in millions of dollars of damage including loss of housing and electricity, contaminated water supplies, healthcare costs and much more.

Many developing nations struggle to recover from the impacts of climate change and have few resources to help protect themselves from future catastrophes. In contrast, more developed countries have the ability to mitigate the impacts of climate change e.g. by building flood defences or harvesting water. They also have dedicated budgets for disaster recovery and climate change putting them at much lower risk.

Unfortunately, the countries that have the fewest resources to battle climate change are also the ones contributing to it the least. The maps below highlight this inequality showing CO2 emissions per person, per country, on the left, and the impact climate change has had on the economy to the right. As you can see many of the green areas (i.e. those least impacted) have the highest emissions. It is important to note that the impact map below does not take into account the effect climate change has on individuals such as mental or physical health issues, homelessness and loss of life.



Map Source: Noah S. Diffenbaugh (Global warming has increased global economic inequality, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, May 2019) Via [NationalGeographic.com](http://NationalGeographic.com)

It is vital for developed countries to recognise this inequality and increase their efforts to reduce emissions whilst supporting countries with fewer resources. There can be an "out of sight out of mind" attitude and this is where our youth activists come in! Lots of young people are now fighting for equity and climate justice. The three activists mentioned below come from high risk countries but are based in developed countries and are standing up to represent the nations most impacted by climate change.

# Aneesa Khan

Born  
**1995/6**



More info:

- [Sustain US](#)
- [Oil Change International](#)
- [Young people can change the future](#)



*Image credit: globalwitness.org*

Born in India, and raised in Oman, Aneesa Khan knows first-hand the impacts of the fossil fuel industry and climate change. In 2015, at the same time world leaders were signing the Paris Climate Agreement, Aneesa's hometown of Chennai, India was hit by catastrophic floods. She knew that sitting around talking about what to do wasn't enough and action needed to be taken immediately.

This led her to work for multiple climate focused charities including: Friends of Earth, The Wilderness Society and Earth in Brackets before becoming the executive director for SustainUS. During COP24 in 2017, Aneesa led a delegation confronting climate leaders on their lack of progress. A key message from their team was: **"Those most impacted by climate change, international trade agreements, and UN treaties are not at the decision-making table"**.

Aneesa spends her time inspiring young people to get involved with climate justice and telling the stories of those most impacted by climate change, all while pressuring the large polluting industries to make the changes needed to fight climate change. She has recently completed a Masters in Environmental Policy and Regulation at The London School of Economics and been appointed the communications officer at Oil Change International.





# Mya – Rose Craig

Born  
2002



More info:

- [birdgirl](#)
- [Wikipedia](#)



Image credit: Twitter @birdgirluk



Mya-Rose is a British, Bangladeshi ornithologist also known as Birdgirl. Her expertise and passion for birds and nature led her to become the youngest British person to receive an honorary doctorate.

The University of Bristol awarded this in recognition of the non-profit organisation she set up at just 14 years old, Black2Nature. The main focus of Black2Nature is providing “equal access to nature for all”.

Mya-Rose runs outdoor nature camps for visible minority ethnic children and young adults inspiring them to fall in love with wildlife and encouraging them to stand up for their planet.

She has spent her life fighting for environmental and racial justice and has recently released a book ‘We Have a Dream’ featuring the climate stories of 30 young indigenous and people of colour.

**“My family in Bangladesh are already suffering because of climate breakdown. My grandfather’s village had their rice crop swept away by unseasonal flooding. There are a million stories like this.”**

She is a prominent activist and speaker who has completed a TED talk, featured on TV, written multiple articles, led campaigns and to top it all off she is the youngest person to see half the world’s birds.



# Vic Barrett

Born  
**2002**



More info:

- [Global Kids](#)
- [Alliance for Climate Education](#)



*Image credit: Alliance for Climate Education*

Vic Barrett was only 12 when Hurricane Sandy hit his hometown of New York: the power was cut off, water supplies were contaminated and houses were destroyed. His community was left broken.

Hurricane Sandy shone a light on climate inequality in the US as the majority of areas severely impacted were predominantly African-American. A study showed that only 14% of people in these communities had home insurance or flood prevention measures, compared to 86% in white neighbourhoods. Not long after this, Vic joined [Global Kids](#), an organisation that works with underserved communities to educate and inspire youths to take action on critical world issues.

Vic belongs to the Afro-Indigenous [Garifuna](#) community who settled in Honduras hundreds of years ago. This community has already been affected by climate change and rising sea levels. His personal experiences and indigenous roots led him on a path to fight for climate justice standing up for everyone disproportionately impacted by climate change.

