Climate Training | KIT

Module 2d: Health, WASH and climate

Exercise 2B

January 2021

Exercises

Title	**Timescales scenario exercise – heatwave prevention in country Z**
Introduction and background for facilitators:	Early warnings are available for different time scales. This exercise explores the actions for heatwave preparedness that a National Society Health department could take based on early warning information available at different time scales – from years to hours – building on the regular "peace-time" activities of the National Society. The climate and risk scenarios offered are generic for 'country Z' but the facilitator could make it country-specific by adjusting the scenario information to local contexts.
Aim/learning objective:	At the completion of this exercise participants will realize how the existing health project activities of the National Society could be re-organised and adjusted to make better use of the early warning information available for heatwave risks also at longer time scales (climate projections).
Materials and preparation:	• Print the empty scenarios at the bottom of this document on A3 paper; several copies for each group. Note that the tables can also be uploaded toa web-based platform (e.g. as a Google Document) and used for online collaboration among participants. • Pens for each group. • In the tables below, some example answers (red text) are provided for the facilitator, which can be used to inspire the discussion. • Suggested 'take home discussion points' are provided after each sample sheet below.
Duration:	Approximately 45 minutes
Participant numbers and/or arrangements:	Depending on the number of participants, the group can be divided in sub-groups

The exercise step by step:

1. Organise participants in one or several groups to work on the heatwave scenario
2. Hand out several copies of the printed scenarios and pens to each group
3. Explain how the first row of empty cells in the scenario sheets can be filled with examples of activities the National Society would *normally already* do to prepare for and react to the warnings and risk information listed in the top row under “Information available”. Since many National Societies do not yet have specific heatwave activities and plans, the activities available for listing in the first row may be ‘ad hoc’ or largely unknown to the participants.
4. Next, coach participants to fill in the second row with ideas on *changes and improvements* to the ‘normal’ activities in the row above – what to do differently to incorporate the early warning information available on different time scales (i.e. activities are made more ‘climate-smart’).
1. Note that the last column is for the specific recovery activities after an event.
2. Circulate between groups and support the discussion with supplementary questions and ideas.

Debriefing/ discussion:

Let each group provide examples of their ideas for the second row (changes and improvements) in plenary – and invite for comments and discussion

Tips:

Suggested ‘take home discussion points’ are provided after the sample sheet below.

Practical steps for National Society heatwave actions are described in the City Heatwave Guide for Red Cross Red Crescent Branches (available in ‘Recommended Reading’ of this module).

Timescales scenario exercise: Heatwaves

You work in country Z where access to health facilities is variable.

Weather trends in the past decades indicate that more intense and prolonged heatwaves combined with humidity have become more frequent. Future climate projections for the region suggest that the trend may continue as global temperatures keep rising up. Country Z is in the part of the world where it is hot most of the year and where heat has not been an issue in the past. That country traditionally experiences its main heat season between April and June.

How can the National Society of country Z use the 'early warning' information (below) to scale up its efforts to reduce the health impacts of heatwaves?

Health and DM strategic planning over time **Available information >>**	**Years trend – and projections:** More intense and prolonged heatwaves combined with humidity are projected to become more frequent. Health impacts of heatwaves are projected to be more intense in urban settings.	**Monthly/ seasonal climate information:** The heat season is approaching. A seasonal forecast for temperature and humidity is provided by the Met office – this season is likely to be extra hot and humid.	**Weekly weather information:** Meteorological office warns that there is a heatwave coming which might affect urban areas.	**Daily weather information**: Heat is above average for multiple consecutive days, with high humidity and little temperature decline during night time, with a peak between 12:00 and 15:00	**Response and recovery:** The heatwave is over.
1. What are National Society's health and disaster management programmes ***already*** doing to address these impacts? Examples in red font	CBHFA projects in several districts.		Preparing for assistance at public spaces (drinking water distribution points, and 'stay cool' tips) in the capital during peak hot days.	Ad hoc assistance at public spaces (drinking water distribution points, and 'stay cool' tips) in the capital during peak hot days.	
2. As heatwaves patterns change what can the National Society do ***differently*** to reduce their health impact? Provide ideas for changes and improvements to the activities listed in the row above. Examples in red font	Develop a National Society Heatwave Action Plan – and link it to plans that the public authorities may have. If feasible, include (urban) Branches across the nation, not only in the capital. If government authorities do not have a heatwave action plan, advocate and work with the authorities to develop one and, if possible, offer the National Society branches and volunteer	Prepare for an activation of the Heatwave Action Plan and coordinate with prioritized stakeholders (meteorological services, healthcare facilities, the media, etc) Prepare local branches and volunteers – and communities the National Society supports – for possibly more intense and prolonged heatwaves.	Help activate the Heatwave Action Plan with all key stakeholders. If feasible, activate Branches across affected areas, not only in the capital. Set up drinking water distribution points: make sure there is shade so that people don't have to wait in long queues in the sun.	Visit households and schools in the areas where the people most affected by heatwaves live and / or work. Recognize heat stress and provide first aid if needed. In case of a pandemic (e.g. covid-19), prefer phone outreach to household visits. Disseminate key 'stay cool' messages and behaviour	Take time to reflect as a team after the heatwave campaign: "What have we achieved?", "What was unexpected?", "What did not work so well?", "What would we do differently next time?" Prepare for the next – maybe more extreme – heatwave: build momentum by working closely with strategic partners and stakeholders.

