



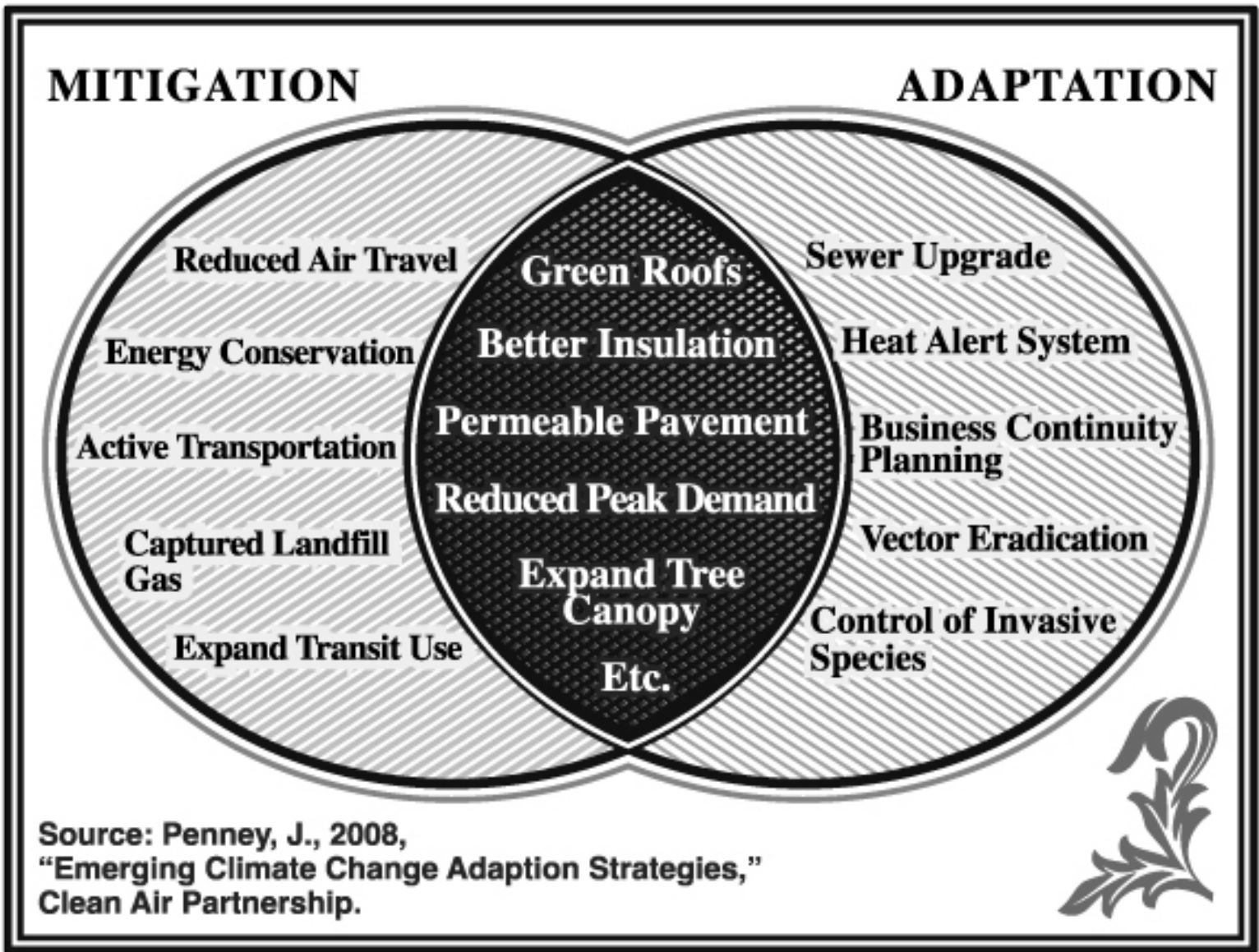
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How to prepare for the health effects of climate change