**“I’m young and I’m Latinx and I’m Black and I’m queer and I’m a first-generation American. This (Climate Justice) is something that really affects a lot of the identities that I hold and a lot of people like me.’ And I just couldn’t ignore it after that.” “When you have this lived experience of feeling unheard or unlistened to, or ignored, you kind of want to prevent that for other people”**

In 2015 Vic joined a group of environmentalists who have taken on the US Government in [Juliana Vs. United States](#). The lawsuit called for a more progressive plan to reduce CO2 emissions and claimed that by allowing activities that harmed the climate the government had violated youth rights.



# South America

South America is a fascinating continent because it has a really varied range of climates and environments. The famous Amazon rainforest is home to thousands of species of trees, birds and fish, and hundreds of mammals. The Atacama desert is the driest sandy desert in the world, receiving less than 1mm of rain each year. The Andes is the longest mountain range in the world - about 5,500 miles long. That's roughly the same distance you'd cover if you flew from Edinburgh to Shanghai!

There are 14 countries in South America. Because the physical landscape across the continent is so varied, each nation is being affected in very different ways by climate change.



*Image credit: National Geographic*

## How are South American countries being affected by climate change?

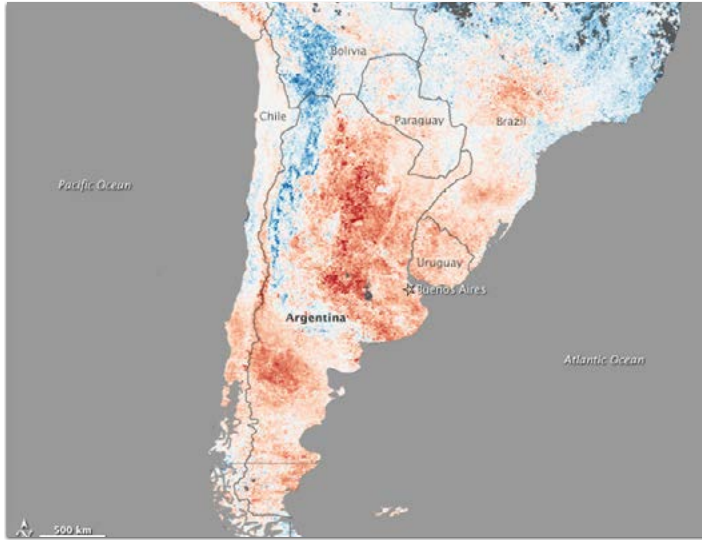
### Brazil

The largest country in South America is Brazil - it's about three times bigger than the second-largest country, Argentina. It is home to 211 million people and over 220 million cows - only India has a bigger cow population. Having so many cows is bad for the environment - a lot of carbon dioxide is created when producing feed for the animals and transporting them. Not only that, but cows belch a lot of methane, another greenhouse gas.



*Image credit: Pixabay*

These huge farms also contribute to another large climate change problem in Brazil: deforestation. Large areas of the Amazon rainforest have been cleared to make space for livestock to graze. Between the summers of 2017 and 2018, about 3000 square miles of the rainforest was cut down, according to satellite images. That's a bigger area than the whole of Aberdeenshire - all within one year. Deforestation is a big climate change issue because trees absorb carbon dioxide and stop it from going into the atmosphere. By cutting them down, the carbon dioxide can't be absorbed - and if the wood is burned, that releases it all back into the atmosphere again.



*Image credit: NASA Earth Observatory*

## Argentina

Argentina is predicted to be hit quite hard by climate change, particularly due to increases in heat waves and droughts. In December 2013, Argentina was hit by a severe heatwave where almost every single part of the country was much hotter than normal. Some areas were 15°C warmer than they would normally be at that time of year. So many people turned on the air conditioning to deal with the heat that there ended up being widespread power shortages.

The map above shows how hot Argentina got during this heat wave. The white areas are those where the temperature was the same as the average in previous years. However, you can see that most areas are orange or red, which shows that they were far hotter than normal.

## Venezuela

Other South American countries are also vulnerable to weather changes that are predicted to increase due to climate change. For example, Venezuela is experiencing droughts and has lost four glaciers since the 1990s, but there is unrest within the country due to problems within the government, meaning climate change has not been a priority. Their economy also relies heavily on money made from fossil fuels.

## Paraguay

Paraguay on the other hand generates almost all of its electricity through hydropower instead of fossil fuels. Unfortunately, it is experiencing higher amounts of rainfall and flooding due to storms. This can disrupt supplies of electricity and water, and cut off roads to access rural areas of the country. 40% of the population live in rural areas so this puts a lot of people at risk of being cut off from the rest of the country.



*Image credit: AP News*



## Who are some of the youth activists campaigning for change?

We have picked three activists from South America who are pushing for governments to take responsibility and act to combat climate change. All three of them are indigenous people who have been adversely affected by the destruction and exploitation of the land they have grown up on. Indigenous groups have intimate knowledge of their land and can offer a lot of wisdom about how to tackle problems like the ones arising due to climate change. You can learn more about current work being done via our [Indigenous Solutions resource](#), and about more Indigenous activists in the [Indigenous Peoples](#) section of this resource.

