



Psychosocial Centre

NAVIGATING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Mental health and well-being



Psychosocial Centre

Navigating the Climate Crisis: Mental health and well-being

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Executive summary

The climate crisis is increasingly creating health risks for populations worldwide. The direct and indirect impacts on mental health and well-being are concerning and often neglected. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support (PS Centre) mission is to promote and enable mental health and psychosocial well-being at a global level. This work supports Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to develop their capacity to provide mental health and psychosocial support services.

In 2023, the PS Centre initiated a consultation process with the aim to better understand the intersection between mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and climate change in the work of National Societies. Fifteen National Society representatives participated in the project. It was clear from interviews that most aspects of the work of National Societies is impacted by the climate crisis. For all National Societies representatives, the main concern was the well-being of staff and volunteers. In addition, the need for internal and external communication guidelines and educational tools regarding climate change and mental health was stressed. Lastly, participants highlighted the challenges faced by National Societies in implementing inclusive and equitable programming in response to the climate crisis.

This report covers a high-level overview of the climate-related mental health risks as identified by the consulted National Societies. Firstly, at risk population groups are highlighted and implications for the work of IFRC staff and volunteers are addressed. Secondly, examples of initiatives from National Societies are showcased to illustrate potential pathways to addressing the mental health and psychosocial challenges arising from the climate crisis.

Introduction

The climate crisis poses a serious global public health threat. Climate change is already contributing to worsened mental health outcomes, a development which is expected to further deteriorate (1). The frequency and intensity of climate-related [hazards](#) will increase, leading to significant [losses and damage](#) to critical infrastructure and community and personal property (2,3).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has projected that heatwaves and droughts will become more frequent and that storms will be more intense (1). The climate crisis will affect mental health and well-being through multiple pathways. This includes the impact of extreme weather events, cumulative climate change exposures, and anticipated and vicarious climate exposures (4). The severity of the impact is dependent on the level of [exposure](#), [vulnerabilities](#), and the capacity of communities to prepare and respond (5). Taking proactive measures to minimize [risks](#), and enhance resilience is key to protecting lives, health and well-being (6).

The IFRC network responds to these growing humanitarian needs. Staff and volunteers across the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's work towards supporting communities, reducing risks, and preventing loss and damage. The protection and safeguarding of health and well-being, address not only the physical health risks posed by the climate crisis but also the escalating concern for mental health and well-being. The following research process was undertaken to determine how the IFRC PS Centre can best support National Societies in addressing the mental health and psychosocial impacts of the climate crisis.

The core component of the research project was a consultation process with National Societies. Key informants were selected, using snowball sampling, based on their expertise in mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and/or emergency work. A total of 15 interviews were conducted with representatives from nine National Societies. Key informants shared their experiences and challenges with addressing MHPSS needs in the context of [climate change](#).

In this report, we summarise the current research on the mental health and psychosocial impacts of the climate crisis. The crosscutting concerns voiced by the

key informants will be addressed by discussing risk factors and the implications for Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers. Lastly, we showcase the ongoing initiatives by National Societies to counteract these climate and adverse mental health challenges.

The climate crisis: a mental health emergency

The climate crisis will impact all aspects of human life and our environment. This means that climate change will affect mental health and wellbeing in multiple ways. Cumulative climate changes (such as rising temperatures and sea levels) and extreme weather events (storms, floods etc.) will have direct impacts on people and their communities and increase adverse mental health outcomes. In addition, people may experience distress as a result of observing the climate crisis unfold, bearing witness to an environment or community in distress or anticipating the potential impacts (4).



Photo: Myanmar Red Cross

Cumulative climate changes and extreme weather events

The impacts of climate-induced disasters, whether sudden or gradual, deeply affect mental health and well-being. These events cause devastating losses and significant damage to property and infrastructure. These can encompass economic losses such as resources, goods, and services, as well as profound non-economic losses such as loss of life, health, and cultural heritage (Figure 1). The resulting grief and distress can trigger anxiety, depression, and in some cases post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among individuals (7).