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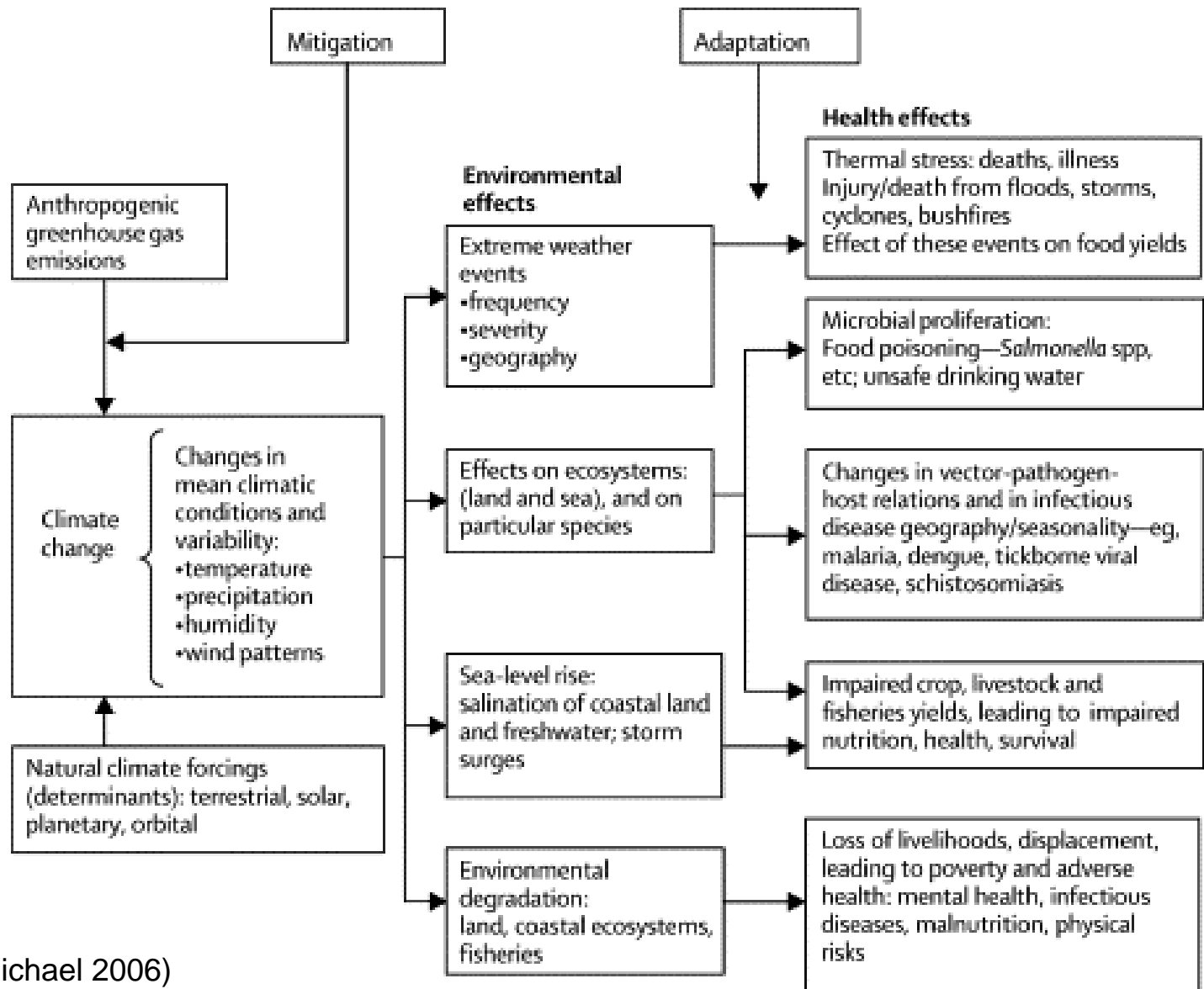


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(McMichael 2006)



