

## The despair of Africa

For most people, going to school, going to the cinema, or travelling are part of the standard of living. Above all, we don't have to worry about food shortages because the nearest supermarket is around the corner and there is plenty of water here. When it rains, we just go back into the house. So why should anyone complain? We are fine. We are, but other children, women, men, and senior citizens are not. As I looked at the picture more closely, I asked myself the question "Am I partly to blame for the girl's stressful living situation?" and how can we counteract such natural disasters?

The picture entitled "The despair of Africa" by the photographer Guido Dingemans is a frightening depiction of the catastrophic situation in Malawi in 2016 after one of the worst droughts in decades. About the photographer: Guido Dingemans is an award-winning photographer from the Netherlands who focuses on humanitarian and editorial issues. He has travelled the planet as a freelance photographer, writer, journalist, translator, editor, and philosopher. He currently spends most of his time on assignment for international NGOs in developing countries in Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

The culprit was the climatic phenomenon El Niño, a regularly occurring weather anomaly in the tropical Pacific. The consequences were dramatic when large parts of East Africa suffered extreme drought, while other regions were flooded by torrential rains. Other consequences were and lack of clean drinking water, which threatened the livelihoods of millions of people. But what does this have to do with us? Africa is far away.

However, a published study from the University of Hawaii shows a direct link between global warming and the frequency and intensity of the weather phenomenon with its disastrous effects. When we calculate our carbon footprint, it quickly becomes apparent that we are making a major contribution to global warming. Above all, the human-enhanced greenhouse effect is to blame for global warming. If we look back and look at our human activities, it quickly becomes apparent that something is seriously wrong.

Various factors, such as deforestation, the burning of fossil fuels and livestock farming, influence the climate and the resulting environmental disasters. Let's start small because I can say upfront that we are all to blame for this global warming. Oh, I'd rather take the car than the bus. I'm not going to take a full train for five hours. I'd rather drive my car at 200 km/h and get there faster. I have nothing to wear again.

Wait until I order something great online. I could wear a jumper, but I'd rather turn up the heat. I'd rather buy local or the cheaper stuff.

I hope I have been able to show that it is important to open our eyes and become aware of increasing global warming. In terms of the issues, we can say that we are contributing to global warming and increasing the intensity of natural disasters through our reckless actions in terms of our CO<sub>2</sub> consumption. In a slightly more complicated way, we are responsible for the stressful living situation of millions of people in Africa. We must not shift the responsibility, even if Africa is far away. There are many ways to protect the environment, for example buying local products, using less and less plastic, upcycling and taking a cloth bag when shopping. We need to show responsibility and rethink and improve our actions. In addition, natural disasters directly related to global warming are occurring all over the world. Every year, 50,000 people die due to natural disasters. Of course, I am grateful that I am doing well here at home, but even here there is still the danger of natural disasters like the flood disaster in 2021. I would give the picture the caption "One for all - all for one", because global cohesion is crucial.

**The fragile paradise – Essays on issues of selected photographs**