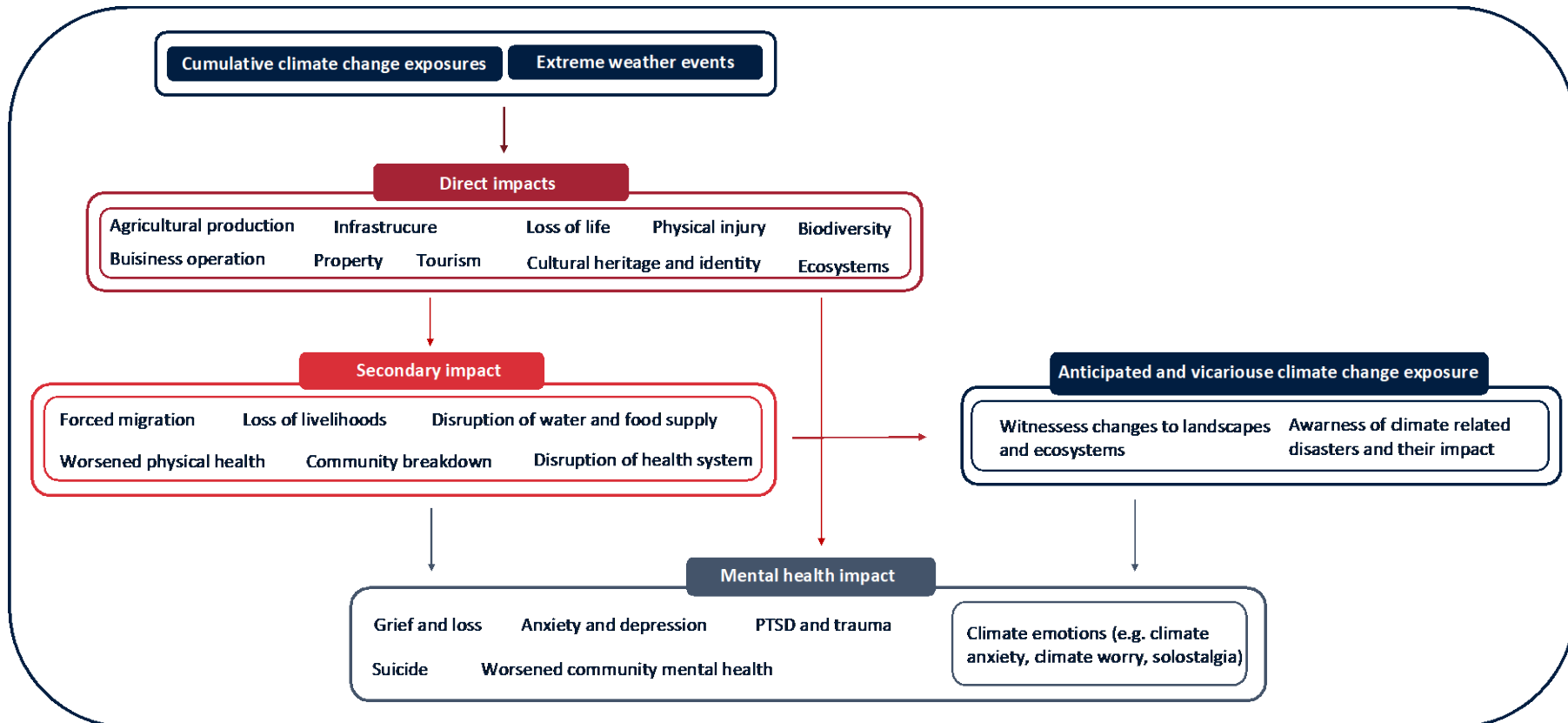


Figure 1: Climate change and mental health (adapted from Augustinavicius (4))

The long-lasting consequences of disasters lead to heightened mental health risks. The destruction of critical infrastructure can disrupt healthcare systems, limiting access to both physical and mental health services. This hampers ongoing care for individuals with chronic health conditions, contributing to increased anguish and declining mental well-being (7).

Loss of livelihood and disruption in access to food and clean drinking water causes severe distress as well (7). The inability to sustain oneself or support family members takes a considerable mental toll, that may result in anxiety, depression, perceived helplessness and hopelessness, and sleep disturbances (8). Displaced populations commonly exhibit particularly high rates of these symptoms due to resource loss, diminished control, and decreased social support (9).

Climate change has escalated the severity and frequency of disasters, with shorter recovery periods and simultaneous occurrences of multiple disasters (10). When communities experience multiple disasters their [compounded and cascading](#) effects need to be considered. Understanding the cyclical patterns and escalating severity of climate-induced disasters is crucial for effective disaster risk reduction planning and adaptation initiatives (11).

