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Education in Emergencies; Disasters and Refugees



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EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES; DISASTERS AND REFUGEES

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, LEARNING & INNOVATION

ABSTRACT

This article examines the complexity of providing education in adverse circumstances, crisis settings, and situations involving trauma. Drawing on psychology, sociology, and pedagogy, it explores the short-, medium-, and long-term consequences and implications for affected individuals and communities, including trauma, lasting effects, and migration under extreme conditions.

It then seeks to understand the strategies used to provide education in crisis settings, considering the role of governments, nongovernmental organizations, and the international education community in addressing the needs of groups affected by emergencies.

Finally, it discusses innovative strategies involving new technologies and policies focused on resilience, with the aim of informing and guiding the development and implementation of effective practices in this critical field.

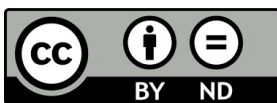


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Introduction

In education, crisis settings are as fascinating as they are frightening: they put our ability to adapt to the test, yet they also involve some of the most terrible circumstances a human being can endure. Information is readily available about efforts to implement education policies in challenging contexts, such as extreme poverty, dictatorship, or difficulties associated with crime and drug trafficking. Yet there is one context that, from my perspective, is far more difficult to work in and, sadly, is becoming increasingly common. I am referring to humanitarian crises involving armed conflicts and natural disasters, known as emergencies.

Living in the information age means that most of us can follow global news in real time. Even those of us who live thousands of kilometers from an event receive almost instant information when a volcano erupts, an earthquake strikes, or a city is bombed, among other events. This has enabled us to empathize directly with affected communities, encouraging us to do our part in such terrible circumstances. Faced with this bleak picture, we are left wondering how a society rebuilds under these conditions and what role education will play in that process.

At the same time, as political beings, we also feel compelled to speak out, demanding that our leaders intervene with international organizations and provide solutions for those affected, even when the nation in question has no incentive to do so. This has triggered a mass migration phenomenon in which people living in extreme poverty are forced to leave their country and seek shelter in others willing to receive them. Without delving into the social conflicts this creates, we can examine another dimension: educational institutions in countries receiving refugees will face a major challenge in integrating them into

the national education system and will need tools and high-impact professional development to do so.

It is crucial to understand that humanitarian crises have a profound and lasting impact on a country's education system and on the people learning within it. Those affected experience an abrupt and significant interruption to their education, damaging both the country's administrative structures and students' psychological and emotional well-being. Teachers and institutions, meanwhile, face an overwhelming emotional burden and workload as they seek to adapt quickly to these students' extreme needs. Together, these factors make access to quality education for refugees a monumental challenge in a crisis, hindering their reintegration into society for years.

In this article, we will analyze real cases of past and ongoing humanitarian tragedies, how they have been addressed at the national level, and how refugees have been integrated into education. Alongside this analysis, I will propose innovative initiatives involving technology to improve our educational approaches in emergencies, making them more effective and useful within today's educational landscape. Our goal is to identify practices that have proved effective in the past and offer recommendations for improving education in crisis settings, with technology and modern developments as our allies.

Our deepest hope is that the experiences, lessons, and recommendations presented here will guide and support all those teachers, institutions, and governments that, unfortunately, find themselves facing the difficult task of educating amid the adversity of a crisis and humanitarian emergency. May they find in these pages not only strategies and tools but also a reflection of the human hope and strength that emerge when we confront such a complex situation. And to all those currently living through this experience, know that you are not alone; we stand together in overcoming these challenges and offering the possibility of a better future.

Emergencies

Before explaining how education systems function during humanitarian crises, we must understand exactly what an emergency entails. We generally define it as a catastrophic situation affecting a significant number of people and requiring immediate action to prevent even greater consequences. Specifically, UNHCR (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) defines an emergency as a humanitarian crisis or disaster that has caused, or threatens to cause, new forced displacement, loss of life, or other serious harm.

These events may also significantly affect the rights or well-being of displaced people, stateless people, returnees, or others with whom UNHCR works, unless immediate and appropriate action is taken. For an emergency to be declared, the crisis must also require exceptional measures because the existing capacities of the government and UNHCR are insufficient to provide a predictable and effective response.

Emergencies in education often arise in armed conflict settings, where school infrastructure may be destroyed, teachers may be displaced or even killed, and students may also be displaced or recruited into militias. In addition, war economies entail numerous cuts across a country's sectors, leaving budgets insufficient to keep education functioning normally. An emergency may also result from natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and other climate-related disasters.

These events also severely disrupt education: institutions may be seriously damaged or destroyed, and the need to invest in rescue efforts and societal reconstruction further depletes the education sector's resources, making them almost inaccessible. In events such as floods,

damage may also include the loss of physical educational materials, such as books, expensive laboratory equipment, and digital technology and infrastructure. Restoring and replacing these materials can take a long time, depending on the scale of the disaster, the total cost of the losses, and the resources available for reconstruction.

Finally, we must consider refugee movements and forced displacement. Conflicts and disasters can force people to leave their homes, whether within their own country or across borders. The response must address their needs for protection, shelter, food, water, health care, and continuity of learning, according to the circumstances of each situation.

If the host country lacks the structures and resources needed to accommodate their arrival, it too enters an emergency in which it must redistribute available resources to support refugees. In education, this generally means expanding available infrastructure, adapting curricula and lessons to new cultures and languages, and enlisting teachers' cooperation in giving these cases particular attention.

When an emergency occurs, there are two main possibilities: it was identified early enough to take protective action, or it erupted suddenly and without warning. If managed properly, the first type usually allows swift and decisive measures to eliminate the risk of loss of life. To ensure that we remain able to detect a future humanitarian crisis, UNHCR follows the protocol below.

