

# THE HUMAN IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

A teaching resource for ages 11-16



OXFAM

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**Cover photo:** Jessy and Isaac, two young climate activists, speak to secondary school students about their work on climate change in Kasungu District, Malawi.

**Credit:** Thoko Chikondi/Oxfam



This project is funded by  
the European Union

Who you are  
and where you  
are in the  
world matters!



# INTRODUCTION

We frequently think of the climate emergency as being **environmental**, with its main impacts being on nature and wildlife. This is certainly true, and humans need a healthy environment for life on earth to thrive. However, the climate emergency also directly impacts on people themselves, and this **human element of the climate crisis** is the focus of this resource. People living in the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities are often the most affected by the crisis, often in the forms of unpredictable and extreme weather or rising sea levels. In November 2021, the eyes of the world are on the UK while the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) takes place in Glasgow. The human impact of climate change is one of the vital issues which delegates at the conference will discuss and aim to reach agreement about fair and effective solutions.

Over recent decades there's been huge progress in the global fight against poverty. Across the world the [total percentage of people living in extreme poverty declined from 36% in 1990 to 10% in 2015](#). But Covid-19 and the climate emergency are now threatening this progress and pushing people back into poverty. For example, people living in poverty find it much more difficult to build back after extreme weather events. Add to this the fact that [an estimated 55 % of the global population have had no access to social protection during the Covid-19 pandemic](#). Taken together, the climate emergency and the pandemic are a crisis on top of a crisis for millions of people around the world.

Therefore, the decisions made at the COP26 conference and their implementation in the nine years before 2030 are vitally important for the world's poorest people.



**Photo:** Oxfam has worked with partners in Pakistan to provide training to help people adapt to the impacts of climate change.  
**Credit:** Khaula Jamil/OxfamAUS

# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

These activities for ages 11–16 explore the human impact of the climate emergency and provide new spaces, approaches and opportunities for climate education and social action. This is in response to the call to action by [Teach the Future](#) (2020) who presented research on the current state and future of climate education in the UK. Their report discovered an overwhelming demand for climate education in schools alongside low levels of teacher knowledge about how to effectively deliver climate education and a narrow range of curriculum areas where it is taught.

This resource frames the climate emergency as a human rights and people-centred issue and supports teachers to promote a sense of agency and empowerment within young people. This in turn is recognised as [one strategy to help young people manage eco-anxiety](#), as well as disillusionment and disengagement with climate issues.

## Resource aims

1. To explore the climate emergency from a human rights perspective.
2. To critically examine intersectionality (interconnectedness) and its relevance to the climate emergency, particularly through the lens of gender.
3. To promote critical thinking, debate and discussion leading to informed, empowering and relevant action to help shape a better and fairer world.
4. To apply learning to plan and carry out social action calling for climate justice.

## Curriculum links

- › **England:** KS3 & KS4 Citizenship
- › **Scotland:** [Exploring Climate Justice](#) is a partner resource specifically tailored for the Curriculum for Excellence.
- › **Wales:** ESDGC (Choices and Decisions) and PSE (Active Citizenship)

This resource is suitable as both a curriculum resource and to inform social action by young people (for example, in GCSE Citizenship Studies). It is being published in advance of the COP26 climate change conference in October and November 2021. However, we hope it remains relevant and useful long afterwards while the conference's decisions are being implemented.

# RESOURCE STRUCTURE

## Using the activities

The purpose of this resource is to reframe the climate emergency in the context of human rights and equality, and not to view it as an environmental emergency alone. At the end of teaching, we recommend you set some time aside to complete a [social action](#) as this will reinforce learners' sense of agency and counteract the potential for eco-anxiety.

Additional activity sheets are also included in this pack. Images referred to in the activities are displayed in the accompanying [slideshow](#). The case study films used in [Activity 3](#) can be accessed through the [Oxfam education website](#).

The five learning activities may be:

- Taught sequentially as a short programme of study or selected depending on the availability of time and other learning taking place.
- Delivered as stand-alone lessons. The activity notes and this teachers' guide help you to provide context and background to learners.
- Integrated into an existing programme of study. This document explains the purpose, background and context of the overall resource and each activity has separate notes to make doing this as flexible and easy as possible.

### Activity 1 - Climate change, human rights and equality

An activity to introduce the links between climate change and human rights.

### Activity 2 - Climate justice

A mystery activity to demonstrate the inequalities inherent in the global interconnectedness of climate change. All people are affected in some way by the climate emergency but who you are and where you are in the world matters.

### Activity 3 – Critically thinking about evidence

An activity to examine case study films and make conclusions about which human rights are most threatened by climate change, which groups in society are most affected and what the solutions are.

### Activity 4 – A climate consequences wheel

A consequences wheel activity using evidence from one case study film to make inferences about the different impacts of climate change on members of a community with different personal characteristics (for example: male or female).

### Activity 5 – The climate game

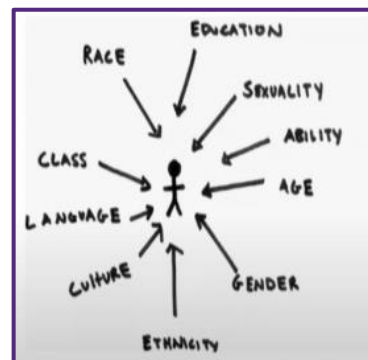
A role play activity for which a clear space, either indoors or outdoors, is required. Learners compare the impacts of climate change on people from different backgrounds and in different circumstances. For some participants, the impacts of climate change overlap and are amplified. This strengthens learners' understanding of intersectionality (interconnectedness).

# KEY IDEAS

There are three key ideas at the core of this resource.

## People and their rights

This resource is about **people and their rights**. Its purpose is not to explore climate science, the ecological crisis or biodiversity loss. Though these are vitally important issues with damaging impacts on people as part of nature, they are well covered in other resources. There are links to additional resources at the end of this pack.