Anticipated and vicarious climate exposures

Witnessing, or being aware of, climate threats can trigger a range of emotions. In many cases this is a healthy response to danger. For some people, these climate emotions can lead to more serious mental health concerns. Anxiety, anger, denial, hopelessness, guilt, and cynicism are all potential reactions to witnessing climate change (7). Terms such as 'climate anxiety,' 'eco-distress,' 'ecological grief,' and 'solastalgia', among others, have emerged to describe these strong emotional experiences. For practitioners it is important to know that these terms derive primarily from research conducted in high-income countries. Climate emotions, resulting from direct, secondary, and vicarious exposure to the climate crisis, are a global phenomenon but more research is needed to understand how climate emotions are experienced and expressed in different settings and by different population groups.

The mental health impact of climate change is not just an individual concern. There is a community, cultural, spiritual and social dimension to the mental health

and well-being impacts of climate change. The severity of this impact depends on various social and economic factors. Our social connections, culture, spiritual life and community support significantly influence how we respond to climate change. The processing of climate change-related trauma, uncertainty, and loss can cause distress and anxiety, but it does not inherently lead to long term poor mental health outcomes. When sufficient resources and social supports are available people are more likely to be able to cope. Strong networks offer support and enable collective action, while limited economic resources can hinder preparation and recovery from climate events (7). Consequently, climate change does not affect everyone in society equally. It disproportionately affects the poor and already marginalised in societies.



Photo: Benoit Carpentier

People and communities

The impact of climate change on mental health and well-being can be reduced or even prevented through preparedness measures. While climate change impacts can affect everyone, disadvantaged groups, such as those facing financial hardships or residing in regions highly vulnerable to climate change, bear a disproportionate burden, as adapting to these challenges often necessitates financial resources or external support. If neither are available, one's ability to adapt is limited. Climate change amplifies existing social inequalities and enhances vulnerabilities (12).

Similar to post-disaster contexts, the risk of experiencing poor mental health related to climate change is further dependent on factors such as age, housing, and health status (8). These are also known as the social determinants of (mental) health. Recognizing and addressing the interconnections between climate change, mental health, and social inequalities is vital to ensure adaptation efforts can lead to more effective and inclusive solutions (13).

In the following sections, we discuss the implications for population groups who are of particular concern to the consulted National Societies.

Children and young adults

Potential disruption, caused by the impact of the climate crisis, to life development stages make children and young people more susceptible to poor mental health or mental health conditions (14). These challenges not only add to their stress but also interact with stages of development, possibly changing life paths (7). Risks may occur within a single developmental period or run across multiple periods. The effects differ depending on the timing, severity, and chronicity of exposures. Already during the prenatal phase exposure to climate change related stressors can alter healthy neurological and physiological growth. A high level of vulnerability continues through early childhood due to children's physiological immaturity and rapid neuropsychological development.

In adolescence, disrupted educational attainment and social-support networks related to climate events can delay developmental milestones and increase mental-health vulnerability (15). As a young adult, one is still undergoing

significant neurological and cognitive development. Besides having to cope with the loss and damage caused by the climate crisis many young adults feel they are given the responsibility to solve climate change.

Many children and young adults express worry about the repercussions of climate change in their daily lives. To cope with these concerns, children employ different strategies. Some actively address climate change by seeking information, organising events or taking other direct steps. Others take internally focussed actions such as managing and acknowledging their emotional response to the threat, seeking distractions or finding social support (16). Certain factors, such as involvement in activism, fostering positive future images, finding purpose, utilizing meaning-focused coping mechanisms, and having a sense of agency, act as protective elements for their mental well-being. However, despite their concerns and coping mechanisms, young people often find limited opportunities to voice their ideas, feelings, and hopes about climate issues. Many feel that they lack autonomy, political or economic power or control over the environment.

Their contributions are sometimes dismissed as naive or inexperienced, depriving them of a platform for collaboration. This lack of meaningful engagement not only weakens the global collective response to climate change but also harms the well-being of young people, amplifying their concerns about the future. Moreover, consistent invalidation of their feelings by others can create additional distress, as people may downplay their concerns and undermine the seriousness of their climate-related worries (17). To address the mental health impact of climate change on young adults, it is essential to implement strategies that promote resilience, coping mechanisms, and sustainable solutions to mitigate the environmental challenges they face. Additionally, involving young adults in decision-making processes and validating their concerns can contribute to a sense of agency and empowerment, positively influencing their mental well-being.