At least once a year, a comprehensive risk analysis must determine whether a new emergency could arise or an existing one could intensify. Based on this report, each potential scenario identified is assigned a risk level: high, moderate, or low. This assessment is based exclusively on the likelihood of the event occurring and its potential social impact. If any of these situations is classified as "high" risk, a contingency plan based on potential scenarios must be developed. This plan must include a response strategy, together with its budget, staffing requirements, necessary coordination structures, and the thresholds that will trigger the protocol.

When this happens, governments involved in the humanitarian crisis are forced to make decisive and hurried decisions known as “emergency measures.” The main challenge with these measures is that, because they are devised under pressure, they are not usually planned with an approach that prevents secondary consequences or unintended effects that may ultimately harm those affected. Yet this is not the fault of the nations implementing them: an emergency is equivalent to every conceivable social problem arising at once, leaving no room for planning, research, or the proper implementation of these solutions.

Let us begin by examining the affected nation. The following are typical emergency measures taken after a humanitarian crisis:

- Establishing and managing temporary camps to house displaced people, alongside a campaign to distribute food, clothing, and drinking water to prevent deaths from famine, malnutrition, or extreme temperatures.
- Deploying emergency medical teams to care for injured or ill people and those requiring long-term medication. Military field hospitals are set up for this purpose, and military resources are used to transport those affected.
- Implementing curfews, intensive patrols, and border controls. These measures aim to contain the chaos, clear the streets, and allow security personnel to focus exclusively on transporting and assisting the injured. They also prevent groups from exploiting this vulnerability to commit crimes with impunity.
- Coordinating with and notifying international organizations such as the UN, the Red Cross, and Doctors Without Borders to obtain support in the form of financial resources, food, medicines, and medical personnel.

All these resources require government organization and oversight, so the general protocol begins with an initial damage assessment. An

assessment team establishes daily monitoring to gather information on the number of people affected, priority needs, and damage to infrastructure. These reports are sent to a management team, which identifies immediate needs and maps both available and required resources. With this information, the government can centralize coordination in an Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which organizes the resource distribution strategy, setting up warehouses, tents, transportation, and refrigeration systems for medicines that require them.

The authorities will also begin the diplomatic work and procedures needed to inform the international community and efficiently receive resources provided by NGOs and partner nations. If necessary, they will draw on available funds and request donations from the international community. Where appropriate, they may also use emergency financing instruments offered by international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, subject to applicable requirements and conditions.

Beginning the process of societal restoration and rehabilitation as soon as possible can make a significant difference to the negative medium- and long-term effects of emergency measures. Governments must therefore respond firmly, efficiently, and transparently.

A humanitarian crisis can cause displacement within national borders or into other countries. When people seek international protection, host countries must organize a response that addresses their needs and respects the rights to which they are entitled. Because receiving and integrating refugees and asylum seekers poses complex challenges, we will now review some of the main response mechanisms.

Displacement Following an Emergency

A closer look at the circumstances facing displaced people shows that they will seek asylum in neighboring countries where they have greater opportunities to participate in civic life. These countries receive an influx of new residents that they are generally unprepared to accommodate. Governments must therefore exercise care in receiving them and follow established protocols. These usually consist of the following sequence of steps:

1. Following an emergency, neighboring countries establish reception and registration centers for refugees. These provide food, water, emergency medical care, and temporary shelter. Beyond providing humanitarian assistance to displaced people, the aim is to determine how many people are expected to arrive and to keep track of them once they are within the country.
2. Once this is done, border police and the immigration department evaluate and approve asylum applications arising from the humanitarian crisis. This process has long drawn criticism because it usually includes interviews, background checks, and other identity verification procedures. The criticism concerns the lack of empathy shown toward refugees by subjecting them to these procedures shortly after they have been displaced from their home country. Nevertheless, this is necessary to issue legal temporary residence documents without violating international treaties.

3. While their applications are being processed and after decisions have been reached, people are entitled to the rights and services recognized under national legislation and applicable international law. Access to education, health care, and employment may be governed by different rules, so it should not be assumed that all these rights begin only when asylum is granted. Recognition of refugee status does not automatically confer citizenship either; any subsequent naturalization will depend on the host country's laws.
4. Refugees are generally assigned shelter for as long as necessary until they can establish stability. If shelters are not free of charge or no social integration programs are provided for refugees, various NGOs and other international agencies may step in to meet these needs for a specified period.

Receiving and integrating refugees requires shared responsibility among authorities, international organizations, civil society organizations, and host communities. Each actor fulfills distinct functions, but none can replace the others on its own. Initiatives such as Amnesty International's "I Welcome" campaign show that integration is also built within society, through support, solidarity, and community participation. Without this local dimension, welcoming refugees risks becoming merely an administrative response.

Appealing to people's humanity and empathy can be a useful and effective strategy, especially when integrating displaced people into society. According to UNHCR, at the end of 2023, approximately 117.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced because of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, and other events seriously disturbing public order. Disasters also generate new displacement, much of it within national borders. We must distinguish movements recorded over a period from the number of people who remain displaced on a given date.

Receiving refugees can have several positive effects. One is the cultural richness and diversity that follow successful refugee

integration, promoting tolerance, understanding, and learning among the local population and guiding them toward a political model based on respect and good civic conduct. The country may also benefit from an expanded workforce and economic growth, especially if it has an unfavorable demographic structure because of its population size and the average age of its workforce, as is the case in Uruguay and Croatia, among others.

Another potential advantage is the presence of creative and innovative people among the new residents. They may use the opportunities offered by a more prosperous country to start businesses and help build a business community that generates prestige and employment for the local population. Yet the arrival of refugees can also have major consequences if the process is not managed properly and comprehensively. For example, without monitoring the total number of displaced people entering the country, public and private services—including health care, education, general infrastructure, government administration, commerce, and transportation—may become overburdened.

