

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

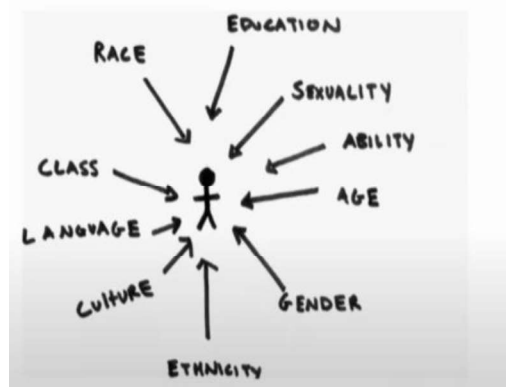


Image: From Kate Crowley at the Scottish Climate Citizen's Assembly, Nov 2020, 12:03 mins into this talk: <https://youtu.be/-4eLuFDslAM>
Also provided on slide 2 of the slideshow.

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. **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.

- 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.
 - Changing rain patterns make crops fail.
 - Mosquitos breed and malaria spreads.
 - Sudden flooding washes buildings away.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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

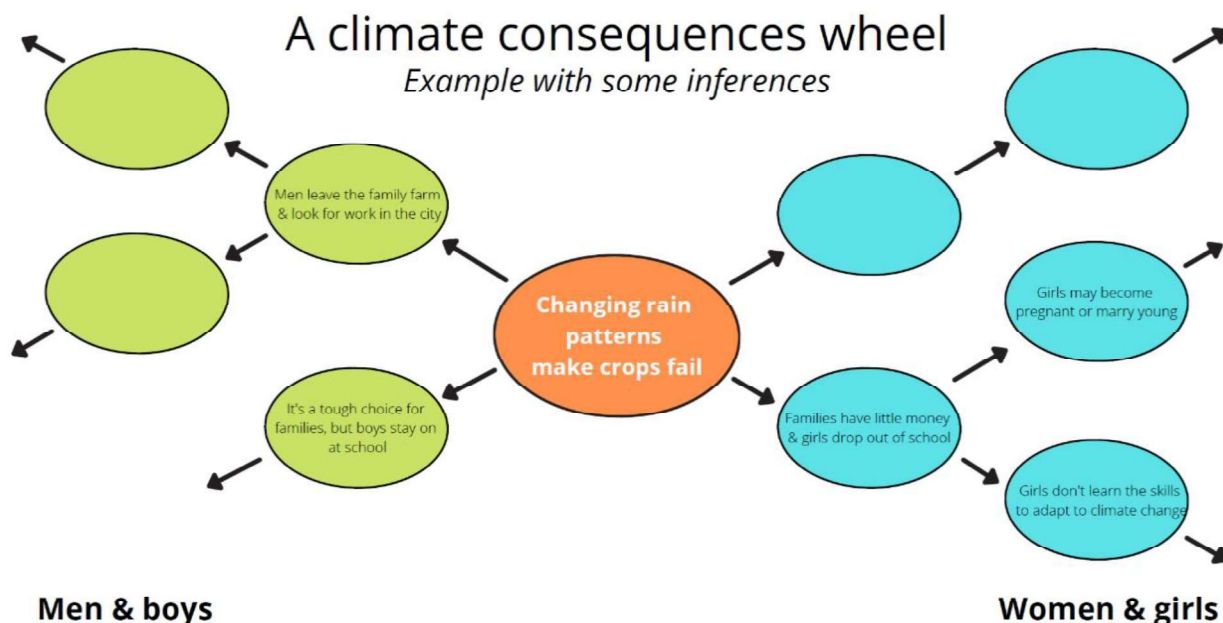
centre of the diagram in opposite directions towards the left and right depending on which characteristic they are thinking about. The consequences should be arranged around the main circle as shown below.

- 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

- 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.

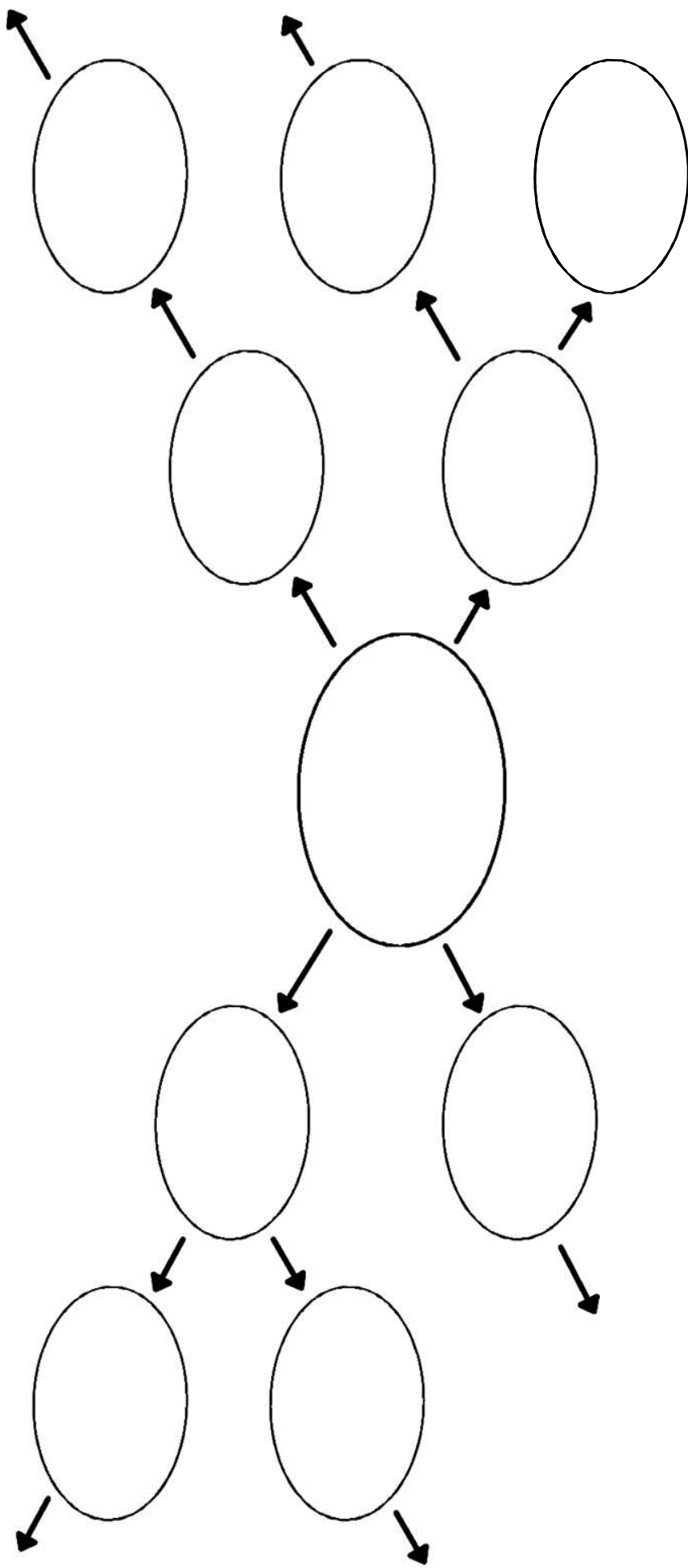
The following example shows the beginning of a consequences wheel to examine the impact of crops failing on 'men and boys' and 'women and girls'.



Adapted from: Oxfam (2015) – ‘Global Citizenship in the Classroom’ p.15: <https://oxfamlibrary.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**