Photo: Pramin Manandhar

Older adults

Older adults (individuals aged 65+) possess extensive knowledge and valuable experience that can aid in adapting to, and mitigating, the negative impacts of climate change. Older adults, who represent the cultural roots, knowledge, and wisdom for many communities, serve as a vital link to ancestors and act as custodians of the environment, land, and culture. Engaging older people in climate initiatives not only taps into their wisdom but also bolsters support for climate policies by leveraging their intimate knowledge of local environments and their memories of past events. Collaboration with older adults can not only help resolve vulnerabilities in this specific age group but also address the climate crisis overall.

However, older adults face distinctive risks due to climate change. Some older adults experience poor physical health, have greater risk of depression and anxiety, and have limited access to support and services. In addition, a lack of inclusive preparedness planning compounds the risk of climate-related illnesses and dangers older adults face (18). For example, heat-related deaths among older adults have almost doubled globally in the past 20 years; and in the case of floods or wildfires, older people are less likely to receive timely warnings because of illiteracy, poor access to phones and other digital technologies. In many cases they are also less mobile and often unwilling to leave their home despite the threat (19).

People with disabilities and chronic health conditions

People with disabilities and chronic health conditions are faced with unique challenges when confronted with the consequences of climate change.

Presently, approximately 1.3 billion people, close to 16% of the global population, live with disabilities (20). Their vulnerability is magnified by climate change, yet they are often overlooked in adaptation strategies. These individuals face heightened risks during extreme weather events and experience barriers in accessing services due to physical and social environments. Recognizing their capabilities and adapting to their needs is vital. Emergency response systems need to shift away from equating disability with vulnerability and acknowledge their resilience and potential contributions (21).

Individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions and chronic illnesses can be highly vulnerable to climate-related events, as well. Conditions like schizophrenia, dementia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder can heighten health risks during extreme weather events. Individuals with physical chronic health conditions who are dependent on medication or who have limited mobility are at a similar risk. Inadequate evacuation planning and emergency supplies endanger their health and well-being. The disruption of care, displacement to a foreign environment and loss of social ties can cause confusion, distress, and anxiety (22).

Acknowledging and addressing the distinct vulnerabilities of people with disabilities, and those with pre-existing health conditions is crucial in climate change adaptation strategies. Collaborative efforts between individuals and service providers are crucial for promoting inclusivity and enabling survival across diverse communities.

Indigenous peoples

[Indigenous peoples](#) around the globe harbour rich and distinctive cultures, languages, and social systems. They are often overlooked and subjected to widespread human rights violations and land dispossession. These historical traumas, compounded by ongoing socio-cultural and economic disparities, manifest in elevated rates of mental health challenges such as psychological illnesses, suicide, and substance misuse (23,24). Indigenous peoples' direct exposure to climate change, coupled with indirect stressors like restricted land access and diminished opportunities to pass on traditional knowledge, highlights the potential increase in mental health and psychosocial needs. Elders express deep concerns for the future generation's ties to their culture and the land, emphasizing the vital role of land in bolstering self-worth and preserving essential cultural practices linked to positive mental health (25).

Climate change deeply distresses Indigenous communities, whose lives, livelihoods, and culture are profoundly intertwined with the land they live on (23,26). Forced displacement due to inhabitable lands exacerbates feelings of dispossession and grief, amplifying past traumas and mental health stressors (7). The disruption of cultural ties, perceived disrespect to ancestors or future generations, disrupted access to traditional foods, and social injustices further

cause anguish and grief (27), underscoring the pivotal role of cultural traditions and time spent on the land as coping mechanisms.

Climate change intensifies vulnerabilities unique to Indigenous peoples. The significance of traditional knowledge, cultural identity, social bonds, and kinship emerges as crucial adaptation and coping strategies. Community solidarity stands out as a potential protective factor against climate-related mental health challenges. Acknowledging and leveraging Indigenous communities' knowledge and awareness is pivotal in fortifying their resilience to cope with health adversities stemming from climate disruptions, both in the present and the future (25).

Persons experiencing homelessness or inadequate housing

Rising sea-level and extreme weather events put [inadequately housed](#) individuals at risk of becoming homeless. Individuals who are inadequately housed or experiencing homelessness are particularly exposed to climate-related risks such as air pollution, extreme heat and cold (28). Limited ability to prepare for and recover from climate-related disasters due to a lack of resources is a severe mental health stressor.

Persons experiencing homelessness often have inadequate access to health and social care services. A climate-related event exacerbates vulnerabilities such as chronic illnesses, physical exposure, and stigmatization. The short- and long-term impacts of a climate-related disaster can harm the individual's mental health status. People living with an existing mental health condition are of particular risk and likely to experience a worsening of their symptoms (29). Nevertheless, they are not included in many climate risk mitigation and disaster response strategies (28).

