

**Module 2d:
Health,
WASH and
climate**

Exercise 3

January 2021



Title **Social & environmental determinants of health in the context of climate change**

Introduction and background for facilitators:

An energizing exercise where participants are given 7 different ‘characteristics’ (printed on hand-out cards) and experience/show how their characteristics (or role) shape their vulnerabilities, opportunities and ability to react to different climate change risks. Alternatively, only 7 participants become active players and the rest of the participants observe and comment in plenary afterwards.

The aim is to understand how social and environmental determinants of health (geography, age, gender, health status, socio-economic status, access to healthcare facilities and the intersection of those characteristics) can affect people’s vulnerability as well as ability to respond to the health consequences of climate change.

Aim/learning objective:

At the end of the exercise, participants will have a better understanding of climate change affects different subsets of a population differently. This exercise should help participants realize that climate change tends to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and that vulnerability factors are multiple and often inter-linked. These characteristics also influence their ability to respond to the impacts – some have comparative advantage while others are disadvantaged.

Materials and preparation:

Materials

Cards with the individual ‘characteristics’ printed – one card for each participant (at end of this document).

Prior to workshop, print out cards with the 7 different ‘characteristics’. You may also adjust the ‘characteristics’ to fit the country you are working in (e.g. other types of water infrastructure etc.)

Duration:

About 30 minutes

Participant numbers and/or arrangements:

Any number of participants with the 7 different ‘characteristics’ (roles); they are lined up in a row, in the middle of a room.

With a very large group you may choose to select a subgroup to play and let the rest of them observe/comment.

The exercise step by step:

- 1) Invite participants to stand in the middle of the room or in an outdoor space in a line, side by side.
- 2) Hand out the cards with the 7 individual ‘characteristics’ – which are:
 - a) Refugee women, 40 years old, illiterate, unemployed, lives with her husband and her 4 children in a rural informal tented settlement with no water tank. Limited access to healthcare and sanitation facilities.
 - b) Agricultural worker male with diabetes, 40 years old, illiterate. Has a wife and 3 children. Lives in a weak house with no water tank, close to a contaminated lake. Limited access to healthcare facilities.
 - c) Male teacher, 35 years old, literate. Lives with his wife and their 2 children in a strong house with a water tank in a low-income urban area. Has access a moderate access to healthcare facilities.
 - d) Elderly women, 60 years old, illiterate, walks with difficulty. Lives in strong house with no water tank together with his son, who is the village chief, his wife and their 2 children. Has access a moderate access to healthcare facilities.
 - e) Construction worker, 30 years old, single, illiterate. Lives in the city, by the highway, in a weak house with a water tank. Has access to healthcare facilities.
 - f) Female, 40 years old, employed in a bank in an urban area, literate, divorced and pregnant. Lives with a child in a strong house with running water and AC, in a high-income area. Has good access to healthcare facilities.
 - g) Young girl goes to school, lives in a small island developing state. Collects water from a source subject to saline contamination in case of a flooding event. Lives in a strong house with no water tank. Limited access to healthcare and sanitation facilities.

The characters suggested do not live in the same country. They illustrate a diversity of profiles to provide examples of different social and environmental determinants of health that can affect the health consequences of climate change. However, the moderator can decide to modify those profiles and make them more specific to a certain country or region if needed. The questions can also be adapted to fit a specific context if needed.

- 3) Ask participants: “Imagine your character – do you know of someone like this?”
- 4) Say, I’m going to read out some questions, and
 - a) If you think you would answer yes take a step forward
 - b) If you think you would answer no take a step backwards,
 - c) If you aren’t sure, stand still
- 5) Read out the following questions and let participants react:
 - a) There is a big flood! Are you able to escape and or swim rapidly?
 - b) There is a cyclone – does your house stay standing?
 - c) You have been injured during a cyclone and you need urgent care. Are you able to receive it?
 - d) There is a long dry spell – can you find clean water?

- e) Is your livelihood or that of your household affected by the drought?
- f) There is a heatwave warning on the radio – do you hear and take precautions?
- g) Do you spend most of your day outside?
- h) Does your age or health condition make you at risk?
- i) Do you live in an area that is subject to air pollution?
- j) The weather forecast says “more intense rain” – can you read the poster with the forecast on the community notice board?
- k) Do you live in an area that is prone to vector-borne diseases?
- l) There is a community meeting to decide priorities to prepare for the coming cyclone – do you participate and share your ideas?
- m) There is a Red Cross training on Disaster Preparedness – did you go?

**Reflection
Debriefing/
discussion:**

What do you think about this exercise?

What are some of the characteristics that you think make a person most vulnerable to the health consequences climate change?

Do you have an action plan in your National Society to identify those populations are most vulnerable and help them prepare for the health risks that they are facing?

Are you collaborating with the Disaster Risk Reduction team to address the health consequences of climate change for vulnerable populations?

Cut out those 7 paragraphs and hand out to players

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