**Image:** From Kate Crowley at the Scottish Climate Citizen's Assembly, Nov 2020, 12:03 mins into this talk: <https://youtu.be/-4eLuFDsIAM>  
Provided on slide 2 of the slideshow.

## Who you are and where you are in the world matters

The climate emergency impacts people **unequally** and it's hitting people living in the world's poorest communities the hardest. What's more, the people on this climate change frontier are the people who have done the least to cause the crisis. The idea of **climate justice** explores the fact that the people who are the least responsible for causing the emergency in the first place are the people who are impacted by it the most. This is seen most clearly by comparing high-income with low-income countries. However, inequalities also exist between people and social groups living within both high-income and low-income countries.

## Intersectionality

In addition, the inequalities of the climate emergency are amplified by interconnectedness, or **intersectionality**. This means that other structural inequalities which people experience – for example, age, gender, ethnic background and disability – combine and amplify how a person is affected by the climate emergency.

Here's a hypothetical example.

For historical reasons families from an indigenous group occupy poor quality farmland in their community. The climate emergency, in the form of unpredictable weather patterns, means that the families' incomes are disproportionately reduced by poorer harvests, and they are forced to take their daughters out of school. The girls miss school and grow up with less knowledge than their peers about how to adapt to climate change in the future. As they reach adulthood, the impact of the climate emergency upon these young indigenous women is further amplified by their continued poor access to land and in addition their poor education.

The reverse may also happen. People with greater wealth and assets may have more opportunities to mitigate the impacts of climate change upon their lives, at least in the short and medium terms. For example, they may occupy better land, live in a better-built house, be better educated, have better health care, be insured against misfortune and so on.



# WHICH RIGHTS?

## Linking to the Sustainable Development Goals

There are many human rights frameworks which could be used in this resource, for example, the foundational 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights. However, we use the seventeen universal [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) as an accessible and straightforward checklist of social, economic and environmental rights and targets.

Note that, except for Goals 16 and 17, the SDGs omit explicit direct reference to political rights and that Goals 14 and 15 address the rights of non-human life.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Image: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>  
Provided on slide 3 of the slideshow.



**Photo:** Collecting water from a solar powered water pump in the Garu District of Ghana.

**Credit:** Nana Kofi Acquah/Oxfam

# TALKING ABOUT INTERSECTIONALITY (INTERCONNECTEDNESS)

## How does the resource frame intersectionality?

Intersectionality (or interconnectedness) is a potentially difficult concept to explain. It means recognising that the impacts of the climate emergency are not felt equally across humankind but are interconnected, historically or socially, to other forms of injustice and inequality. Sometimes the phrase 'we're all in this together' is used in relation to the climate emergency. The idea of intersectionality and evidence from around the world challenges this notion and suggests that 'we're not all equally in this together'. Another word which may help young people to understand this term is interconnectedness.

An excellent practical example of this approach is David Lammy MP explaining the intersectionality of climate justice and racial justice in this [TED talk](#). He uses a justice framework to strongly connect two apparently unconnected issues, the climate emergency and structural racism. This connection isn't simply a product of geography and science. It has deep historical, political and cultural roots. This has implications for how climate change is experienced, taught and understood.

We suggest watching and discussing [this film](#) with students.



## How to explain intersectionality to young people

The [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) lists the 54 universally agreed rights of children which every state has the responsibility to uphold. Article 2 (non-discrimination) is one of the UNCRC's four 'General Principles' (along with Article 12 – the right to be heard) and it provides a useful way to begin framing intersectionality (interconnectedness) with young people.

Article 2 states that no child should be discriminated against, and this is represented in the [CYPICS](#) symbol below. The symbol draws explicit attention to gender justice, racial justice and disability justice, and that meeting children's rights is inclusive and must address these intersectional inequalities fairly. Many children possess more than one of the characteristics highlighted in the diagram. For example, a child may be black, be a girl and have a disability. How do we ensure that the rights of these children are protected and upheld alongside other children?

The symbol could therefore be used to begin a discussion about intersectionality and to list other examples of intersectionality which young people can identify. Once young people grasp how different factors are interconnected to shape a person's characteristics, they will quickly realise that a blanket 'one size fits all' solution to the climate emergency will not bring about climate justice for all.

**Image:** UNCRC Article 2 – 'All children have these rights': [\[Children & Young People's Commissioner, Scotland\]](#)  
Provided on slide 4 of the slideshow.



# ACTIVITY 1

## CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

**Time:** 30 minutes

### Aims

1. To recognise the climate emergency as a human rights issue.
2. To begin to understand and explain that the climate emergency doesn't affect all people equally.

### Background

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) are 17 global goals agreed by the United Nations in 2015 which apply to every country in the world. They may be viewed as human rights which everyone on earth should have if we all are to live a good life. For example, the right to good health and well-being (SDG 3), a quality education (SDG 4) and so on. This activity assumes that learners have some awareness and understanding of the SDGs, the 17 SDG icons are provided on slide 3 of the slideshow.

### Running the activity

1. Young people should work in groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of **Connections** ([Activity sheet 1](#)).
2. For each SDG, learners should suggest one connection linking the goal to the climate emergency. An example has been given for SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).
3. Learners should work through the list quickly. If it's not possible to think of a connection, they should leave it out. However, encourage learners to try to do as many as possible. Some are easier than others.
4. Next, learners should give a score between -10 and +10 to say how strong they think the link they have identified is. There is no 'right answer' but some links will be stronger than others. Some links may be negative (a bad impact) while others may be positive (a good impact). Scores may be awarded as negative (e.g. -10) or positive (e.g. +10).
5. Finally, learners should take a coloured pen or pencil and highlight any SDGs where they think the connection identified affects every person on our planet equally. If the impact isn't equal for everyone, they shouldn't highlight it.