Societal outcomes

There are numerous societal outcomes stemming from the climate crisis, yet conflict and climate-induced migration stand out as pivotal considerations for humanitarian work.

Climate mobility

Climate change does not just cause injuries and fatalities; it triggers a cascade of human mobility. Disasters, exacerbated by climate impacts like sea-level rise, intensified droughts, and extreme weather events, are anticipated to escalate human migration in various forms. This climate-driven movement is broadly categorized into three types: *displacement*, where people are temporarily forced to leave their homes due to climate disasters; *relocation*, involving permanent shifts away from hazardous areas; and *migration*, voluntary movements within or across borders driven by multiple pressures, including climate risks (30). In 2020, disasters displaced approximately 30.7 million individuals, over three times more than by conflict and violence (31). Cyclones, floods, and droughts, linked to climate change, fuelled this displacement (32).

The aftermath of these disasters forcibly uproots communities, pushing them into inadequate temporary shelters. Overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in these spaces breed diseases, compounding existing health risks and overwhelming healthcare systems. Moreover, environmental migration and displacement fracture social bonds, impacting the mental well-being not only of the mobile populations but also families that stayed behind (33).

Migration, particularly when forced, becomes an immensely stressful experience exacerbated by factors such as a lack of social support, weak health systems, economic hardships, discrimination, and limited access to essential services. The consequences encompass diminished self-esteem, challenges in adapting to new surroundings, and heightened rates of mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety (30).

To address the stated challenges requires health systems that are inclusive of migrants and resilient to climate impacts. There's an urgent need for comprehensive strategies that recognize and support the health needs of mobile populations, including traditionally nomadic population groups and climate-

driven mobility within and across borders amidst the escalating challenges of climate change.

Conflict

Evidence underlines that climate crises, water shortages, and land degradation fuel conflict and extremism (34). Nations grappling with armed conflicts find themselves particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change (35). The challenge intensifies as the adaptive capacities of people, systems, and institutions already strained by conflict become further limited. Across fragile regions, we witness soaring food insecurity, and escalating resource competition.

Conflict-related violence significantly impacts mental health, leading to distress, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress among affected populations. Simultaneously, the available mental health services are often inadequate, underscoring the urgent need for improved support mechanisms in conflict-affected areas. Alarming, 90% of the world's refugees originate from nations already grappling with the climate crisis or possessing the least ability to adapt to a harsher environment. Addressing climate change not only aids in mitigating its effects but also tackles numerous conflict drivers, contributing significantly to peace-building efforts (36).

Conflicts inflict devastating physical and mental harm and disrupt societies, amplifying disparities and impeding development, leaving lasting scars on individuals and communities. The convergence of climate risks and conflict compounds challenges, escalating food and economic insecurities, and health disparities, and restricting access to crucial services. The intersection weakens governmental, institutional, and societal capacities to provide necessary support. Its impact is not only extensive but far-reaching, influencing mobility patterns, resource access, and health (35).

Conflicts lead to reduced institutional capabilities in environmental management. In certain scenarios, the environmental fallout from conflicts contributes to climate change, such as the exploitation of natural resources to sustain war economies. In regions marked by persistent conflict, combating climate change is instrumental in achieving peace, stability, and future prosperity (34). To address these complex challenges, anticipation of risks and bolstering resilience are key. Protecting communities involves promoting environmental respect during

conflicts, adapting livelihoods and shelters, fortifying access to hazard-resistant essential services, and enhancing awareness of risks and adaptation methods (35).

How are National Societies impacted?

Staff and volunteers witness the dramatic alterations in the environment and worldwide consequences of climate change in their direct environment and globally. This can evoke a sense of helplessness and fear for the future. Depending on the extent of the exposure to climate change consequences and the level of other mental health stressors it can severely impact the psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers.

In disaster-prone regions, there is the additional fear of potential losses and displacement as the climate crisis progresses. Staff and volunteers can be directly impacted by climate-related disasters just like the communities they support. This becomes particularly challenging when they are involved in disaster response. Balancing personal grief with professional responsibility intensifies the emotional toll.

However, emergency responders and humanitarian workers who have not been directly impacted can also experience distress. They engage in the critical phases of disaster management, from preparedness to response and recovery. Working on the frontlines, they witness the immediate and lasting impacts of climate-related disasters on communities. Providing hope becomes a monumental task as disasters become more frequent and severe.