Furthermore, without appropriate social support, cultural differences may create political, social, and economic conflicts between refugees and the local population. Establishing and maintaining refugee support programs also entails a significant short-term cost, which can pose risks for a small or poorly managed economy.

But suppose we succeed in integrating refugees effectively into our country. What happens to them when the emergency in their country of origin ends? There are three main post-emergency outcomes:

1. Refugees may return to their country of origin if they wish and conditions permit. This process is known as “voluntary repatriation.”
2. If they have adapted to the national culture, established their lives in the country, and achieved stability in accordance with applicable nationality laws, refugees may choose to become permanent residents and citizens.

3. Finally, if conditions do not allow refugees to be repatriated and they do not wish or are not permitted to remain in the host country, resettlement in another country must be negotiated, generally through diplomatic engagement by the relevant embassies.

Rebuilding a nation that has experienced a humanitarian crisis may take months, years, or decades—or may never be completed. Many people who become refugees after a crisis ultimately decide not to return to their country of origin. As a new society takes shape, it gains cultural richness and tolerance, substantially strengthening key features of a modern society, such as respect, inclusion, and integration. These concepts underpin tourism, investment, and national development today, so governments should have a strong interest in managing this process as effectively as possible.

Next, we will explain the particular circumstances in which displaced people tend to arrive following different types of emergencies and how each situation should be addressed.

Prejudice Against Refugees

All the potential benefits of receiving refugees depend on their successful integration. Yet consideration and collective effort become especially important when we account for the prejudice people who move abroad commonly face, even when their migration results from a catastrophe rather than a personal desire to join a new nation. Let us briefly review the most common prejudices and examine whether they contain any truth:

Prejudice 1:

“Refugees are an economic burden on the country and its development because they consume more resources than they contribute. Tax revenue should not be used to meet the needs of people who add no value to society.”

Initially, refugees may require additional assistance and resources that the government must provide. However, the OECD notes that although receiving and integrating refugees entails short-term public costs, effective labor market integration can subsequently generate economic and fiscal benefits for host countries. These issues are also examined in *“The Labor Market Effects of Refugee Waves: Reconciling Conflicting Results”* by Clemens and Hunt (2019) and *“Refugees Work: A Humanitarian Investment that Yields Economic Dividends”* by Legrain (2016).

Prejudice 2:

“Refugees do not want to work or integrate into society. They prefer to maintain their own customs and cultures while the government looks after them with our resources. They will therefore never repay their economic and social debt, harming native-born citizens in the process.”

The European Commission report *“Integration of refugees in Europe 2016,”* together with the OECD’s 2014 document *“How can migrants’ skills be put to use? (Migration Policy Debates, No. 3),”* helps identify barriers to refugees’ and migrants’ entry into the labor market. Relevant measures include language learning, cultural integration, recognition of qualifications, vocational training, and employment support. Their effectiveness depends on conditions in the host country and the needs of the people they serve.

Effective integration enables refugees to participate fully in the host country’s social, economic, and cultural life. This participation benefits more than just those arriving: it can broaden the range of skills available, stimulate productive activity, and enrich society as a whole. Realizing this potential requires removing the linguistic, educational, employment-related, and cultural barriers that prevent reception from becoming effective integration.

Prejudice 3:

“Refugees compete unfairly with local people for jobs: they receive assistance, employment programs, and training, while native-born citizens must compete without any help, despite paying taxes.”

The arrival of refugees may create pressure and competition in certain sectors in the short term. However, the available evidence indicates that adverse effects on native-born workers’ employment and wages tend to be limited and temporary, especially when appropriate labor market integration policies are in place. In the long term, the

addition of new workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs can expand economic activity and create new employment opportunities.

Moreover, in cases of mass migration, the precarious employment conditions migrants are forced to accept are severe. They often end up taking jobs that local people do not want, for wages lower than a native-born worker would demand. In addition, this influx of talent makes it likely that some migrants will start businesses that may eventually employ native-born workers and reduce unemployment rates.

Numerous studies support this finding, including the International Monetary Fund report *“The Refugee Surge in Europe: Economic Challenges”* and *“Immigration and American Jobs”* by Zavodny. The evidence reviewed points in a consistent direction: in the long term, when labor market integration is effective, the inclusion of refugees can contribute to economic growth, strengthen public finances, and expand employment opportunities, benefiting both the native-born population and refugees themselves.

Prejudice 4:

“Refugees tend to commit more crimes than native-born people. They use the services we selflessly offer them and then commit crimes and atrocities against the local population.”

The prejudice that “native-born people are good / migrants are bad” merely reveals our inability to look beyond our own experiences while ignoring statistics. The question is not whether all refugees are good or whether a large majority commit crimes. Rather, by endorsing this prejudice, we are making statistical claims without sufficient information.

We may have repeatedly seen a foreign-born person involved in criminal activity and, on that basis alone, decided to generalize or even exaggerate the figures. It is also possible that the media, intentionally or otherwise, predominantly report this kind of news, leading the public to

pay greater attention to crimes committed by migrants without realizing it.

The evidence reviewed also fails to support the idea that the presence of refugees and immigrants in itself increases crime. *“The Criminalization of Immigration in the United States”* by Ewing, Martínez, and Rumbaut (2015) challenges this association in the United States. Kayaoglu (2022), in *“Do refugees cause crime?”*, reaches a similar conclusion in a study of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Individual crimes must be investigated as such, but they cannot be used to portray an entire population as a threat.

