

UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE

The Impacts: How Climate Change Affects Africa

Presenter: Wanjira Mathai, Director of the Partnership for Women's Entrepreneurship in Renewables at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace & Environmental Studies at the University of Nairobi

Lesson Description

This lesson takes a look at the very real effects of climate change on human and animal populations and migration, rainfall-dependent agriculture and the serious problems of drought and changes in typical precipitation patterns, and the intensification of illnesses such as mosquito borne diseases and respiratory and cardiovascular sickness.

Lesson Overview

1. The effects of climate change on African agriculture.
2. The role of climate change in worsening health, including increases in mosquito-borne diseases, tropical fevers, and respiratory illnesses.
3. Climate change and its potential to ignite conflict amongst people and nations.

Discussion Questions

1. What, if any, changes have you seen in the rainfall patterns and agriculture in your community? What changes have you seen in the availability of traditional crops? What changes have you seen in animal populations? How would the loss of predictable rainfall and fertile agricultural land impact the economic health of your community? How would a loss of agricultural production impact the development of your community?
2. Burning fossil fuels, particularly in times of extreme heat, can cause significant loss of air quality. Discuss the differences you can see and smell in air quality between areas with high amounts of fossil fuel emissions and those with little to no fossil fuel emissions. What are the primary causes of greenhouse gas emissions in your community? What steps have you seen taken to reduce or eliminate these emissions?
3. Rising sea levels, flooding, and drought from climate change will alter the land available for human habitat and development. Where do you see the risks to populations from climate change? How prepared do you think the people and governments in your country are for these risks?

Developmental Actions

1. Identify the primary risk factors attributable to climate change in your community. Identify the vulnerable populations associated with these risks. Develop information and resources to educate these populations. Enroll your community in your efforts and work with them to inform others about the risks of climate change.

About the Video Presenter

Wanjira Mathai is the Director of the Partnership for Women's Entrepreneurship in Renewables at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace & Environmental Studies at the University of Nairobi. Daughter of the late Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai, Ms. Mathai is the Chair of the Green Belt Movement, founded by her mother, and sits on the Board of Wangari Maathai Institute. She is a World Future Counselor, Advisory Council Member to the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, member of the Global Restoration Council and a member of the Earth Charter International Council. Ms. Mathai is a graduate of Hobart & William Smith Colleges. She earned graduate degrees in Public Health and Business from Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health and Goizueta School of Business.