Staff and volunteer well-being is of utmost importance both from an ethical and organizational perspective. Their mental health and well-being need to be ensured so they can continue their essential work.

The climate crisis will have an impact on all programmes of National Societies. It transcends the realm of emergency management. The work of all staff and volunteers, not just emergency teams, are affected by the consequences of climate change. Climate-induced changes in migration patterns pose challenges for migration teams who must adapt to evolving population dynamics.

Simultaneously, climate change exacerbates social inequality, placing marginalized communities at a disproportionate risk. This has important implications for the work of Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers. The ethical dimensions of working with issues related to social justice, social inclusion and equity become an increasing challenge as the disproportional impact of climate-related disasters needs to be addressed.

The work of communication staff and department are crucial allies in responding to the climate crisis. Information, education, and communication (IEC) materials shared by National Societies shape public awareness and understanding of the climate crisis. In the age of social media, people are overwhelmed with a constant flow of information. Clear communication of science-based content is essential to building trust. Successful climate change mitigation and adaptation depends on public trust in experts and governing authorities. Effective communication can be a tool to promote climate mitigation actions and foster a sense of agency and hope. National Societies need clear, relevant, and targeted information on the climate change impacts on MHPSS. There is a need for clear and consistent messaging to inform the work of National Societies both within their agencies and with their communities.



Photo: Guillaume Binet

What are National Societies doing?

The following section outlines several examples of programmes and projects shared by National Societies consulted for this report. These programmes span a range of sectors from MHPSS, to disaster resilience and livelihoods. This diversity reflects the cross-cutting nature of climate impacts and the need for integrated approaches to addressing the impacts of the climate crisis on mental health and wellbeing.



Photo: Nav Photography

Weather Together

British Red Cross

"Weather Together" is a comprehensive educational toolkit designed by the British Red Cross to empower learners aged 10-16 with the essential skills and knowledge needed to understand and navigate the impact of weather and climate change. This resource aims to prepare young minds for extreme weather events, fostering resilience and promoting proactive responses to environmental challenges.

The toolkit encompasses three crucial topics:

1. **Flood Education:** Providing insights into the dynamics of floods, learners will gain a deep understanding of the causes, impacts, and preventive measures associated with flooding. The goal is to equip them with the knowledge to make informed decisions in flood-prone situations.
2. **Heatwaves:** Addressing the increasing frequency and intensity of heatwaves, this section delves into the science behind heatwaves, their effects on communities, and strategies for staying safe and resilient during extreme heat events.
3. **Eco-Anxiety:** Recognizing the psychological impact of climate change, "Weather Together" addresses eco-anxiety – the emotional response to environmental challenges. This topic helps learners navigate and manage their emotions, fostering a sense of agency and empowerment.

"Weather Together" goes beyond traditional environmental education. It recognizes the emotional toll climate-related events can have on young minds and strives to equip them not only with scientific knowledge but also with the emotional tools to cope. In a world where climate change is a reality, empowering the younger generation with the tools to comprehend, adapt, and act is crucial. "Weather Together" is a valuable resource, paving the way for a generation that is equipped with the knowledge to face the environmental challenges (37).

Team Austria App

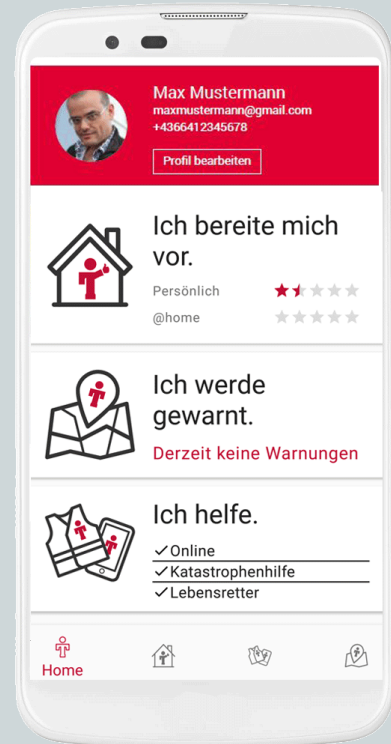
Austrian Red Cross

Team Austria promotes a unique concept of proactive assistance, emphasizing a pre-deposited willingness to help that can be rapidly and purposefully deployed in times of need. The Team Austria app serves as a digital hub, with the three following functions:

The "I want to prepare myself" function assists users in preparing for various scenarios, offering practical tips for everyday situations and specific challenges like extreme weather events. The app serves as a personal preparation assistant, guiding users in securing their homes and providing tailored behavioural tips for different circumstances.