	network to assist in its implementation. Identify the key media partners and prepare key communication messages ahead of a heatwave. Advocate for heatwave prevention measures at the city level such as cooling centres and green areas. Identify where populations that are the most vulnerable to heatwave live and work (e.g. which are the neighbourhoods that tend to have an older population? Where do people work outdoors?) Train community-based health workers on the health consequences of climate change and heatwaves in particular. Prepare local branches, volunteers and the public for possibly more intense and prolonged heatwaves in the future.	Prepare drinking water distribution points: make sure they are located in places that vulnerable populations frequent. Plan household, school and businesses visits or phone outreach in the areas where the people most affected by heatwaves live and / or work. Disseminate key messages and behaviour change communication.	Visit households, schools and businesses in the areas where the people most affected by heatwaves live and / or work. In case of a pandemic (e.g. covid-19), prefer phone outreach to household visits.	change tips though various pre-planned media channels. Ensure volunteer safety: make sure that volunteers stay hydrated, take frequent breaks, use mosquito repellent if needed, etc.	
3. What information sources are available at different times to aid decision-making (years, months, weeks, days, hours ahead)?	Weather trends: how are temperatures and humidity projected to increase in the coming years? Population trends: how are the demographics of the vulnerable groups projected to evolve in the coming years?	Seasonal forecasts available on Weather Agency website.	Weather forecasts available through all media. National Society gets direct mail with warnings. Weekly reports of heat-related morbidity and mortality at the local level.	Weather forecasts available through all media. Daily reports of heat-related morbidity and mortality at the local level.	

Take-home messages for the discussion on Heatwave strategic planning over time:

1. It is essential to have a Heat Action Plan. If such a plan does not exist at your country / city level, your NS can partner with local authorities to develop one (for further guidance please consult the “Heatwave Guide for Cities” and the “City Heatwave Guide for Red Cross Red Crescent Branches” issued by the Climate Centre)
2. Heatwave definitions can vary across countries and region. In order to an early warning system, there needs to be a clear agreement on the thresholds that trigger a Heat Action Plan in your country / region.
3. Heat-related morbidity and mortality are mostly preventable. Community-based efforts are an essential component of Heat Action Plans, especially when they focus on the most vulnerable population groups.
4. Early warning information (seasonal and short-term forecasts on temperature and humidity) can be a good way to better prepare for the health effects of extreme heat, especially when it is combined with humidity. It is a neutral (non-political) determinant for action, and can now be coupled to DREF Forecast based Action (FbA).

Some more suggestions for questions to guide the discussion:

- How does the National Society currently work with local authorities on Heat Action Plan?
- How is heat-related morbidity and mortality monitored in the country? Does the National Society have access to that information? How often?
- What can the National Society do to prevent heat-related morbidity and mortality in the country?
- Thinking about climate change impacts, are there any areas or population groups that you feel should be prioritized in your country? Explain.
- How do the Disaster Management and Health teams collaborate within the National Society?
- As climate change is predicted to result in an increase of health issues related to extreme heat, is the current way of working within the National Society as good as it could be? What kind of long-term planning for change – and extreme heat – within DM and Health might be relevant?
- How can community-based surveillance better prepare for and respond to heatwaves?
- What actions to protect health can be taken if there is a warning of a heatwave in the coming weeks? And where does the NS staff get such warnings?
- Is the National Society currently using such *seasonal* early warning information to plan for health effects of extreme heat? Are health staff using this information? How can the use of such information be improved?
- Is the National Society currently using *short-term* (measured in days) early-warning information to plan for health effects of extreme heat? Are health staff using this information? How can the use of such information be improved?
- Is there a good awareness of the possible effects of climate change on health within the National Society?
- Communicating on climate change to communities can often be challenging. What messages should the National Society give to communities on health implications of heatwaves? How can we encourage behaviour change communication?

Timescales scenario exercise: Heatwaves

You work in country Z where access to health facilities is variable.

Weather trends in the past decades indicate that more intense and prolonged heatwaves combined with humidity have become more frequent. Future climate projections for the region suggest that the trend may continue as global temperatures keep rising up. Country Z is in the part of the world where it is hot most of the year and where heat has not been an issue in the past. That country traditionally experiences a heat season between April and June.

How can the National Society of country Z use the 'early warning' information (below) to scale up its efforts to reduce the health impacts of heatwaves?

Health and DM strategic planning over time **Available information**	**Years trend – and projections:** More intense and prolonged heatwaves combined with humidity are projected to become more frequent. Health impacts of heatwaves are projected to be more intense in urban settings.	**Monthly/ seasonal climate information:** The heat season is approaching. A seasonal forecast for temperature and humidity is provided by the Met office – this season is likely to be extra hot and humid.	**Weekly weather information:** Meteorological office warns that there is a heatwave coming which might affect urban areas.	**Daily weather information**: Heat is above average for multiple consecutive days, with high humidity and little temperature decline during night time, with a peak between 12:00 and 15:00	**Response and recovery:** The heatwave is over.
1. What are national/local health and disaster management programmes ***already*** doing to address these impacts?					

2. As heatwaves patterns change what can the National Society do ***differently*** to reduce their health impact? Provide ideas for changes and improvements to the activities listed in the row above.					
3. What information sources are available at different times to aid decision-making (years, months, weeks, days, hours ahead)?					