As we can see, narratives that present refugees as an inevitable burden or a threat are not neutral descriptions: they generalize from individual cases, disregard the evidence, and can legitimize discriminatory practices. Responsible policy must acknowledge the real challenges of integration without turning them into prejudice against people seeking protection.

The studies are clear: refugees tend to have more positive than negative effects, provided that the local population and national government are committed to enabling them to develop as members of society. Governments are therefore urged to formulate public policies based on empirical data rather than social perceptions or unfounded stereotypes.

Historical Examples

To explain in depth the main consequences of a conflict and the educational measures typically taken in response, it is not enough to analyze theoretically what might happen and what costs might be incurred. It is more useful to study history as it unfolded and draw general conclusions that allow us to answer these questions more decisively.

In this section, we have selected examples from different periods in recent human history to illustrate, in as much detail as possible, how events might unfold if one of these situations arose today anywhere in the world. We have also sought to include different socioeconomic contexts, rather than focusing solely on underdeveloped societies such as African communities.

As a general criterion, we prioritized emergencies that began before 2018, allowing their long-term consequences to be analyzed with some historical perspective. However, we later included one case that began after that year—mass migration from Morocco in 2021—because it is useful for examining the features of a recent migration crisis that is still unfolding.

Health emergencies such as the COVID-19 crisis, the Spanish flu, and the HIV/AIDS crisis were also excluded from this report. The effects of quarantine, combined with restrictions on international movement, mean that in most cases a refugee crisis does not arise until the health crisis has already subsided. Moreover, this type of crisis does not involve costs associated with infrastructure destruction or repatriation, among others. Where necessary, its effects on society will be mentioned briefly to provide context.

In addition, we decided not to describe only the catastrophe itself and its consequences. We have taken the liberty of extending our analysis beyond the crisis to recount the history that made these situations even more complex. The examples that follow therefore offer not only an explanation of the humanitarian crisis experienced but also a fairly extensive overview of the preceding history and the circumstances in which each region faced the emergency. This approach allows a more detailed understanding of how destructive a humanitarian crisis can be under political and economic conditions that deepen deprivation.

We nevertheless consider it important to clarify that this report does not seek to take a political position on the events described, but to recount history as it unfolded. At each stage, we will seek to draw on academic studies to establish whether an event helped or hindered societal reconstruction, regardless of who carried it out at that particular moment in history.

The information presented below is the result of extensive research into historical records and collaboration with experts who helped us portray events as they occurred. On behalf of CERLI, we thank all the advisers consulted for their time, dedication, and outstanding explanations; without their contributions, this would not have been possible.

Armed Conflicts

An armed conflict, more commonly known as “war,” is one of the most common and devastating emergencies a society can experience. It involves a violent, armed confrontation between two or more large groups of people, generally leaving material destruction and loss of life in its wake.

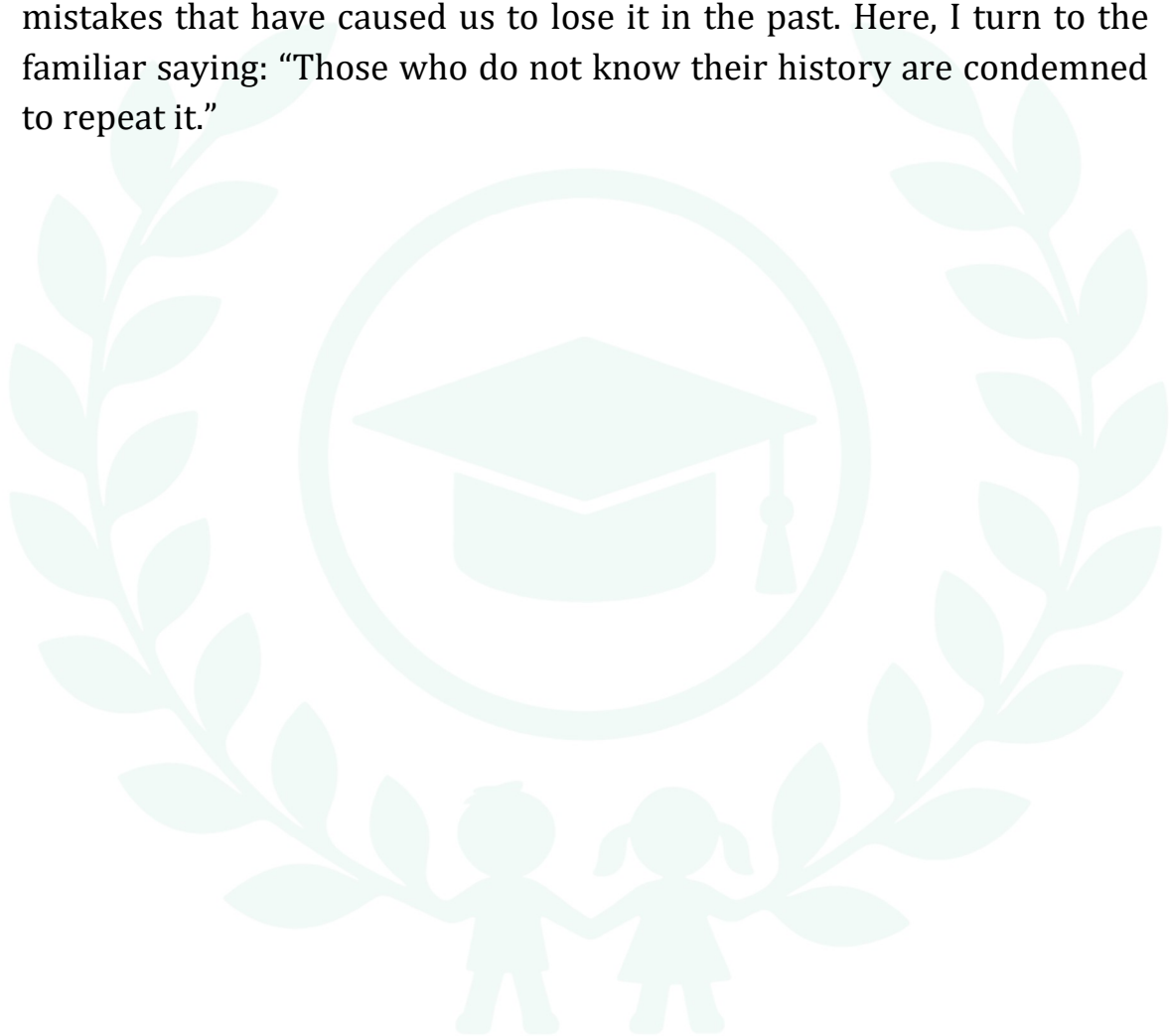
Although one might think that a species as advanced and civilized as humanity should already have moved beyond such a primitive and animalistic idea, the reality is that, as of the completion of this report, more than a hundred armed conflicts are recorded worldwide under the criteria of the Geneva Academy’s RULAC project. These conflicts continue to cause severe humanitarian crises in different regions of the world. Their causes range from territorial interests and natural resources to ethnic and religious differences and struggles for political power. Yet they all share the bloody and devastating humanitarian crises they leave behind.