### Follow up discussion

1. Ask learners to identify approximately five SDGs with the strongest links to the climate emergency. Then, ask them to briefly explain the link, why they think it is strong and whether it is negative or positive. Write the SDG on the board or stick up the SDG logo (available to download [here](#)).
2. Then, ask learners to explain whether they think these links affect every person on earth equally. The answer in each case should be 'no' although the degree of difference may vary from case to case.

In the example provided for SDG 3 below, the difference may be because poorer people living in tropical countries affected by hotter, wetter weather caused by the climate emergency are more likely to fall ill. This is because the mosquitos that carry life-threatening malaria are better able to breed but those living in poverty cannot afford protective nets or health care when they become ill. Their homes are also more likely to be near places where mosquitos breed.

## CONNECTIONS

## Activity sheet 1

Sustainable Development Goal	One example of how this goal links with the climate emergency. It may be positive (+) or negative (-). Leave the space blank if you can't think of a link.	How strong is this link? Choose a score between +10 and -10.
1. No Poverty		
2. Zero Hunger		
3. Good health & Well-being	In some places hotter and wetter weather caused by climate change leads to the spread of mosquito-borne diseases like malaria.	-5
4. Quality Education		
5. Gender Equality		
6. Clean Water & Sanitation		
7. Affordable & Clean Energy		
8. Decent Work & Economic Growth		
9. Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure		
10. Reducing Inequality		
11. Sustainable Cities & Communities		
12. Responsible Consumption & Production		
13. Climate Action		
14. Life Below Water		
15. Life on Land		
16. Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions		
17. Partnership for the Goals		

## ACTIVITY 2

### CLIMATE JUSTICE

**Time:** 30 minutes

#### Aims

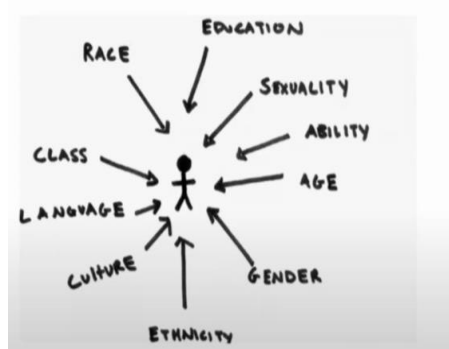
1. To understand two key elements of climate justice: inequality and interconnectedness.
2. To think in greater detail about how the lifestyles of people in the world's wealthier countries, which emit the greatest amounts of carbon dioxide per capita, impact on people in the world's poorest countries, which have lower carbon dioxide emissions.

#### Background

Climate change may have environmental impacts which are consistent over large areas or even the entire planet – for example, a particular global rise in temperature or an increase in sea levels. However, how these impacts are experienced by people varies greatly depending on people's access to resources, their knowledge, and their capabilities (the things they are able to do). Who and where you are in the world really matters.

On the right are some of the factors which may influence how a person is affected by climate change. The climate doesn't know who individual people are or anything about their backgrounds any more than Covid-19 knows who it infects and makes unwell. However, people's backgrounds and their everyday lives greatly influence how they will be affected.

#### Who and where you are matters



**Image:** From Kate Crowley at the Scottish Climate Citizen's Assembly, Nov 2020, 12:03 mins into this talk: <https://youtu.be/-4eLuFDsIAM>  
Provided on slide 2 of the slideshow.

#### Starter discussion

1. Show learners this photograph showing farmers' homes in Bangladesh (provided on slide 5 of the slideshow). Explain that these farmers, who live in poorly constructed homes close to rivers which frequently flood, were more seriously affected by Cyclone Bulbul than wealthy people living in well-constructed homes on drier land. Among the farming communities along the river, women, children and the old were often more severely impacted than young men because these groups have less money and education than the young men. In addition, their ability to move away and look for work outside the community is more restricted.
2. Ask learners to think about this example from Bangladesh. They should try to identify other similar examples they have heard of and suggest how the different factors in the **Who and where you are matters** diagram above may apply in other real-life situations.
3. Empathise that these **inequalities** occur both between different countries and inside the same country. In some cases, inequalities **within** countries may be greater than inequalities **between** countries. For example, South Africa is frequently cited as the world's [most unequal country](#). It has wealthy suburbs located near informal settlements which lack basic services and are vulnerable to crises, as when the city



**Photo:** Fabeha Monir/Oxfam. Provided on slide 5 of the slideshow.

of Cape Town experienced a severe drought and water shortage during 2017 and 2018. It was the poorest communities which found it most difficult to access the limited water supplies.

Inequality is the first key element of **climate justice**. The second element is the result of interconnectedness, whereby the people who are affected the most by climate change are also the people who are least responsible for causing it. This can be explained and understood by asking learners to solve a **mystery** activity and following this activity up with a discussion.

## Running the activity

For further details see Oxfam's [Global Citizenship in the Classroom](#) guide (p. 15).

A **Mystery** involves learners in piecing together 'clues' printed on separate pieces of paper to answer a question or tell a story. This is an excellent tool for exploring global interconnectedness.

1. Learners should work in groups of three or four. Their task is to solve a mystery which has one central question: **'Why did Runa's street food stall close down?'**
2. To answer the question, learners should have a set of the **Clue cards** ([Activity sheet 2](#)). Some clues may be more important than others in solving the mystery.
3. Emphasise that it's not enough to simply sequence clues in the correct order. Learners should be able to explain how they solved the mystery and reflect on the message the activity is communicating.

## Follow up discussion

1. The climate emergency is complex. There are several reasons why Runa's stall closed, including her gender and her subsequent difficulty in accessing a loan. There are also good reasons why Shrafaz is driven to school despite the environmental impact. The point of the activity is not to blame a global problem on one young person's actions, but to illustrate interconnectivity and inequality between people on a global scale.

