

Lesson Plan: Poverty and Climate: an inextricable link

A teacher-contributed lesson plan by Dr. Ameeta Motwani, Jesus and Mary College (University of Delhi), India.

As a **High School** or **Undergraduate Economics** or **Social Sciences** teacher, you can use this set of computer-based tools to help you in teaching about **poverty, the impact of climate change on global poverty** and **the ways to manage it** in the current and future scenarios.

This lesson plan includes reading resources to teach students about poverty, how it is exacerbated by climate change and the measures needed to manage it using the guidelines provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Thus, the use of this lesson plan allows you to integrate the teaching of a climate science topic with a core topic in Economics or Social Sciences.

Use this lesson plan to help your students find answers to:

- Define poverty and briefly explain its causes.
- What is the 'vicious circle of poverty'? How can the poverty cycle be broken?
- 'It is the poor who are affected most by climate change'. Do you agree? Give reasons in support of your answer.
- Explain the impact of climate change on poor women and children.
- How are the struggles against poverty and climate change interlinked?
- What policies and actions are needed to mitigate climate change as well as reduce poverty?

About the Lesson Plan

Grade Level: High School, Undergraduate

Discipline: Economics, Social Sciences

Topic(s) in Discipline: Poverty, Absolute or Extreme Poverty, Poverty Trap, Poverty Cycle, Human Development, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Climate Adaptation, Climate Mitigation, Disaster Management, Resilience, Inequality

Climate Topic: Climate and the Anthroposphere

Location: Global, South East Asia, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Philippines, Honduras

Access: Online, Offline

Language(s): English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian

Approximate Time Required: 60-75 min

1 Contents

1. Reading (45-60 min)

A chapter reading that defines what is poverty, poverty in the context of a country's economy, and the causes for poverty, with reference to South-East Asian countries. It also describes the relationship of climate change and poverty and outlines strategies to counteract the impacts of climate change.

This can be accessed at:

http://www.seameo.org/SEAMEOWeb2/images/stories/Publications/Centers_pub/2011RECSAM-ClimateChange-TeachersGuidebook/RECSAM-ClimateChange.pdf (Chapter VII)

2. Reading (15 min)

A feature story on a comprehensive report by the World Bank that describes the threat of climate change to poor people and the ways to offset it through adaptation and mitigation strategies. This story is available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Russian.

This can be accessed at:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/11/08/rapid-climate-informed-development-needed-to-keep-climate-change-from-pushing-more-than-100-million-people-into-poverty-by-2030>

3. Suggested questions/assignments for learning evaluation

- Define poverty and briefly explain its causes.
- What is the 'vicious circle of poverty'? How can the poverty cycle be broken?
- 'It is the poor who are affected most by climate change'. Do you agree? Give reasons in support of your answer.

- Explain the impact of climate change on poor women and children.
- How are the struggles against poverty and climate change interlinked?
- What policies and actions are needed to mitigate climate change as well as reduce poverty?

2 Step-by-step User Guide

Here is a step-by-step guide to using this lesson plan in the classroom/laboratory. We have suggested these steps as a possible plan of action. You may customize the lesson plan according to your preferences and requirements.

1. Topic introduction and discussion

Use this chapter reading, '[Chapter VII: Impact of Climate Change on POVERTY](#)' from a teachers' guidebook on climate change, 'Integrating Climate Change Issues in Southeast Asian Schools' by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) to introduce to your class the topic of poverty and to discuss various aspects of it through a close reading of the text.

- Use the reading to first define poverty and to explain that the definition of 'poverty' is not the same for all nations and that it is based on the country's level of economic progress.
- Explain the causes of poverty and therefore, parameters like access to food, water, shelter, healthcare, infrastructure and education that define the state of well-being or poverty of a nation's population.
- Discuss, using the text, the causes for varying proportions of poor people in different nations with emphasis on the Southeast Asian countries.
- Explain terms like 'absolute or extreme poverty' and 'poverty trap' to describe the various degrees of poverty across the social strata within a society.
- Use the text to discuss how poverty disproportionately affects women, children and the elderly or infirm, making them more vulnerable to the impacts of poverty.
- Using figure 7.2, pg. 258, explain what the poverty cycle is and its implications across generations.

- Further, discuss the relationship between poverty and climate change. Explain how they are interconnected and using figure 7.1, pg 255, explain the impacts of climate change on poverty. Emphasize how climate change exacerbates poverty and therefore, the vulnerabilities of the poor. Use the reading to comment on how poverty in turn adversely affects climate change.
- Using the text, define and discuss climate adaptation, climate mitigation, disaster management, and resilience building measures to deal with climate change.
- Identify the basic causes of poverty- lack of income, access and power- and describe ways in which these problems can be addressed by countries.
- Finally, stress on the need for government policies to alleviate poverty and to tackle climate change, the two major challenges for sustainable global development.