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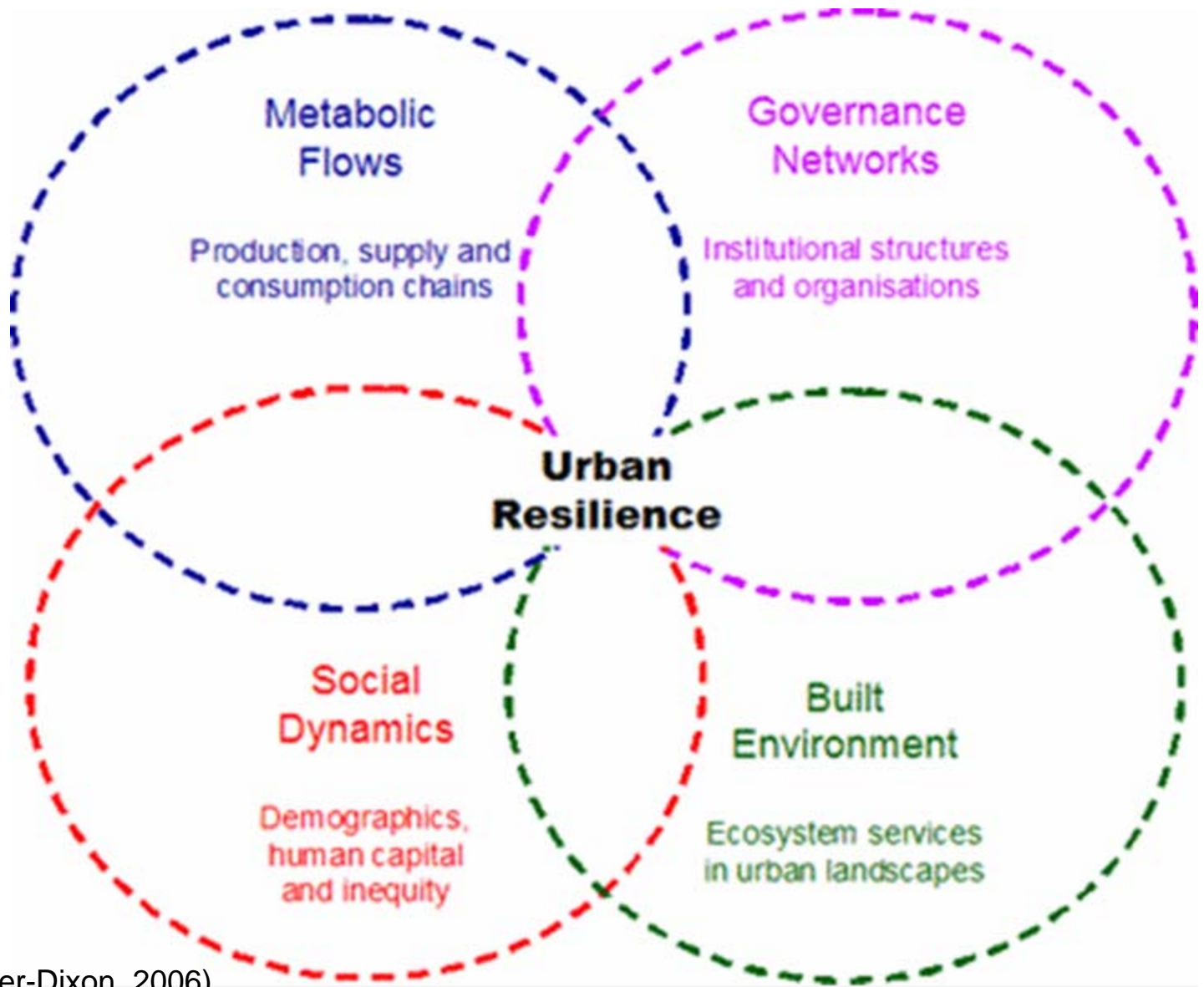
RESILIENCE

The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure; this is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection

(ISDR, 2008)



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(Homer-Dixon, 2006)



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Research on climate change and public health: WHO recommendations

1. Interactions of climate change with other health determinants and trends
2. Direct and indirect effects of climate change
3. Comparing effectiveness of short-term interventions
4. Assessing health impact of policies of non-health sectors
5. Strengthening public health systems to address health effects of climate change

(WHO, 2008)



Basic public health functions in relation to climate change

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1. Document and communicate the actuality of health risks
2. Anticipate the 'pressure points'
3. Develop methods of causal attribution
4. Develop rationally-targeted prevention (adaptive) strategies
5. Commit to systematic updating of scenario-based (future) health risk assessments

(Kovats and Hajat, 2008; McMichael et al., 2008)



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Role of health agencies in adaptation

1. Modifications of existing prevention strategies
2. Translation of policies and knowledge from other countries
3. Restoration of surveillance, maintenance and prevention programmes that have been weakened or abandoned due to financial considerations
4. Development of new policies to address new threats

(Ebi et al., 2006)



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Principles of heat-health action plans

- Use existing systems and link to general emergency response arrangements
- Adopt a long-term approach (mitigation actions and adaptation of built environment)
- Be broad (multi-agency approach)
- Communicate effectively
- Ensure that responses to heat waves do not exacerbate the problem of climate change
- Evaluate (if plans and their implementation are not evaluated, they will not improve)

(WHO, 2008)



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Health service response needs to be complemented by activities that extend beyond the health sector