2. The per person carbon emissions for an average person in the UK in 2018 were [5.6 metric tons](#). The comparable carbon emissions for an average person in Bangladesh were [0.6 metric tons](#). UK carbon emissions per person are therefore more than six times greater than the emissions of an average Bangladeshi. Not everyone in the UK or Bangladesh emit equal amounts of carbon. These figures are averages and conceal wide in-country differences.
3. The climate emergency impacts both Shafraz and Runa. For example, the air quality, public health and environment of Sparkbrook are damaged by carbon emissions. However, Runa has completely lost her livelihood and will find it difficult to find a new way to make a living. She has few available alternatives and no social protection 'safety net'. Runa has suffered personal loss and damage and cannot yet adapt to the disastrous impact the climate emergency is having on her life. Her gender excludes her from accessing a loan to repair her stall. This type of scenario is being repeated millions of times in countries across the world.
4. The people who have done the least to cause the climate emergency (such as Runa) are those who suffer from it the most. Meanwhile the people who do the most to contribute towards the emergency (such as people in the UK and other high-income countries) have so far suffered relatively few impacts while enjoying the benefits of modern life. The climate emergency is also an inequality emergency. The debate rarely focuses on how millions of people like Runa will be supported through this emergency which they did not cause.



## CLUE CARDS

## Activity sheet 2

Cut out the cards and place them in envelopes for group work

Shafraz is driven to school each day in his parents' car.	Runa cannot afford to repair her damaged stall. The moneylender she asks for a loan only lends money to men.	Climate change contributes towards rising sea levels and the risk of extreme weather.
Bangladesh is in South Asia. It is one of the countries that are most at risk from the effects of sea levels rising and extreme weather.	Sea levels are rising, and storms are stronger and more frequent because of climate change.	Shafraz's parents say the traffic in Sparkbrook is too dangerous for him to walk the short distance to school on his own.
Runa's street food stall has had to close down. Runa has no way to make a living.	Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas which contributes to climate change.	After her husband died, Runa worked hard and saved up the money to set up her stall. It's unusual for a woman to be in business by herself and she doesn't make much money.
Shafraz lives two kilometres from his school in Sparkbrook, Birmingham.	Last week very heavy rains and winds badly damaged Runa's stall for the second time.	Birmingham's traffic is mostly made up of cars. Some drivers have large SUVs.
Local workers and people catching a bus visit Runa's stall for a snack or a drink.	Bad storms and rain have been flooding the roads in Chattogram. Fewer workers stop for a snack or a drink.	Cars produce carbon dioxide from the burning of petrol.
Chattogram is a large port city on the south-eastern coast of Bangladesh.	Runa's stall is on a main road next to Chattogram's port.	The morning bus to Shafraz's school is often held up by heavy traffic.

## ACTIVITY 3

### CRITICALLY THINKING ABOUT EVIDENCE

**Time:** 60 minutes

#### Aims

1. To examine case studies of the climate emergency to identify how the rights of people are being affected
2. To review possible solutions to the climate emergency in each case and decide whether these are examples of adaptation or mitigation.

#### Background

The climate emergency is a **human rights** issue as well as an ecological crisis. The world's poorest people are being affected the most by an emergency which they have done the least to cause. The purpose of the activity is to introduce the human experience of the climate emergency and to ask young people to think in greater detail about some of the solutions required to tackle it.

This activity asks learners to critically examine five real-life examples of how the climate emergency impacts on the lives of people in low and lower middle-income countries. All these examples emphasise the urgent need for funding for adaptation so that those affected are able to live positively with climate change. Some examples also highlight how funding is needed to mitigate against climate change by reducing global carbon emissions.

These film clips are not comprehensive, either geographically or thematically, and it is not necessary to show learners all the film clips if time is short. As an alternative you could use film clips you have sourced yourself, and several are suggested at the end of the resource.

#### Films

1. [Ghana](#) – 3 min. 45 sec.
2. [Kenya](#) – 1 min. 54 sec.
3. [The UK and Malawi](#) – 2 min. 14 sec.
4. [Burkina Faso](#) – 2 min. 18 sec.
5. [Guatemala](#) – 4 min. 10 sec.



**Photo:** An aerial view of the sea defence at Axim, Ghana – one of the communities featured in the films. This project is funded by the European Union.

**Credit:** Nana Kofi Acquah/Oxfam

## Running the activity

1. Learners should work in small groups.
2. Print and cut out the 17 Sustainable Development Goal icons ([available to download here](#)). Give a set to each group.
3. Learners should then watch the films. When they see evidence, however small, of one of these seventeen rights being affected by any events shown or discussed in the film, learners should place the relevant SDG icon card(s) in the centre of the table in front of them. Learners could use [Activity sheet 3 \(Critically thinking about evidence\)](#) to record their ideas.
4. After each film, allow time for the class to pause and review the decisions each group has made. Is there agreement? What reasons or evidence have they used for making these choices? Are there particular rights which are affected more often than others?
5. Ask learners to think about their own lives. There isn't a film to show this, but they could think back over the 24 hours of a typical day or any time period of your choosing such as one week, one month or a full year. Ask learners to write down some brief notes – for example, what are the main events they would show if they were making a film for this task? These could be illustrated as a storyboard. Once they have done this, they should place the relevant SDG icon(s) into the centre of the table for their own story. How does their response to the stories of their own lives compare with their responses to the films?

## Follow up discussion

Each film suggests solutions to the climate emergency which restore the rights of the people who are affected. Some solutions are small and local; others require action on a global scale.

1. Ask learners to identify the solutions proposed in each film while remembering that the locations of the films are a selection and do not give a comprehensive view of what is happening everywhere in the world. Encourage learners to consider whether each solution is an example of adaptation or mitigation (see below for support with this). Learners could record their ideas in the table in [Activity sheet 3](#).

2. When the class has finished their analysis of each film, ask learners to identify examples in the films where the climate emergency impacts on specific groups in society such as women, girls, children, older people and people with disabilities. This may be easier to do for some films than for others. Again, learners could record their ideas in the [table](#) provided.

The clearest example is provided in the film about the women in Axim, Ghana, who smoke and process fish to sell. Their businesses will be ruined if the fishing boats can no longer land their catches of fish on the beach. They would face an uncertain future like that of Runa in [Activity 2](#).