This can be accessed at:

http://www.seameo.org/SEAMEOWeb2/images/stories/Publications/Centers_pub/2011RECSAM-ClimateChange-TeachersGuidebook/RECSAM-ClimateChange.pdf (Chapter VII)

2. Explore the topic further

Use this feature story, '[Rapid, Climate-Informed Development Needed to Keep Climate Change from Pushing More than 100 Million People into Poverty by 2030](#)', by the World Bank to talk about the findings of a comprehensive report published by them, 'Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty'. The link to the full report can be found in the additional resources section. This feature story is available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Russian.

- Play the video, 'Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty', by the World Bank Group to highlight the need for policies to manage the effects of climate change in order to protect the poor, that are worse affected by it.
- Read the text to emphasize to your students that measures taken to eradicate global poverty are thwarted by climate related factors and therefore, there is a need to address climate change in conjunction with poverty alleviating development work.
- Use the infographic, 'Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty', to walk your students through the impacts of climate change on poor people, the implications of inaction on climate change related factors for global poverty and the ways to address both issues of poverty and climate change through 'climate smart development'.

This can be accessed at:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/11/08/rapid-climate-informed-development-needed-to-keep-climate-change-from-pushing-more-than-100-million-people-into-poverty-by-2030>

3. Questions/Assignments

Use the tools and the concepts learned so far to discuss and determine answers to the following questions:

- Define poverty and briefly explain its causes.
- What is the 'vicious circle of poverty'? How can the poverty cycle be broken?
- 'It is the poor who are affected most by climate change'. Do you agree? Give reasons in support of your answer.
- Explain the impact of climate change on poor women and children.
- How are the struggles against poverty and climate change interlinked?
- What policies and actions are needed to mitigate climate change as well as reduce poverty?

3 Learning Outcomes

The tools in this lesson plan will enable students to:

- identify 'Poverty' and 'Climate Change' as the two most important challenges for sustainable global development.
- discuss the causes of poverty and understand the 'Poverty Trap' or 'Poverty Cycle'.
- learn how poverty and climate change are related and understand how climate change has a more severe impact on poor communities.
- distinguish the ways in which men, women and children are differently affected by poverty and climate change.
- appreciate the need for climate change adaptation and mitigation policies.

4 Additional Resources

If you or your students would like to explore the topic further, these additional resources will be useful.

1. Reading

A report, 'Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty' by Stephane Hallegatte, Mook Bangalore, Laura Bonzanigo, Marianne Fay, Tamaro Kane, Ulf Narloch, Julie Rozenberg, David Treguer, and Adrien Vogt-Schilb, that stresses on the need for immediate action to alleviate poverty in the face of climate change and suggests policies for the same. This report is a part of the Climate Change and Development Series published by the World Bank Group.

This can be accessed at:

https://www.gfdr.org/sites/default/files/publication/Shock_Waves.pdf

2. Reading

A reading, 'Sustainable Development Goals', by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), that describes the different SDGs, including the first goal of eliminating poverty across the globe by 2030.

This can be accessed at:

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

3. Reading

A section reading, 'Climate Change and Inequality' from the book, 'The Economics of Climate Change' by Jonathan M. Harris, Brian Roach and Anne-Marie Codur (pgs 26-28), Global Development and Environment (GDAE) Institute, Tufts University, to teach about climate change affecting poorer populations more due to inequality in access to economic resources such as food, water shelter, infrastructure and health care.

This can be accessed at:

http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/education_materials/modules/The_Economics_of_Global_Climate_Change.pdf (pgs. 26-28)

5 Credits/Copyrights

All the teaching tools in our collated list are owned by the corresponding creators/authors/organizations as listed on their websites. Please view the individual copyright and

ownership details for each tool by following the individual links provided.

We have selected and analyzed the tools that align with the overall objective of our project and have provided the corresponding links. We do not claim ownership of or responsibility/liability for any of the listed tools.

1. Reading; 'Chapter VII: Impact of Climate Change on POVERTY'

Published in a Teachers' guidebook on climate change, '[Integrating Climate Change Issues in Southeast Asian Schools](#)' by the [Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization \(SEAMEO\)](#)

2. Reading; 'Rapid, Climate-Informed Development Needed to Keep Climate Change from Pushing More than 100 Million People into Poverty by 2030'

Published by the [World Bank](#).

3. Additional Resources

Contributed by Stephane Hallegatte, Mook Bangalore, Laura Bonzanigo, Marianne Fay, Tamaro Kane, Ulf Narloch, Julie Rozenberg, David Treguer, and Adrien Vogt-Schilb. Report published by the [Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery \(GFDRR\)](#);

[United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#);

Jonathan M. Harris, Brian Roach and Anne-Marie Codur, Global Development and Environment (GDAE) Institute, [Tufts University](#)