

# Dealing with Disasters

## Lesson plan 5: A causes web

**Age group: 11 - 14**

### Aims:

To identify different causes of, and solutions to, a disaster.

To help pupils realise that there is seldom one single cause of a disaster.

The causes web can be a useful way of beginning to look at a disaster and its causes. It can show how the root causes need to be addressed before any long-term solution can be found.

### What to do:

Divide pupils into pairs. Download and photocopy the **worksheet** (below) so that you have one copy for each pair. Download and photocopy the **individual testimonies** (below), and cut them up so that each pair of pupils has one testimony.

Ask pupils to read their testimony, agreeing on and noting any questions that they would like to ask the teacher or further information that they will need to look up (difficult words, etc). Now ask them to fill in the worksheet, noting down what they think the disaster is in the central bubble and the causes and solutions that they can identify in the outer circles. Ask each pair to share their diagram with another.

As a class, discuss the following: which causes do they feel are most significant? How do these causes interact to cause a disaster? How can these causes be tackled?

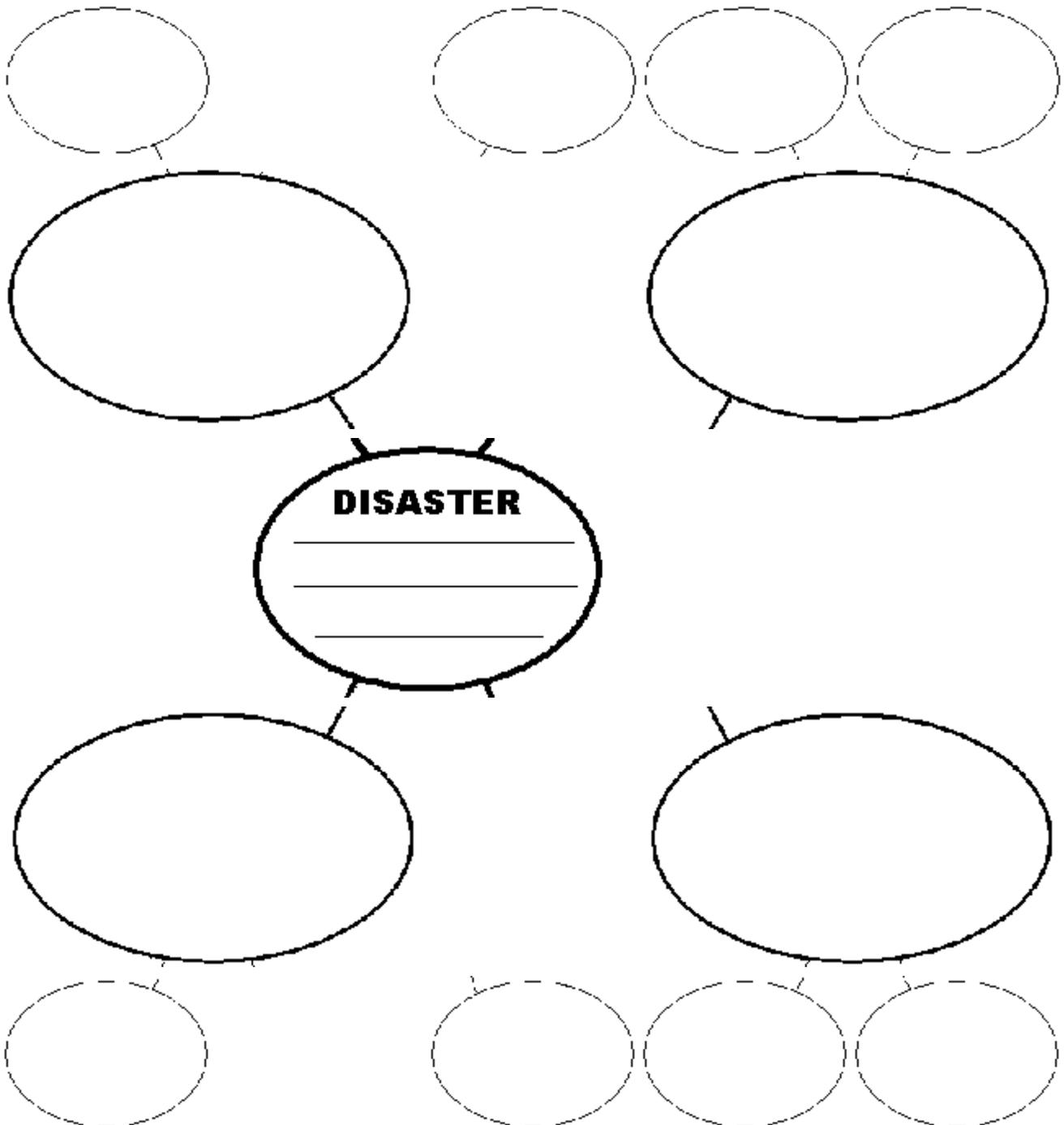
### Curriculum links:

England	Scotland	Wales
Geography: - Analyse and evaluate evidence; draw and justify conclusions; study issues of topical significance; effects of environmental planning and management on people, places and environments; causes and effects of a hazard and human responses. Citizenship/PSHE: - How to empathise.	Environmental Studies; Society: - Human-physical interactions. - Developing informed attitudes; interaction of people with their environment. English: - Listening and talking in groups; talking about feelings, experiences and opinions. PSD: - Social development.	Geography: - Analyse and evaluate evidence and draw and justify conclusions; study issues of topical significance; effects of environmental planning and management on people, places and environments; causes and effects of a hazard and human responses to it. PSE: Empathise with others'.

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## Worksheet: A causes web

In the circle at the centre of the web write down the disaster that the person in your case study is facing. In the circles with the thicker border write down some of the causes of that disaster. Finally in the circles on the edge with the fine lines write down how these causes might be tackled.



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## Worksheet: individual testimonies

"In 1992, this area experienced the worst drought of the century. Our maize was destroyed and we were left with only a little millet. Even those with much land lost their crops, so there was no work for us. There was emergency food, but it came so late . . . There was much hunger in our villages, some children died from dysentery. My husband used to send money because he was working in Harare. He worked in a factory. But he came home because there was no more work. We had even less money to buy food. Our three children ate only one meal a day. For many weeks we just had sadza (boiled maize meal) with no meat or vegetables. Last year we could not afford to buy seed or fertiliser, and so we planted less. There was no money to hire oxen, so I ploughed the land by hand. I will have to work on other farms for food. If the rains are bad again, I don't know if we will survive." *Dorothy Chiredze, Masvingo, Zimbabwe*

"It is a tradition that you do not push people away from your home. You share the limited food, you finish it, and you starve together so the suffering comes to all of you. Before the war started people were settled: we had no need to move from place to place, no insecurity. We planted sorghum and finger millet last year but, because we still all feel insecure after the raid on Akot, we did not plant enough. Then the rains were not very good, and the crops have been poor. People will not go off and fish, because of the insecurity. Now people are hungry, they are full of discontent, they no longer abide by the laws. All this is because of the war. Peace is the priority." *Chief Dut Malual, Akot, Sudan*

"I left home. I went to one of my mate's houses. Then I got put in foster care. Came out of foster care, put into a children's home . . . was too old to be in there, so they took me out, put me in bed and breakfast. 'Cos I had no money and no food, I was taking food from the cupboard and like, just to feed myself . . . An' I was caught and I was moved out of there. I moved into another bed and breakfast after than one and 'cos I didn't get on with the people anyway . . . I was getting the blame for everything basically . . . I decided to go on the streets." *Steve, aged 18 from the UK (reproduced with permission of Crisis).*

"I used to live on the neighbouring island of Hatiya. When I was there I had to move three times because my houses kept collapsing into the river as the flood waters changed. My first husband used to work building embankments to stop flooding. He died after catching a disease from the dirty water and because we could not afford medical treatment for him. I was left with a young son. It is considered unacceptable for a woman to work outside the home and the other villagers persuaded me to marry again shortly afterwards. I had a daughter, Jasmin, who is now eight but my husband died in 1988. My son has now married and moved away. I came to live here because I heard that the government was distributing unowned land to people like us. But they did not allocate any land to me because I am a woman. Now I'm squatting here because I have nowhere else to go. I have to go round and ask the neighbours every day for food. They usually give me something, a few *taka* (coins) or a handful of rice. My daughter and I are often hungry, she has to wait until I come home with something before she can eat. If I had a little bit of land, it would give me some security: I could have a kitchen garden and sell vegetables." *Arfaza Begum, Bangladesh*

"We do not own any land and so I have to work on other people's land to earn a living. I get Tk 40–50 (50–62p) per day, but work is only available for about six months of the year. At other times it's very hard. I try to save and these savings last about a month, but then I have to take out a loan. It is hard to pay back a loan, and still earn enough money for the family to survive. Last year we were not worried by the floods at first – after all, they come every year. We kept thinking 'the water will go down' but it just stayed high. As the waters rose we moved onto our flat tin roof. There was very little dry wood for cooking and so we sometimes went hungry. Our animals suffered too because fodder to feed them was so short. Since last year's floods we have been working together to raise the level of this village. You can see that it is built on a steep bank about 10 feet high. All the work is done by hand, with people carrying basket loads of earth. Even during the dry season, there is plenty of preparation that goes on for the floods." *Gafur Zoarder, Bangladesh*