### Key words

**Adaptation** means solutions which help people to live better and more fairly with the climate emergency for the time being without actually solving it, for example, building a sea wall in Ghana to prevent erosion caused by rising sea levels. However, this adaptation does not stop the melting of ice caps that causes sea level rises.

**Mitigation** means solutions which tackle the climate emergency by directly reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, for example, a country with high carbon emissions bans petrol cars and replaces them with electric cars. However, this does not immediately improve the lives of fishers in Ghana affected by rising sea levels.

Much of the debate about the actions required to tackle the climate emergency focuses on **mitigation**. This is correct, because lasting solutions require us to greatly reduce our carbon emissions as fast as possible. However, the urgent need for **adaptation** is frequently overlooked. The world's poorest people have been affected by climate change for decades and will continue to be affected for years to come while carbon emissions are being reduced. As introduced in [Activity 2](#), the idea of **climate justice** means that these communities require financial and practical support for the loss and damage already caused by climate change and that still to be caused in the future while emissions are reduced.

## CRITICALLY THINKING ABOUT EVIDENCE

## Activity sheet 3

Case study film	Rights being affected (these are open to discussion – be prepared to give reasons for your ideas)	Solutions – adaptation or mitigation?	Groups in society most directly affected
<b>Ghana</b>	1. No Poverty 2. Zero Hunger 5. Gender Equality 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 10. Reduced Inequalities 13. Climate Action 17. Partnership for the Goals	1. Work with others to advocate for change (adaptation)  2. Build a sea wall to protect the beach from erosion (adaptation)	Women
<b>Kenya</b>			
<b>UK &amp; Malawi</b>			
<b>Burkina Faso</b>			
<b>Guatemala</b>			
<b>My own life</b>			



## ACTIVITY 4

### A CLIMATE CONSEQUENCES WHEEL

**Time:** 40 minutes

#### Aims

1. To question how the climate emergency impacts different members of the same community.
2. To make inferences about how these differences are amplified and how they may be overcome.

#### Background

Frequently the climate emergency is depicted as a disaster which affects all people in a community approximately equally. For example, a flood sweeps down a valley and destroys everything in its way. Sometimes this may be the case but, in most cases **who you are and where you are in the world matters**. Even within the most affected communities and areas, the impacts of the climate emergency are usually far from random.

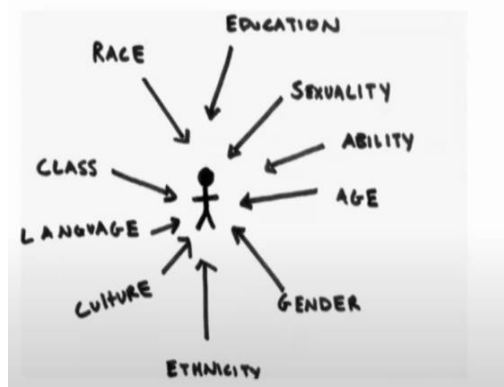
In [Activity 2](#), we introduced this diagram which shows the human **characteristics** that might influence a person's ability to adapt to the climate emergency and access the resources they require to manage.

It is not necessary to discuss all these characteristics in this activity. Instead, select ones which are most relevant to your learners' context and, for the purposes of this exercise, begin with binary opposites as those shown below. As you do this, explain that in real life binary opposites rarely exist. Social categories are complex. They are fluid, merge into one another and are socially constructed. For example, you could discuss how difficult it is to define whether a person is 'young' or 'old'. However, it can be useful to begin with opposites such as:

#### Examples of binary opposites

'good education' – 'poor education'  
 'young' – 'old'  
 'majority ethnic' – 'minority ethnic'  
 'middle class' – 'working class'  
 'urban' – 'rural'  
 'straight' – 'LGBTQIA+'  
 'men and boys' – 'women and girls'  
 'official language' – 'home language'  
 'white' – 'black'

#### Who and where you are matters



**Image:** From Kate Crowley at the Scottish Climate Citizen's Assembly, Nov 2020, 12:03 mins into this talk: <https://youtu.be/-4eLuFDslAM>  
 Also provided on slide 2 of the slideshow.

## Starter discussion

1. Learners should watch (or re-watch) the film of the [London schools' climate rally](#) introduced in [Activity 3](#). In this film, Jessy and Isaac speak to the crowd about **three** main impacts of the climate emergency on their rural community in Malawi. These three impacts are:

- **Changing rain patterns make it difficult for their parents to plan farming. Crops dry up and fail to mature, and this leads to hunger among children.**
- **It is easier for mosquitos to breed when it's wetter, and this spreads diseases such as malaria.**
- **Sudden and severe floods occur, and people's homes are washed away.**

In the film Jessy does not mention that her parents' crops failed during Malawi's drought. Consequently, she was removed from school because her parents could no longer afford the costs. She returned to school after a period of absence and successfully completed her education.

**Who** Jessy is (a girl whose family have modest financial resources) and **where** she lives (rural Malawi during a drought) matter. Other people in Malawi (and elsewhere) experience different impacts because of who they are and where they live. For example, a wealthy Malawian business owner living in Lilongwe (the capital city) is likely to be better protected from extreme weather events because s/he can afford to buy food and is likely to have a house strong enough not to be swept away by floods.



**Photo:** Jessy and Isaac arrange tree seedlings at the farm of the senior chief of their village in Kasungu District, Malawi. This project is funded by the European Union. **Credit:** Thoko Chikondi/Oxfam

## Running the activity

### What is a climate consequences wheel?

A **climate consequences wheel** is a type of mind-map which can help learners to think through the consequences of the climate emergency for different people. It asks learners to make inferences about **how** who you are and where you are matters.

This activity helps learners to identify connections between an event (the climate emergency in Malawi) and its consequences for different people. Learners may not have all the facts to 'prove' their answers; they are making suggestions and inferences based on what they know and deduce.