This section explores three relatively recent armed conflicts with different underlying causes. We will examine how the histories of these countries and international dynamics influenced the conflicts’ development and resolution. This will lead us to discuss the socioeconomic and humanitarian consequences of war, which inevitably include the displacement of entire populations, the destruction of infrastructure, and negative psychological effects on communities drawn into the conflict.

In such a dynamic and tense world, armed conflicts are the most common of these three types of emergencies, making them a persistent concern for society. A thorough understanding of our history and past

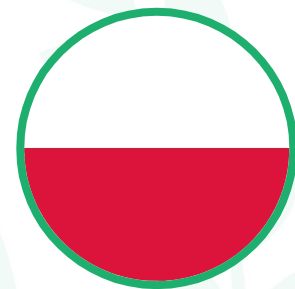
experiences therefore allows us to see light at the end of the tunnel, recognizing how we have endured much darker times and moved toward a more lasting peace.

We have seen how international reconciliation and diplomatic efforts have helped prevent and resolve armed conflicts. These events destroy lives, destabilize nations, and create waves of problems in neighboring countries. Yet we will not achieve peace without first learning from the mistakes that have caused us to lose it in the past. Here, I turn to the familiar saying: “Those who do not know their history are condemned to repeat it.”



Invasion of Poland (1939)

Poland is a Central European country bordered by Germany to the west; the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south; Ukraine and Belarus to the east; Lithuania to the northeast; and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad and the Baltic Sea to the north. It has a population of approximately 38 million and covers approximately 312,696 square kilometers.



Its official language is Polish, and its predominant religion is Catholicism. The Church holds political power and social prestige in the country. Its main source of economic income is the manufacture and export of automotive, electronics, and industrial machinery products. More recently, Poland has also gained considerable recognition as a tourist destination, thanks to iconic cities such as Kraków, Warsaw, and Gdańsk.

Like every European country, Poland has a long and fascinating history extending back to prehistoric times. The historical origins of the Polish state are generally traced to the tenth century, during the reign of Duke Mieszko I, whose baptism in 966 is one of the principal milestones in its formation. Mieszko I died in 992, and his son, Bolesław I the Brave, was crowned Poland's first king in 1025. Although its history is rich in detail, for the purposes of this report we have chosen to move directly to the twentieth century, when the unfortunate sequence of events culminating in its invasion took place.

An important consideration is that Poland's geographical features have always been a major geopolitical vulnerability. Its borders with Russia and Germany, combined with its flat terrain, make it an ideal setting for war between military powers.

Following the partitions of the late eighteenth century, Polish territories were divided primarily among Russia, Prussia, and the Habsburg monarchy, which later became the Austrian Empire. When World War I broke out, the Central Powers and Entente forces also fought in territories belonging to the former Kingdom of Poland. In 1916, Germany and Austria-Hungary signed an act promising to create an independent kingdom between their borders under their protection, in an attempt to gain Polish support during the final years of the conflict.

With the defeat of the Central Powers in 1918, however, Poland found an opportunity to proclaim its independence from all the occupying empires, taking advantage of their weakened position. Just one year later, the famous Treaty of Versailles consolidated its independence, and Poland obtained territories that had previously belonged to Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. The creation of the "Polish Corridor" was also approved, granting certain strategic territories of the defeated empires to give Poland access to the Baltic Sea and separate Germany from East Prussia.

What appeared to be a great victory for the Polish people in their second period as an independent republic was, in fact, the seed of German resentment that would culminate in invasion. When Adolf Hitler rose to power in 1933, he did so through populist rhetoric centered on recovering the territory taken from Germany under the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler insisted that a country such as Germany needed living space to secure natural resources, portraying Poland as a geographical obstacle to German economic recovery after World War I.

However, Hitler's interests did not necessarily align with this rhetoric. He viewed Poland as an obstacle to his expansionist ambitions because its existence as an independent state blocked any plan to expand eastward. To avoid arousing suspicion before acquiring the power and

allies needed to undertake an invasion, Germany and Poland signed a nonaggression pact in 1934.

After the pact was signed, Hitler's words could be seen as populist rhetoric intended to consolidate his position at the head of German power, rather than as a threat. Nothing could have been further from the truth: in 1939, Hitler signed a nonaggression treaty with the Soviet Union, known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. This agreement included a secret section containing a joint protocol to divide Poland and other Eastern European countries if the two signatories succeeded in taking control of them.

