



# Experience the Planned Relocation Simulation

To raise awareness and stimulate thinking on the long-term, complex, and varied forms of planned relocations in the context of disasters and climate change, the United Nations University's Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) and the Centre for Systems Solutions (CRS) have developed a tabletop social simulation.

## ■ WHAT IS A SOCIAL SIMULATION?

Social simulations are a type of “serious game” or policy exercise, designed based on a participatory process supported by research. With game-like mechanics and immersive roleplay, they allow participants to test possible strategies, decisions, and modes of cooperation and communication, and to see the consequences of their actions unfold.

Social simulations are facilitated by a moderator and include structured, context-specific debriefs to draw out lessons learned. Players learn from the simulated world and from each other. Importantly, simulations provide a safe space for experimentation and failure.



## WHAT IS PLANNED RELOCATION?

Planned Relocation is the movement of a community away from their current place of residence, in anticipation or response to disasters and climate change impacts such as sea level rise. Planned relocations are a coordinated and collective process, usually across a short-distance, and intended to be permanent. As such, they are distinct from refugee resettlement, autonomous migration, and short-term evacuations. Relocations are complex and contentious, and may not be the best or preferred solution compared to adapting to stay.

## WHAT IS THE PLANNED RELOCATION SIMULATION ABOUT?

The *Planned Relocation Simulation* is set in a fictional region inspired by real-world cases of relocations of entire communities affected by disasters and climate change. The design integrates insights and concerns shared by researchers, practitioners, and community representatives familiar with planned relocation processes in diverse places like Australia, Fiji, India, Mozambique, Panama, Senegal, the USA and others.

Simulation participants adopt different roles representing community groups and government agencies. Each role comes with its own priorities, responsibilities, and constraints. Through role-play and interactions, participants access a wide diversity of perspectives on planned relocation. To find solutions to the challenges posed by the simulation, they must negotiate with each other, engage in systems thinking, and balance trade-offs.



The simulation highlights common concerns about planned relocation. Participants can expect to experience:

- The many facets of relocation planning that go beyond building new houses, putting the needs of concerned people at the forefront: developing new services, job opportunities and protections for place-based cultural heritage, but also to identify infrastructure needs, review zoning regulations...
- The potential tensions between planning for relocation well and early enough vs. prematurely excluding adaptation solutions that could enable people to stay.
- The challenges of - and need for - communication, coordination, and inclusive decision-making.
- The importance of community consent combined with effective external support, to realise their right to self-determination.
- And much more besides... !

## ■ WHO IS THE SIMULATION FOR?

The simulation is designed as an in-person tabletop experience for groups of 12-20 participants, facilitated by one or two moderators. A complete simulation lasts 3 to 4 hours, including presentations and the essential step of debriefing. The ideal setting for the simulation is therefore as a standalone half-day workshop, or as a session in a longer workshop.

The primary audience for the *Planned Relocation Simulation* are policymakers, funders and non-governmental organisations who may, or will, assist communities in their relocation decision-making and planning, but are currently unfamiliar with the challenges involved. Educators may also find the simulation a useful tool for the classroom in high-schools and universities.



## ■ HOW CAN I USE THE SIMULATION?

The *Planned Relocation Simulation* is free to use for non-commercial purposes. The **Terms of Use** only require you to notify the Centre for Systems Solutions about your target audience and to provide evaluation data from the workshop(s).

To learn more, consult the simulation website:

[plannedrelocation.socialsimulations.org](https://plannedrelocation.socialsimulations.org)

There, you can download and print simulation materials and read detailed documentation, including guidance for moderators and a background note connecting the simulation to real-world case studies. The simulation is currently available in English, with a French version planned for later in 2025.

## ■ CONTACT US

We are always open to receiving your comments, as well as expressions of interest in using the simulation.

Don't hesitate to write to us at

[contact@socialsimulations.org](mailto:contact@socialsimulations.org)

## ■ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND PARTNERS

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Project partners



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