Module 2d: Health and climate
What is in this module?
January 2021

Displaced people back in their village and benefitting from a Red Cross water and sanitation programme. *(Photo: Moustapha Diallo/ IFRC)*

Introduction

Few Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies will be left untouched by the health implications of climate change. Climate change will both exacerbate existing health and Water, Hygiene & Sanitation (WASH) issues and cause new challenges: making heatwaves more intense and frequent as well as expanding water-borne diseases to new areas.

Climate change will mostly affect populations that are already vulnerable as they both face a higher risk of exposure to climate hazards and may lack the appropriate resources to protect themselves from those hazards. For example, people living in low-income urban settings have an increased risk of experiencing a severe heatwave and might lack access to safe water or cooling centers.

This module identifies entry points for climate-smart health programming to prepare for and respond to these changing health risks, such as 'early warning early action' for diseases or partnerships between disaster response and health practitioners. It explains practical steps and tools for engaging with stakeholders on how to better integrate the climate change, health and WASH agendas. It is closely linked with the other components of Module 2 (especially *2a Early warning early action*, *2c Community resilience and Climate, 2e Urban and Climate*).

We are grateful for the IFRC Health Department for its expert advice and collaboration to get to this Module.

Objective

The module aims to provide a clear understanding of the impacts of climate change on health and WASH, and provides examples of how the humanitarian community can respond proactively. It offers a starting point for climate-smart health and WASH programming, but much will still need to be 'learned by doing', as it is an emerging area of work.

Products

1. PowerPoint presentations with explanatory notes

This module contains two backbone PowerPoint presentations to help facilitators introduce the topic to national societies:
1. Climate Change & Health: the presentation provides (i) an overview of the different pathways through which climate change affects health; (ii) examples of interventions to

address those consequences; (iii) tools and resources to support the design and implementation of those interventions.

2. Climate Change & WASH: the presentation follows the same structure as the previous one but with a stronger focus on WASH.

The presentations can be tailored for different audiences depending on the specific risks faced by a country or region. We have deliberately used little text on the slides, but filled up the notes section in the PowerPoint for the facilitator. Most of the note section contain "Key talking points" as well as "additional information". The "additional information" aims at providing background information to the facilitator if needed, they do not need to be presented to the audience.

2. Frequently Asked Questions

That document will answer some of the most frequently asked questions about climate change, health and WASH. It will also provide further references if you would like to dig further.

3. Exercises

In this section you will find three exercises.

Exercise 1: This exercise offers a nice interactive introduction for health and WASH staff and volunteers to the different pathways through which climate change affects health as well as potential health and WASH solutions. It offers a nice break in between the PowerPoint session and is perfectly suited for contextualized local discussions on health impacts and solutions.

Exercise 2: To further stimulate discussion, this module also contains 3 scenarios included in that exercise. Part 2A contains two scenarios on diarrhoeal diseases and dengue fever in the context of La Niña. Part 2B contains an exercise on heatwaves. Each contain a worksheet for activities on warnings of climate risks, such as approaching rainy seasons or heatwave.

Exercise 3: This activity provides an interaction on social and environmental determinants of health. The purpose is to illustrate how vulnerability factors can influence the way in way climate change affects different populations.

These exercises also contain discussion questions for the facilitator to use after participants have completed the exercises.

4. Games

In this section we offer two small participatory games.

1. [A buzz about dengue.](#) This first game is encouraging discussion on how to prevent mosquito-borne disease, and how climate might affect the interaction between humans and mosquitoes. The game can be used to trigger further discussions on early detection early action.
2. [Handwashing with Ananse](#) – a full and playful methodology teaching children how, why and when to wash their hands with water and soap. This game won an international award.
3. Climate & Health QUIZ – a quick quiz to deliver before or after the Module, to test the audience's knowledge in a playful way.

5. Experience from Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies

- Health Risk Management in a Changing Climate, a project in Kenya, Tanzania, Vietnam, and Indonesia
- A climate and health training manual developed in collaboration with the Tanzania Red Cross
- City Heatwave Guide for Red Cross Red Crescent Branches: Case studies from p.52 to p.64.
- Advocacy event with The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change the World Health Organization country office in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Red Cross

6. Relevant Reading

While the IFRC offers important resources on epidemic preparedness, this module contains the a variety of background publications on the nexus between health and climate, which can give in-depth theoretical knowledge. The two final publications in this list can help National Societies with step-by-step climate related support in programmes:
- City Heatwave guide
  City Heatwave Guide for Red Cross Red Crescent Branches
- Factsheet: Heatwaves in cities (short)
- IFRC Dengue Advocacy
- IFRC Zika, Dengue, Chikungunya community and school module
- Lancet 2020: Countdown report
- Extreme Heat during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Taking care of humankind at +2 degrees, French Red Cross 2019
- What is climate-smart programming?