## Activity: Make an Animoto Video

Inspired by Erisvan Bone Guajajara making videos about issues important in his life, we want you to try making a video of your own! If you don't know where to begin, you can try using [Animoto](#). It is a free website where you can use different pictures, GIFs, text and music to make your own video.

First, though, have a think about what you would like your video to be about. Consider the following:

1. Who or what am I talking about? - Is it an inspiring person, or an interesting topic? How is the person or topic important?
2. What information or stories can I share? - Any fun facts or exciting tales? You want your audience to watch to the end, so keep it interesting!
3. What do I want my audience to take from this? - Are you teaching them something, or do you just want them to have a fun time watching it? Are you making them think? Laugh? Cry? All of the above?

You might want to write down some of your ideas. Then, once you are ready to start making your video, head over to Animoto and make an account (it's free!).

There are more options for you to experiment with, but we'll leave that to you! We have made a video of our own about COP26 so you can see the kind of thing you can make. Click below



## Artemisia Xakriabá

In September 2019 many young people went to New York to take part in a Global Climate Strike. Artemisa, who was 19 years old then, addressed thousands of people in the audience to explain the plight of the Xakriabá people in her home country of Brazil.

She stated clearly that the Amazon is burning, with the rainforest being cut down and periods of drought affecting the country because the government is not putting policies into place to protect the land. Because the government is treating the land badly, the effects of climate change are more severe. This is particularly damaging for indigenous groups like the Xakriabá because they live closely alongside nature:



*Image credit: Washington Post*

Born  
**2000**



**“We, the indigenous peoples, are the children of nature, so we fight for our Mother Earth, because the fight for Mother Earth is the mother of all other fights. We are fighting for your lives. We are fighting for our lives. We are fighting for our sacred territory.”**

The Xakriabá people are protesting against the actions of the president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, following his approval of using the land they live on for mining and farming. They are also campaigning for the government to take action against the spread of wildfires in the rainforest.

Artemisa says that the best way you can help the Xakriabá people, even from the other side of the world, is to make sure you don't buy products that are linked to deforestation in the Amazon. It can be hard to know if something you've bought is linked or not, but a good way to see if a product is ethical is to look out for one or more of the following labels on the packaging:

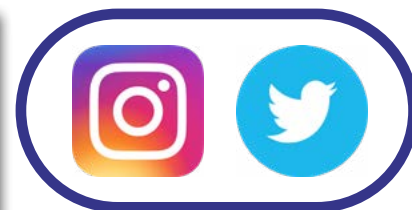


More info:

- [Products from tropical rainforests - WWF](#)



## Helena Gualinga



Born  
**2002**

Image credit: Twitter [@Amazonwatch](#)

Helena is part of the Kichwa Sarayaku in Ecuador, a community of approximately 1500 people. The year Helena was born - 2002 - was the year that an oil company started extracting oil from the Sarayaku's land without warning. The Ecuadorian government had authorised it without having conversations with the community who lived there. This meant that during Helena's childhood, her community was resisting fossil fuel companies that were disrupting their way of life. When extracting oil, much of the land was destroyed, including sites sacred to the Sarayaku.

Unfortunately, the Ecuadorian government has authorised fossil fuel extraction in several different areas, many of which are inhabited by native people who have lived there for many years. People often do not hear about the efforts indigenous peoples go to to protect their land as it doesn't make the news. Their efforts have paid off though: the Sarayaku took the government to court in 2012 over their actions and won the case.

Helena was 10 when this happened and it inspired her to continue fighting back against companies damaging her native land. She has tried to actively make a difference through the '[Polluters Out](#)' campaign, an international project where young people are pushing to stop fossil fuel companies from damaging environments around the world.

More info:

- [Profile on Helena](#)
- [Helena addressing COP25](#)



## Erisvan Bone Guajajara

Erisvan describes himself as a defender of indigenous rights. He is the founder of Mídia Índia, a network for indigenous people and a means for them to be visible digitally. He is a strong advocate for digital communication, as it means activism can be carried out and witnessed far and wide.



He uses his Instagram to inform people of legal action that indigenous peoples have taken to protect their land and ways of life. It is also a way to share links to consultations and petitions that people can sign and respond to to have their opinions heard. By using social media as a platform to share this information, Erisvan has been able to highlight how people in Brazil are suffering because of deforestation and destruction of land, and gain support from other activists to fight back.



*Image credit: Greenpeace*

Erisvan and 11 other young people from the Guajajara community in Brazil received audiovisual training via a project called "Coisa de Índio". As part of this he put together a short film about the Guajajara culture and how their way of life has been threatened. You can see it [here](#), although it is all in Portuguese and not English!

If you wanted to make a video about an issue that was important to you, what do you think you would put in it?

More info:

- [If Not Us Then Who?](#)