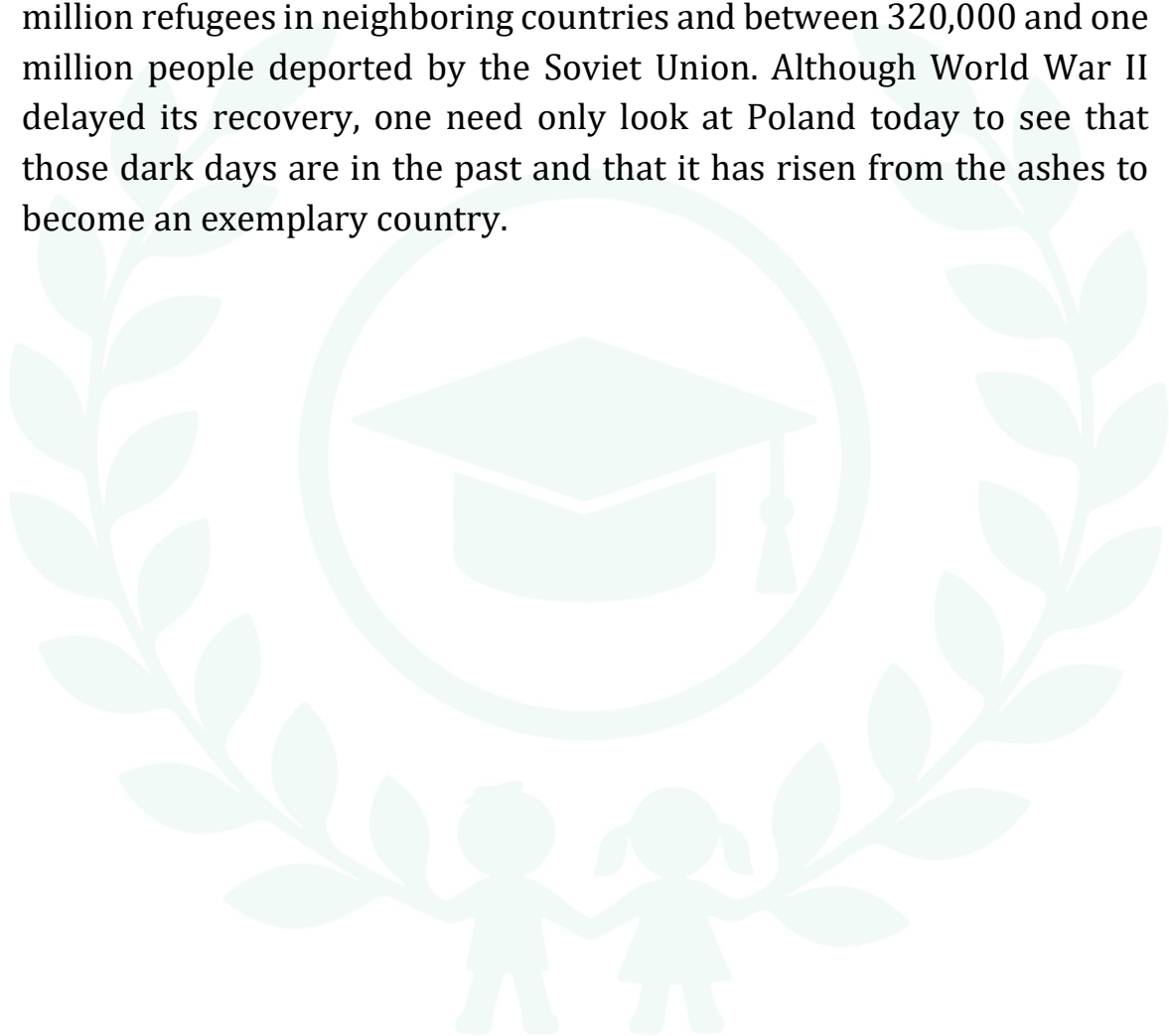
Thus, against all expectations, Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. The invasion began with the bombing of the Polish city of Wieluń, accompanied by a ground attack. Known as "Blitzkrieg," this strategy was characteristic of Hitler and involved rapid advances by land and air, giving defenders very little time to react. The Poles fought fiercely, successfully defending the Westerplatte peninsula for seven days.

They then attempted a counterattack at Bzura, where they were defeated by the Germans. Yet just as it seemed that the Poles might be able to hold out indefinitely, the Soviet Union invaded on September 17. This attack encountered almost no resistance because of the pressure imposed by the German invasion, allowing Russian forces to advance easily into Polish territory. Despite the remarkable efforts of Polish resistance forces, the invaders bombed and besieged Warsaw, the capital, with overwhelming intensity until it surrendered on September 27, 1939.

The consequences were devastating. To begin with, the invasion of Poland marked the beginning of the deadliest armed conflict in human history: World War II. Moreover, the power Hitler gained through this victory enabled him to begin the genocidal plans now remembered as the shameful Holocaust.

Even without examining the consequences of this event in depth, its figures alone convey the scale of the emergency it created. The invasion of Poland caused between 150,000 and 200,000 civilian deaths and more than 66,000 military deaths in combat. The number of injured was also staggering: 133,000 Polish soldiers and hundreds of thousands of civilians harmed by crossfire, bombing, and other causes.

Displacement figures were equally staggering: between 1.5 and 2 million refugees in neighboring countries and between 320,000 and one million people deported by the Soviet Union. Although World War II delayed its recovery, one need only look at Poland today to see that those dark days are in the past and that it has risen from the ashes to become an exemplary country.