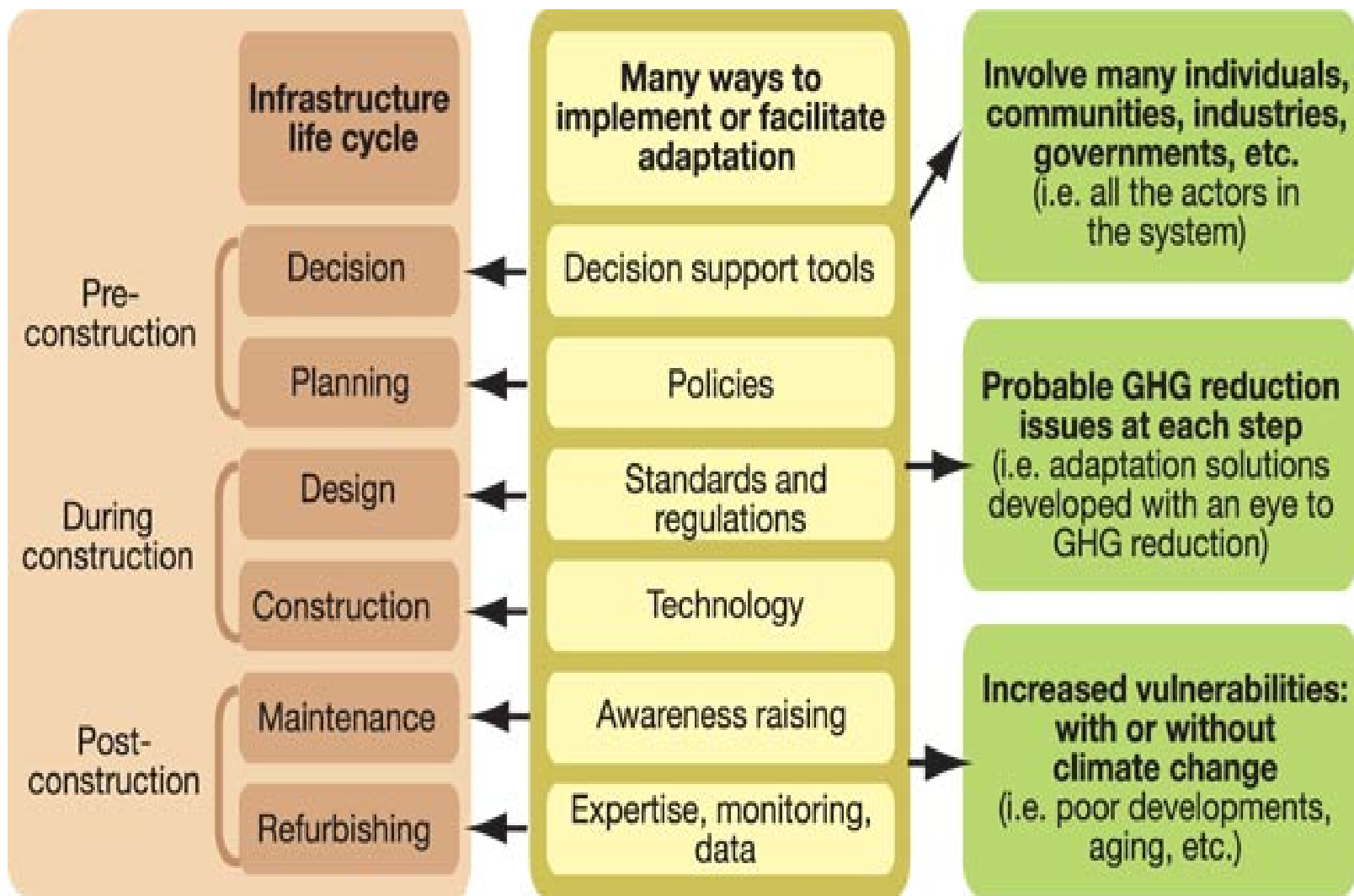
- Early warning systems
- Neighbourhood support schemes
- Climate-proofed housing design
- Urban planning
- Water catchment
- Farming practices
- Disaster preparedness

(McMichael et al., 2008)

Various types of adaptation solutions related to infrastructure life cycle



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(Gosselin 2007)



Conclusions

Adaptation to climate change is likely to reduce expected impacts on health in two ways:

- (1) by requiring changes in the roles of health agencies, including planning and response to extreme weather events and surveillance of infectious disease;
- (2) by modifications in non-health sectors, that is, food production, transport, built environment

Overall, the health community can promote the increased resilience of their local community to adapt to climate change