

MAKING THE CHANGE: FEMALE CLIMATE FIGHTERS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Climate change is often spoken about as an environmental threat and not a human one. This needs to change. Climate change is already having a huge impact on millions of people all over the world, making it an urgent issue to resolve.

Narrated by the poet Roger McGough, this film and the accompanying stories focus on how some women in different countries around the world (Bolivia, Philippines, Zimbabwe and the UK) have been affected by and are responding to climate change. Additional background information about these countries and communities are provided in *Climate Change Impacts*. Suggestions for using these resources in the classroom, linking to a number of curricular areas, are provided in *Teaching Ideas*.

What is climate change?

Overwhelming scientific evidence shows that there have been changes in the global climate since the early 1900s. The vast majority of scientists agree that these climate changes are largely a result of human activities and excessive greenhouse gas emissions, which are warming up the Earth. This is climate change, often referred to as *global warming*.

The human impacts of climate change

In the last two decades, there has been an increase in certain types of extreme weather events, notably erratic rainfall. This contributes to floods and droughts, as well as unpredictable seasons. The results are failed harvests, destroyed homes, water scarcity and deepening health crises. This means that many millions of people who were already struggling for sufficient food, water and shelter are finding it even more difficult. While not all weather events can necessarily be attributed to human influences, scientists expect that climate change will increase their frequency and intensity.

Climate change affects everyone but many people in poorer countries are, and will continue to be, hit harder than many people in wealthier ones. People living in the most food-insecure regions of the world will be hit hardest of all. Ironically (and unfairly), the people who contribute the least to climate change are the ones who suffer the most.

Women and climate change

Although all poor people are vulnerable to climate change and extreme weather, women are often the most vulnerable because they frequently have a wider burden of responsibilities and are more dependent on natural resources to carry out their tasks. These responsibilities usually include childcare and performing tasks that rely on the availability of clean water. Men are often in a stronger position to cope (that is, be less vulnerable) because of their access to the cash economy.

What is Oxfam doing about climate change?

- *Reducing the risks*

Tackling climate change is a vital part of Oxfam's work, especially as it threatens to reverse many of the advances made in tackling poverty over previous decades. We are working with communities around the world, such as those featured in this resource, linking people to the support and skills they need to understand and adapt to the changes they are facing, and to reduce the risks from hazards.

- *Campaigning for action*

Oxfam is challenging world leaders to take more ambitious action against climate change. We are campaigning for a global climate change deal that:

- Reduces carbon emissions to a level that keeps global warming below 1.5°C – the limit to which it is possible for communities to adapt.
- Provides sufficient finance to enable vulnerable countries and communities to adapt to climate change.

Oxfam believes that climate change can be tackled and disaster avoided if world leaders act together, with rich countries – those historically most responsible for climate change – leading the way.

Further support

The following resources and websites may also be of use in teaching about climate change.

Oxfam resources on climate change

- *Climate challenge*

Investigate the causes and human impact of climate change with these cross-curricular resources linked to English, geography and science. Find out more about how communities are adapting to climate change and consider what actions can be taken to tackle the issue.

- *For the love of*

This resource supports learners to get active by learning about climate change then writing or drawing a personal message to their MP and/or holding a meeting with their local MP.

Useful websites

- The Guardian: How to teach climate change

<http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2014/mar/03/how-to-teach-climate-change>

- TES Connect: Climate Change

<http://www.tes.co.uk/TaxonomySearchResults.aspx?area=resources&keywords=climate+change>

- The Science Museum's Climate Science Info Zone

<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/climatechanging/climatescienceinfozone.aspx>

- The Met Office Climate Guide

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-guide>

- Climate Kids: NASA's Eyes on the Earth

<http://climatekids.nasa.gov/>

- Oxfam Policy & Practice. The climate change blog has up-to-date case studies and debate about our work on climate change:

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/climate-change-drr>

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The latest IPCC report is the global go-to source for the latest research on climate change:

<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>

- The Global Carbon Atlas

<http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/?q=en/emissions>