Rwandan Genocide (1994)

Rwanda is a small country in east-central Africa, bordered by Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, Burundi to the south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west. It is one of the most interesting countries in this region, with a population of approximately 12.6 million, most of them young, divided into three ethnic groups. The most widely cited historical estimates put the Hutu at around 85% of the population, the Tutsi at approximately 14%, and the Twa at roughly 1%.



In terms of religion and culture, Christianity predominates: 49.5% of the population is Catholic, 39.4% Protestant, and 4.5% Muslim. The country is landlocked, and its largely mountainous and rolling landscape has earned it the name “the land of a thousand hills.” Its economy depends heavily on tourism, agriculture, and mining, a pattern common across the region. Rwanda is culturally rich and diverse, with largely shared religious beliefs and an indigenous language that provides a strong unifying bond.

Rwanda’s history encompasses the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa populations. Their social and political relationships changed over time and should not be reduced to a simple sequence of original inhabitants and later invaders. At different stages, agriculture, livestock farming, and access to power contributed to social differentiation. The Hutu and Tutsi categories should not be presented as separate biological races or as groups whose social positions remained unchanged throughout history.

The arrival of colonial rule shattered this balance. The Germans were the first to arrive in these lands, in 1897, establishing a system of indirect rule in which the Tutsi served as regional leaders. This became the basis of Hutu resentment toward the Tutsi: the latter ruled a land that the Hutu had occupied first and enjoyed additional prestige granted by Europeans, making social advancement difficult and entrenching an ethnic hierarchy marked by stigma and an ambiguous notion of superiority.

Following World War I and Germany's defeat, Germany lost its colonial possessions under the Treaty of Versailles. The territories of Rwanda and Burundi, then administered jointly as Ruanda-Urundi, came under Belgian administration through a League of Nations mandate. After World War II, the mandate was replaced by a United Nations trusteeship, with Belgium remaining the administering power.

Belgian colonial authorities privileged sections of the Tutsi population through racial categories and a supposed superiority rooted in colonial ideology. This interpretation, associated with the so-called Hamitic hypothesis, did not establish European ancestry or biological superiority among the Tutsi. The administrative classification of the population helped reinforce hierarchies and inequalities in access to education, administration, and power.

These distinctions had tangible effects on people's opportunities. Their explanation lies in power relations and colonial policies, without treating the racial categories used at the time as biological facts. By the early 1950s, nationalist movements were gaining strength across Africa.

The Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement was established as a political force advocating for the rights of the majority population and opposing domination and oppression by the Tutsi minority. This created tensions among citizens that culminated in a revolutionary movement in 1959, when the Hutu took up arms against the Tutsi. Thousands of Tutsi were killed, while the vast majority of survivors fled to neighboring countries seeking shelter.

On July 1, 1962, Rwanda declared independence under a Hutu government led by Grégoire Kayibanda. This ended Tutsi supremacy, and the Tutsi began to face persecution and discrimination from the Hutu population. Kayibanda remained president until 1973, when a Hutu named Juvénal Habyarimana led a coup that overthrew him. Habyarimana established an authoritarian one-party regime and introduced economic development policies aimed at stabilizing the country and improving its infrastructure, education system, and financial position.

Despite this development, however, the Tutsi who remained in Rwanda faced extreme discrimination that denied them access to education, public-sector employment, and humanitarian assistance, among other opportunities. The tables had turned: the Hutu were now inflicting on the Tutsi what they themselves had suffered during the colonial era. The Tutsi grew up nursing resentment, just as the Hutu had before them.

These tensions extended to the Tutsi who had sought shelter abroad. In 1987, Tutsi exiles in Uganda founded the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel and revolutionary group whose sole objective was to build up the strength to return to Rwanda and end ethnic discrimination by force. In 1990, the group launched an invasion, beginning a civil war against Juvénal Habyarimana's government, which stoked Hutu patriotism through anti-Tutsi propaganda.

The war continued until the government and the revolutionaries entered peace negotiations mediated by the international community. The Arusha Accords were signed in 1993. Their most notable provision was the establishment of a transitional government that would include representatives of the revolutionary RPF. One might think that the worst of this story was over and that peace would usher in prosperity and the reconstruction of a society burdened by three years of civil war. Nothing could have been further from the truth: in 1994, Rwanda's population experienced one of the most horrifying and darkest events in human history.

On April 6, 1994, the aircraft carrying Rwanda's president, Juvénal Habyarimana, and Burundi's president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was shot down as it approached Kigali, killing everyone on board. There are two different views about who was behind the attack. On the one hand, numerous historians and political analysts maintain that the RPF shot down the aircraft as part of a strategy to take full control of Rwanda after the Hutu government's collapse. With the republic brought down, a group that had gathered strength and forged alliances abroad would have little difficulty taking power again.

An alternative theory, however, holds that Hutu extremists themselves shot down the aircraft, arguing that extremist groups had never supported the government's peace negotiations. Fueled by hatred spread through the media and fear of implementing the accords, they brought down the president's aircraft to justify a genocide they had, in fact, already planned.

In reality, responsibility for the attack has been disputed and investigated on several occasions, making it inappropriate to attribute it conclusively to either side. In any event, the shooting down of the aircraft served as the immediate trigger for genocidal violence that had been prepared in advance amid growing radicalization.

Two media outlets stand out at this point in the story: the magazine "Kangura" and the radio station "RTLM." The latter was created by Hutu extremists who described the Tutsi as "enemies and existential threats to the Hutu population" and incited genocide against those they called "inyenzi," meaning "cockroaches." Both outlets spread hatred against the Tutsi population and provided specific information each day about the names and locations of Tutsi people so that extremist groups could murder them.

Kangura, for its part, played a role in inciting genocide long before the Hutu president's assassination. In 1990, it published an article entitled "The Hutu Ten Commandments," containing aggressive directives that incited violence against the Tutsi and any Hutu who supported them.