The "I want to be warned" function ensures timely and accurate information during storms or catastrophic events. Official disaster warnings and weather alerts are delivered to individually specified locations, enabling users to take precautions and prevent potential damage.

The "I want to help" function allows users to contribute as online helpers through their smartphones. The app assigns tasks that aid emergency services in assessing situations during crises, such as measuring temperature, reporting snow depth, or sending photos of affected areas.



Inclusive Resilience project

Canadian Red Cross

Effective outreach is paramount in preparing for and responding to climate-related disasters, as it directly impacts the lives and well-being of individuals. The most vulnerable populations, including remote communities, older adults, and indigenous people, face heightened risks in the wake of the climate crisis. Recognizing this, the Inclusive Resilience Project has emerged as a vital initiative with the primary objective of safeguarding the physical and mental health of these populations through optimized preparedness and response measures.

The project starts with an initial research phase which is instrumental in tailoring the outreach efforts to each targeted community. This phase involves identifying or developing the most suitable messaging, tools, and delivery modalities. The goal is to ensure that the information resonates effectively within diverse contexts and addresses the unique challenges faced by each community. Following the research phase, a rigorous testing process is implemented to gauge the uptake and effectiveness of the tools and messages. This iterative approach allows for adaptation and refinement based on real-world feedback. The tools and messages undergo retesting to validate their impact, and once refined, they are finally implemented for widespread use.

The Inclusive Resilience Project stands as a proactive and adaptive initiative, recognizing that the success of outreach efforts hinges on tailoring strategies to specific community needs. By prioritizing inclusivity, adaptability, and effectiveness, the project contributes significantly to enhancing the resilience of vulnerable populations in the face of climate-related disasters (38).

RediCommunities

Australian Red Cross

RediCommunities is an Australian Red Cross (ARC) facilitated process that empowers high-risk communities to develop and implement their own disaster resilience action plans. Embracing a “whole-of-community approach”, it ensures diverse representation and community voice in the resilience-building process.

Through guided workshops, communities initially assess risks, form local teams, and create customised resilience plans. By tapping into local knowledge, networks, and leadership, RediCommunities cultivates a participatory culture.

Following the development of the community’s disaster resilience action plan, Red Cross provides ongoing support to implement the prioritised actions, including the development of household disaster plans, school sessions, and initiatives aimed at bolstering resilience.

Within RediCommunities ARC use their Community Assessment Tool (RediCAT), to establish resilience baselines for each community, aiding in tracking progress over time and identifying areas needing attention.

ARC have had noted and evaluated success with this model - seeing a marked increase in people’s knowledge and confidence of what to do in times of disaster, social connection, and understanding of the psychosocial impacts of disasters.

Overall, RediCommunities embodies a community-driven approach to disaster resilience, prioritising collaboration, inclusivity, and tailored solutions. Its overarching aim is to build stronger, more connected communities ready to confront the uncertainties of the future.

Teen Prep Kit Wellness and Resilience Activities

Global Disaster Preparedness Centre and American Red Cross

The Teen Prep Kit was a global project engaging Red Cross Red Crescent youth to create preparedness content on disaster risk reduction, emergency planning, climate change, health, wellness and resilience, and leadership and future building. Activities aimed to make preparedness information more accessible and enjoyable for teens, fostering teamwork and pushing them beyond their comfort zones.

The kit addresses the stressors of life, offering coping mechanisms, self-care techniques, and guidance on building support systems to enhance resilience. For instance, the calm breathing exercise is a tool to effectively manage emotions in stressful situations, aiding in coping with feelings of being overwhelmed or anxious while strengthening inner resilience. ¹



¹ Photo: Philippine Red Cross

KwaZulu-Natal projects

South African Red Cross

The KwaZulu province of South Africa is already coping with climate change impacts. With the goal of increasing income generation and food accessibility, the South African Red Cross has implemented a number of projects in the region.

One of these initiatives being the uMzimkhulu bakery. The project created job opportunities and made bakery products readily available. Prior the community members were depended on a bakery truck that only came to the village once a week. The new income source supports community members to adapt to and mitigate climate risks.



The Sibusiso Mahlangu food garden was created to fight food insecurity using climate resilient crops. In collaboration with community members, SARCS volunteers grow vegetables which are used to support vulnerable community members.