The purpose of the exercise is not to be comprehensive, but to recognise that an individual's characteristics influence how the climate emergency affects them. There is no fixed or predetermined pattern the circles should follow. Every climate consequences wheel will be different, and its shape and content will be decided by the young people creating it. The activity may be done individually, in small groups or as a whole class.

1. Recap the three main impacts of the climate emergency in Malawi identified in the film. Ask learners to write **one** of these impacts inside a circle in the middle of a piece of paper. A template is provided in [Activity sheet 4 \(Climate consequences wheel\)](#). Learners may select whichever they wish.
  - i. Changing rain patterns make crops fail.
  - ii. Mosquitos breed and malaria spreads.
  - iii. Sudden flooding washes buildings away.
2. Next, learners should select **one** pair of binary opposite characteristics, for example: men and boys – women and girls. Point out that human characteristics overlap and merge in real life. However, thinking of them as binary opposites for the purposes of this activity makes creating a climate consequences wheel more straightforward.
3. Ask learners to write one of their opposite characteristics at the bottom left side of their paper and the other characteristic at the bottom right side.
4. Learners should then write each direct consequence of the impact inside other circles which are linked to the main circle with a single line. They should try to think of as many direct consequences as possible and work from the

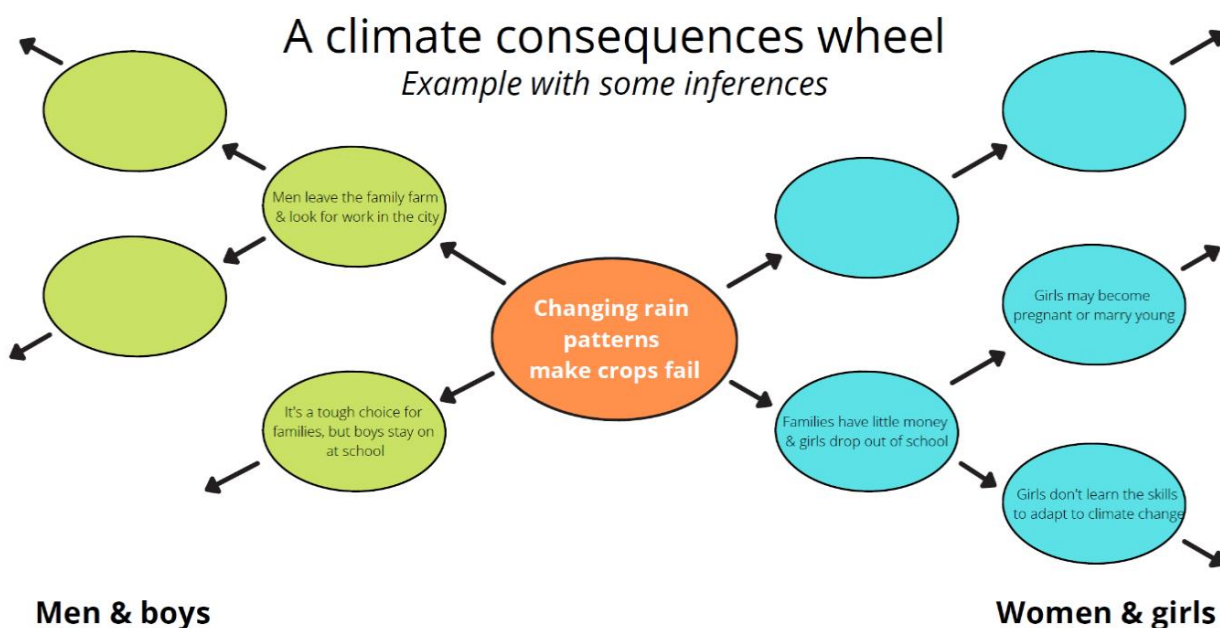
centre of the diagram in opposite directions towards the left and right depending on which characteristic they are thinking about. The consequences should be arranged around the main circle as shown below.

5. Next, learners should consider the consequences of each consequence. These will be different for different people in the community depending on whether they are able to adapt and/or access resources. These should once again be written inside circles linked to the direct consequences, and so on. Learners could colour code each circle depending on which of the two personal characteristics it refers to.

### Follow up discussion

1. A concluding discussion could involve looking more deeply at the issues that have arisen and asking learners to think about what could be done to break chains of negative consequences.

