

## 1.4 ARE WILDFIRES A CONSEQUENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

### Aim

To better understand how climate change is influencing wildfires and our daily lives.

### Description

Current media reporting on recent wildfires may lead some of us to believe that they are a new phenomenon directly linked to anthropogenic climate change. In this challenge, we invite you to investigate the origins of wildfires and if they are only a consequence of climate change.

### Linked units

- Unit 1: Understanding your environment and connecting it to climate change impacts.
- Unit 2: History of fires
- Unit 3: Fire Ecology 1
- Unit 4: Fire Ecology 2
- Unit 5: Be Prepared 1 – Preparedness
- Unit 6: Be Prepared 2 - Landscape Management
- Unit 7: Response to wildfires

### Type of results

- Presentation
- Theatrical session
- Classroom discussion

### Material you may need

- Computer with internet and/or access to a library
- Projector

### Scope of impact

- Classroom

### Activity: Understanding the origins and roles of wildfires

Climate change have different scenarios for different regions and countries. Do you know which is the best and worst scenario for your region? How do these new meteorological scenarios influence wildfires? And how will they influence our daily lives?

### Tasks

1. In the classroom, brainstorm and research which are the climate change scenarios (the best and the worst) for your region / Country. Discuss with your classmates, which are the meteorological conditions that help wildfires to occur. Create a diagram that will present the climate change meteorological conditions and their influence on the occurrence of wildfires and on our daily lives.

What about possible wildfire causes? Are they natural, caused by humans, or could they be both? What about climate change? What is it? Could it be impacting the occurrence of wildfires? Discuss this with your colleagues. (group)

2. Are wildfires new in your region? In the classroom, prepare an inquiry and, in small groups, interview elderly people, firefighters, foresters and other groups in order to understand how meteorology and wildfires were in the "old days". Did the number of wildfires increase? Did they have more impact? Did meteorological conditions change? Optional: Look for the old newspapers and see if the frequency and impacts of wildfires have changed over time. And what about extreme climate events (floods, droughts, thunderstorms, tornados, wind storms)?

3. The results of the research can be presented in many different ways. Editing a video, doing a poster, visual presentation, creating an interactive narrative between the climate, meteorology, and wildfire, etcetera. (group)

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### Professions related to the topic

- Data analyst.
- Biologist.
- Ecologist.
- Forest engineer.
- Scientific journalist.

4. Share your research results with your classmates and discuss them. In light of all the evidence that was presented, did wildfires happen before the effects of anthropogenic climate change started to take place? Are they necessarily bad? How is the news reporting on the matter? How do you think climate change might be affecting wildfires in the world? (group)

5. Invite some of the interviewed people and make a “story circle” where they can share their stories, and you can share your findings.