In Itshelimnayama eight women run a sewing project, initiated by SARCS. Their income enhances their livelihoods and supports their families. Income generation can enable community members to take action towards adapting to or mitigating climate change risks.²



² Photo: South African Red Cross Society

Climate Smart Resilience Project

Zimbabwe Red Cross

The project was designed to fortify community adaptation to climate change by implementing comprehensive climate change adaptation initiatives rooted in the sustainable livelihoods framework. The primary objective is to bolster community resilience through inclusive climate-smart adaptation initiatives.

Guided by the [Minimum Standards for local climate-smart disaster risk reduction](#), the project aims to implement practical approaches for climate-smart DRR and livelihood activities that are achievable by communities. This involves promoting anticipatory actions, and livelihoods, diversification using inclusive approaches.

One key activity being the protection of agroecosystems and promoting the use of nature-based solutions to mitigate climate shocks. This will involve improving communities' capacities for natural resource management through training and adopting best practices, and efficient resource use. The project created a platform for the community to come together and jointly take action towards protecting their homes and community.

Scan QR code to access *The Well-being Guide* which includes a range of stress management techniques.



More resources on mental health and psychosocial support can be found on the PS Centre website.

Terminology

Adaptation

“In human systems, the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, the process of adjustment to actual climate and its effects; human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects.”
(39)

Adequate housing

“For housing to be adequate, it must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:

- (1) Security of tenure: housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have a degree of tenure security which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions, harassment and other threats.
- (2) Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure: housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking, heating, lighting, food storage or refuse disposal.
- (3) Affordability: housing is not adequate if its cost threatens or compromises the occupants’ enjoyment of other human rights.
- (4) Habitability: housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety or provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards.
- (5) Accessibility: housing is not adequate if the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups are not taken into account.
- (6) Location: housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas.
- (7) Cultural adequacy: housing is not adequate if it does not respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity” (40)

Biodiversity

“Biodiversity or biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, among other things, terrestrial, marine and other

aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.” (39)

Climate change

“A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings such as modulations of the solar cycles, volcanic eruptions and persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or land use.” (39)

Climate extreme (extreme weather or climate event)

“The occurrence of a value of a weather or climate variable above (or below) a threshold value near the upper (or lower) ends of the range of observed values of the variable. By definition, the characteristics of what is called extreme weather may vary from place to place in an absolute sense. When a pattern of extreme weather persists for some time, such as a season, it may be classified as an extreme climate event, especially if it yields an average or total that is itself extreme (e.g., high temperature, drought, or heavy rainfall over a season)” (39)

Compounding and cascading Events

“A cascading hazard refers to a primary event (trigger), such as heavy rainfall, seismic activity, or rapid snowmelt, followed by a chain of consequences that may range from modest (lesser than the original event) to substantial. Also, the type of cascading damage and losses may be more severe than if they had occurred separately. A classic example is the major earthquake that struck Japan in 2011, which triggered a tsunami that led to failure of the Fukushima nuclear reactor.”(11)

Exposure

“The presence of people; livelihoods; species or ecosystems; environmental functions, services, and resources; infrastructure; or economic, social, or cultural assets in places and settings that could be adversely affected.” (39)

Hazard

“The potential occurrence of a natural or human-induced physical event or trend that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, as well as damage and loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision, ecosystems and environmental resources.” (39)

Indigenous Peoples

“Indigenous Peoples and nations are those that, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present principally non-dominant sectors of society and are often determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and common law system.” (39)

Loss and damage

“The technical term given to the unavowed or unavoidable devastation that is being caused by higher global temperatures that have resulted from human-induced climate change is “loss and damage”. The “loss” of loss and damage refers to things that are lost permanently to the climate crisis such as human and animal lives, species, territories, water sources, ecosystems, livelihoods, heritage sites and languages. The “damage” of loss and damage refers to things that have been affected by the climate crisis but can be restored, such as impacts to physical and mental health, soils, roads, schools, homes, health centres, and businesses.” (41)

Resilience

“The capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure. Resilience is a positive attribute when it maintains capacity for adaptation, learning and/or transformation.” (39)

Risk

“The potential for adverse consequences for human or ecological systems, recognizing the diversity of values and objectives associated with such systems. In the context of climate change, risks can arise from potential impacts of climate change as well as human responses to climate change. Relevant adverse consequences include those on lives, livelihoods, health and well-being, economic, social and cultural assets.” (39)

Vulnerability

“The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.” (39)

Well-being

“A state of existence that fulfils various human needs, including material living conditions and quality of life, as well as the ability to pursue one’s goals, to thrive and to feel satisfied with one’s life.” (39)

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