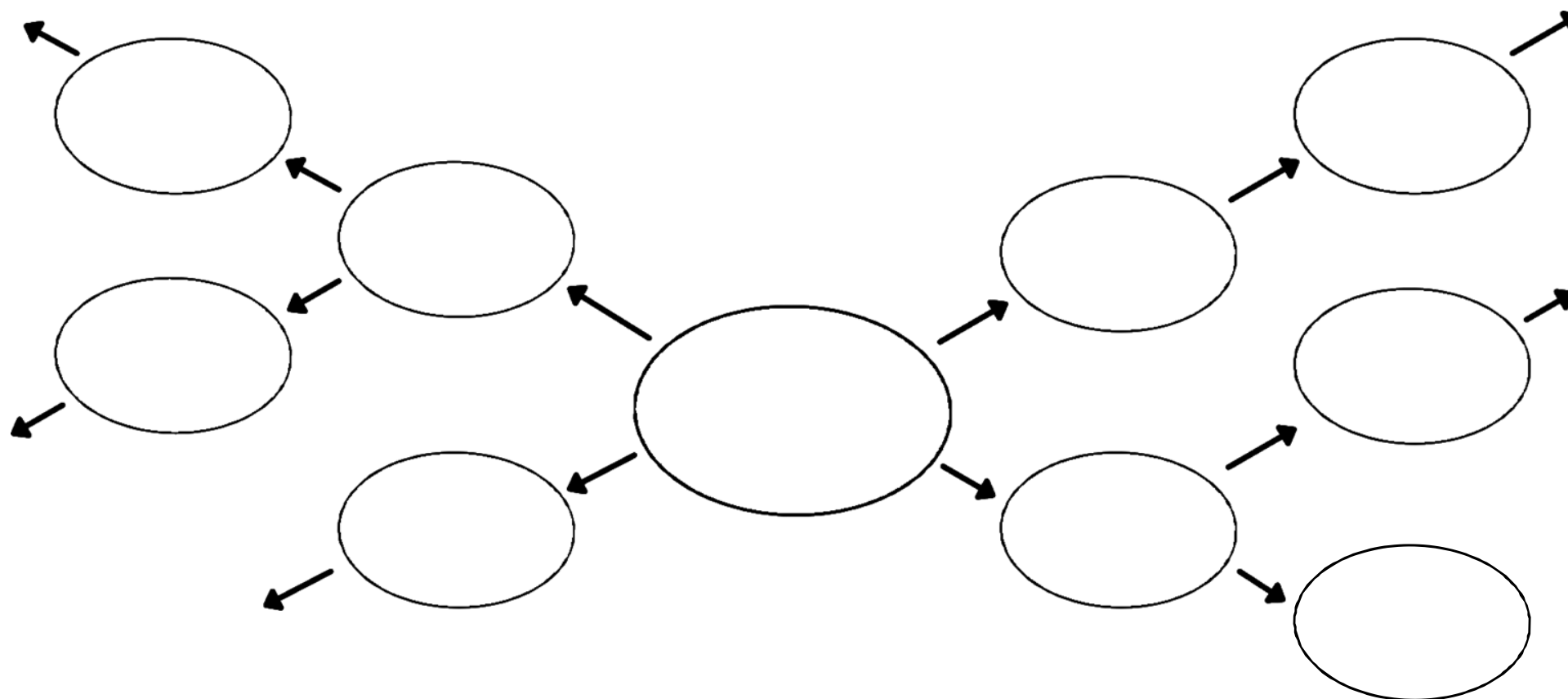
The following example shows the beginning of a consequences wheel to examine the impact of crops failing on 'men and boys' and 'women and girls'.



Adapted from: Oxfam (2015) – 'Global Citizenship in the Classroom' p.15: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/handle/10546/620105>  
Provided on slide 6 of the slideshow.

## CLIMATE CONSEQUENCES WHEEL

### Activity sheet 4



Write down characteristic, e.g. **old**

Write down characteristic, e.g. **young**



## ACTIVITY 5 THE CLIMATE GAME

**Time:** 40 minutes

### Aims

1. To appreciate the wide range of unequal impacts that people experience because of the climate emergency.
2. To draw conclusions about the complex inequalities inherent in the climate emergency and strengthen understanding of climate justice.

### Background

As explored in Activities [1](#) and [2](#), a key element of **climate justice** is **inequality**. One way to introduce this concept is through this '**Climate game**' activity. This is a variation of the '[Power Walk](#)' activity used in humanitarian training (pp. 58-62) and has been more recently adapted as a '[Privilege Walk](#)' activity. The basic methodology is similar and is flexible.

### Running the activity

1. Give each learner a **Climate game** role card ([Activity sheet 5](#)). Explain that it describes a person somewhere in the world. There are 13 role cards altogether. You may remove cards or allocate cards twice or three times depending on the size of the group.
2. Learners should play the role described on their card but keep their role a secret from the other participants. Ask learners to spend a few minutes imagining the daily life of the person whose role they are playing. Tell them they will be answering questions in that role, but that there are no right or wrong answers. They should use their best judgement to decide.
3. Clear space in the room (or go outside) and ask learners to line up shoulder-to-shoulder facing you. Read out the [15 statements](#) one by one and explain that any learners who believe their character agrees with the person described in the statement should take one step forwards. If their character disagrees with the statement, they should stand still. Try to make sure everyone takes roughly the same-sized steps. It's not a race! Eventually the young people will be spread out depending on how many steps forward they have taken.
4. When you have finished reading through the 15 statements the group should be spread out across the space. Ask each learner to introduce

their role. Encourage learners to think they are standing in the correct place for their roles, in relation to others. Permit them to re-position themselves if they wish.

### Follow up discussion

1. Discuss the **inequality** of the climate emergency. Who is impacted the most and in what ways? Who is impacted the least? Why do they think this is? Is this fair?
2. Each role is allocated a gender (e.g. **male** or **female**). Do learners think their climate game would have had different outcomes if they had been a different gender? Binary genders are suggested for this question to make it straightforward to answer. However other gender descriptors may be used, and the exercise may be adapted. Encourage class participation in the terminology you decide to use.
3. Ask learners whether they think any of their responses were influenced by the impacts of the **Covid-19 pandemic** as well as the **climate emergency**? The experience of living through the Covid-19 pandemic may influence learners' responses to some of the scenarios. For example, was the character in lockdown?) Allow learners to make their own judgements about this issue and encourage discussion.

## CLIMATE GAME ROLES

## Activity sheet 5

<p><b>Play the role of</b> A teenage girl who's been excluded from school. You live in a housing estate next to one of the UK's busiest motorways.</p>	<p><b>Play the role of</b> A jet-setting international businesswoman who exports tropical fruit from South America to European supermarkets. You live in a luxury villa on the beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.</p>
<p><b>Play the role of</b> A male sheep farmer living in the Scottish Highlands. You use the farming methods you learned from your parents and grandparents.</p>	<p><b>Play the role of</b> A female secondary school student living on a Caribbean island at risk of rising sea levels and frequent severe tropical storms.</p>
<p><b>Play the role of</b> A skilled male worker in a car factory making petrol engine cars in a large British city.</p>	<p><b>Play the role of</b> A male farmer with a small landholding in a central American country which has been affected by drought for the last six years. This year the rain has not arrived in time for you to plant your corn.</p>
<p><b>Play the role of</b> A wealthy male lawyer who went to Oxford University. You live in a large house with a big garden on the edge of a pleasant British town.</p>	<p><b>Play the role of</b> A female slum dweller who dropped out of school and sells snacks on the street for a living. Your home is a shack built on stilts over a polluted lagoon in one of South Asia's largest cities.</p>
<p><b>Play the role of</b> A female part-time hotel worker without any qualifications in a popular European holiday resort. You make beds and clean rooms.</p>	<p><b>Play the role of</b> A fisherman living on the coast of a West African country where rising sea levels are eroding the beach and making the fresh water supply salty. You need the beach to land your catch of fish every day.</p>
<p><b>Play the role of</b> A highly educated female office worker with a well-paid job in the IT sector in one of Africa's fastest growing coastal cities.</p>	<p><b>Play the role of</b> A male nomad who herds cattle in the Horn of Africa (Somalia and Ethiopia). Water is becoming scarcer every year and you have acquired a gun to protect your community's water sources from outsiders.</p>
<p><b>Play the role of</b> A low-paid female worker with basic skills at a new computer factory in a city in South East Asia.</p>	

