

Worksheet E

Human Stories of Climate Change in Bolivia

Glacial retreat

As there is less rain and it is warmer, the glaciers in the mountain are *retreating* (getting smaller). Glaciers give water to farmers. Without this water farmers cannot *irrigate* their crops.

67-year-old Marcos Choque, from Khapo talks about *Illimani*, the mountain he lives on:



"Since 1952, I have seen the snow moving up the mountain. I think that in 30, or maybe as much as 50 years, there will be no more snow on the mountain... If there is no snow or ice on Illimani, there will be no water. We will suffer drought. We won't have any crops. Everything depends on having water. We could even die of hunger.

"It is also changing when the rain comes. When there is no rain, there is not even any water for our animals. They start getting thinner and there is no pasture for them to eat. The wind comes and it gets colder too. We won't be able to raise animals. ... the young will witness the end of Illimani."

The warmer climate also means diseases like malaria are spreading. Before there was no malaria in the mountains, but now people are catching it there.



Unpredictability

There have been more *extreme* (worse) weather in recent years which people cannot predict. This effects the ability of farmers to grow crops.

In 2008 there was the worst flooding for 50 years in Beni. Maira Sala, aged 50-years-old says:

"It was terribly sad. Our whole community was totally flooded. We all had to go to Trinidad and live under tents. Three months we were there, and when we eventually came back, all our land was completely clean of everything. Even the weeds were dead."



There may also be a problem from *drought* (not enough water). Eusebia Ramas from Cochabamba says:

"We depend on our small plot of land for the food we eat. But we are short of water. When I was young there was plenty of water, now there isn't. This year has been good for potatoes, but the problem has been the worms. Our elders say this is because of the drier weather and higher temperatures. This year we got twenty bags. We used to get a total of about 50 bags... Last year we went on a prayer procession carrying a statue of the Virgin Mary to pray for rain."

Women can have the worst experience of this *extreme* weather as they often look after small farms.