## CLIMATE GAME SCENARIOS

## Resource sheet

**Read out the scenarios one by one and ask learners to either take one step forward or stand still.**

Take one step forwards if:

1. Up to now, climate change has affected your everyday life for the worse in some way.
2. Up to now, climate change has lowered your income or quality of life.
3. The climate emergency has disrupted your or your child's education in some way.
4. You expect to change your job in the next 10 years because of the climate emergency.
5. You expect to leave your home in the next 10 years because of the climate crisis.
6. You expect to have to move to a different country because of climate change.
7. You expect to be financially worse off in the next 10 years because of the climate emergency.
8. Your family faces the risk of hunger because of climate change.
9. The climate crisis is damaging the environment (nature and/or wildlife) in the community where you live.
10. Your lifestyle and job do not create significant carbon emissions.
11. Climate change makes it harder for you to get clean water for your family.
12. The climate emergency makes you more vulnerable to poor health or disease.
13. The climate crisis will have a big impact on your children.
14. The climate emergency places your life at risk.
15. I (your character) would become a climate campaigner or activist.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Learning and social action materials

WOSDEC et al. (2021) – [Exploring Climate Justice. A Human Rights Based Approach](#)

The partner resource to this pack, tailored specifically for the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence.

Send My Friend To School (2021) – [Education Interrupted](#)

Young people lead, learn and take action calling on world leaders to build resilient schools, develop climate-facing curricula and promote children's voices in decision making.

The Climate Coalition (2021) – [Our Climate Our Future](#)

A pack produced by WWF and partners, including Oxfam, for the Climate Coalition. Learners role play their own COP conference and use their negotiations to draft a 'Promise to the Planet' for their school. These resources are also hosted by [Twinkl](#).

Inter Climate Network (2021) – [COP26 Climate Conference In the Classroom](#)

Young people form teams representing a range of countries. They have to research, present and debate their country pledges and climate challenges, then collaborate to raise global ambition for action.

Reboot the Future (2021) – [How Will You Reboot the Future?](#)

Open ended learning and actions inspired by films featuring five young climate activists.

Let's Go Zero (2021) – [Let's Go Zero](#)

Schools develop and implement action plans to go net zero.

Climate Cymru (2021) – [Browse the resources](#)

Learning and action materials tailored for Welsh schools. Includes Welsh language translations.

CODEC (2021) – [The Consortium of Development Education Centres](#)

Link with your nearest Development Education Centre (DEC) for exciting CPD and classroom opportunities in the run up to COP26.

Global Dimension (2021) – [Browse the resources](#)

Browse dozens of global learning resources on the topic of the environment and sustainability.



Photo: OxfamAUS

## Selected films

David Lammy MP (2020) – [Climate Justice Cannot Happen Without Racial Justice](#)

TED talk by David Lammy MP strongly arguing that we can't solve climate change without racial, social and intergenerational justice. The talk supports the core themes of this resource.

Clover Hogan (2021) [What To Do When Climate Change Feels Unstoppable](#)

TED talk by youth activist Clover Hogan discussing eco-anxiety and explaining why challenging the stories that keep you feeling powerless can help you take the first step to protecting the planet for generations to come.

BBC (2020) – [Outer Hebrides: Islands Under Threat From Rising Sea Levels](#)

We think of rising sea levels as mainly affecting the Pacific Ocean islands or the Caribbean Sea. But it's also a threat here in the British Isles.

UNICEF (2020) – [Campaigning for climate justice in the Philippines](#)

A youth activist outlines the youth climate justice campaign in the Philippines.

Oxfam GB (2019) – ["Let's take action now!"](#)

Young climate activists from Malawi join UK youth at the London youth climate rally in September 2019.

ActionAid UK (2017) – [What is happening to Somaliland in the drought?](#)

First-hand testimony from Somaliland. Many places hardest hit by climate change also experience conflict and weak governance.

The Third Generation Project (2020) – [Start the Change: Jirdel's Story](#) and [Start the Change: Shukri's Story](#)

More testimony from Somaliland explaining the impacts of climate change on young people and its relationship with migration.

The 77 Percent (2021) – [Vanessa Nakate: Leading Africa's climate activists](#)

Features Ugandan campaigner Vanessa Nakate discussing African youth climate activism and racism within the global climate movement.

Oxfam GB (2019) – Films from Garu, northern Ghana. [Meet Bekki and Abass in Garu - their WhatsApp film](#); [Families under threat](#); [The water pump project](#); [What's it like trying to survive a drought?](#); [When water flows, hopes grow](#); [Are you ready to learn?](#); [When crops grow, hopes grow too](#)

Oxfam worked with the community in Garu, northern Ghana, to document the impact of climate change on people's everyday lives. Here's what they told us. Note: some of the films end with a link to an Oxfam appeal which has now closed. The relevant films may be paused just before the end.

Oxfam GB (2021) – [The Sea Eroded All This Vast Land](#)

How rising sea levels threatened the fishing community of Axim, Ghana and how the community adapted.