After the president's aircraft was shot down, Hutu extremists and the Interahamwe militia, fueled by hatred spread through the media, took up their weapons. Over approximately one hundred days, they murdered between eight hundred thousand and one million Rwandans, the vast majority of them Tutsi. The victims also included many moderate Hutu who opposed the genocide or tried to protect and shelter Tutsi people. This barbarity continued until July 1994, when RPF forces took control of the capital and overthrew the Hutu government. This brought the massacre to a definitive end, but left the country utterly devastated and difficult to rebuild, both symbolically and literally.

After the genocide, Rwanda began rebuilding under the RPF and its leader, Paul Kagame. This process sought to implement policies for the reintegration of refugees abroad, while international and national courts were established to prosecute those responsible for the genocide, seeking to bring closure to the tragic events the population had endured.

Later in this report, we will discuss the education strategies implemented by both the Rwandan government and the neighboring countries that received its refugees. We will try to understand the principal positive and negative lessons these tragic events have left us, seeking to learn from them and use the tools we were forced to develop, this time with greater calm and deliberation.

This history reminds us, however, that even in modern times, discrimination and hate speech can influence citizens and ultimately lead to barbaric acts. Not all threats lie beyond national borders. It is our duty as citizens to learn to live together, treating others with the respect we would wish to receive.

Political Crisis and Civil Wars in Liberia (1980–2003)

Liberia is a country on Africa's west coast, bordering Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire. Its population is approximately five million, with a large majority of young people and a high proportion under fifteen. English is the official language, although more than twenty indigenous languages are spoken, including Kpelle, Bassa, Grebo, and Krahn. The country is culturally diverse, with many ethnic groups and customs that vary from region to region.



English provides a link across this diversity, enabling shared structures of government, education, and work, and allowing people to feel a sense of belonging wherever they are in Liberia. Yet the region's cultural richness conceals a wounded and impoverished society that, despite slow improvement, has still not achieved an adequate standard of living for even a substantial share of its population.

Its history is interesting, to say the least. Liberia was founded in 1822 by the American Colonization Society (ACS). This organization sought to relocate freed slaves and African Americans outside the United States, choosing Liberia as its preferred destination. The movement had two main motivations. On the one hand, it sought to provide a safe and desirable home for formerly enslaved people, easing tensions between them and U.S. citizens. On the other, it was another expression of the racism of the time, forcing African Americans to emigrate so that they

would not be part of U.S. society. The first colony was established in what is now Monrovia, named in honor of U.S. President James Monroe. This American colony came to comprise the so-called Americo-Liberians and the Indigenous peoples who already inhabited the land.

The process was not straightforward. The first settlers faced a lack of resources and infrastructure, particularly when confronting tropical diseases and Indigenous populations. With American assistance, however, they managed to settle in the territory and begin developing it. By the 1840s, the Americo-Liberians had established autonomous governing structures and even drafted a constitution based on that of the United States. The Republic of Liberia was proclaimed in 1847, with Joseph Jenkins Roberts as its first president.

Establishing sovereignty, however, requires much more than simply proclaiming it. Liberia faced complex diplomatic work to secure recognition of its independence, especially from the surrounding European colonial powers, which frequently entered its territory without authorization. Indeed, the United States did not recognize Liberia's independence until Abraham Lincoln's presidency in 1862, although it never attempted to claim the territory.

Ultimately, Liberia had been used as a means of removing unwanted African Americans, so the United States had no particular interest in the region. Strong resistance came from local Indigenous communities, who refused to recognize Americo-Liberian dominance because they had arrived first. The Americo-Liberians established a highly exclusionary social and political system that shut out Indigenous communities. This generated deep resentment among the latter toward the settlers, whom they began to see as a plague that used them to develop society without allowing them to be part of it.

This continued until shortly before the mid-twentieth century, when William V. S. Tubman became president. His platform included unification policies through which he hoped to integrate Indigenous peoples into the country's social and economic life. Yet Americo-Liberian elites still held too much power and control for these measures

to achieve proper inclusion. His government did succeed in encouraging foreign investment, significantly expanding Liberia's economy and maximizing its development potential.

Because of the factors described above, however, the benefits were uneven, and society remained deeply unequal. Tubman's successor, William R. Tolbert Jr., tried to strengthen these inclusion measures and improve living conditions for Indigenous communities. His efforts were undermined by the global economic crisis of the 1970s, which drove prices and unemployment to extremely high levels and sharply intensified perceptions of corruption in Tolbert's government.

Political opposition grew considerably, organizing mass protests against the government over particular issues, such as the proposed increase in the price of rice—a staple food in Liberia—in 1979. These protests remain deeply etched in local memory because some were met with very violent repression.

On April 12, 1980, Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe, a member of the Indigenous Krahn ethnic group, led 17 soldiers from the armed forces in a coup against the government. They justified the attack as a response to the ruling administration's relentless corruption and oppression, promising to end inequality and improve living conditions. The group stormed the Executive Mansion, killing President Tolbert Jr. in the process.

Afterward, Samuel Doe established the People's Redemption Council (PRC), a military body that took control of the government and imposed martial law. To demonstrate its power and resolve, several senior officials from Tolbert's government were publicly executed, marking the end of Americo-Liberian elite rule.

Despite the promises of equality used to justify the coup, Doe's government was characterized by repression, corruption, and elitism. In reality, it merely tipped the balance in favor of Indigenous ethnic groups, especially the Krahn. This caused widespread discontent among the rest

of the population, which had supported the coup in the hope of gaining freedom, and within the international community.

One of the most remembered events of Doe's presidency was the so-called "Student Massacre" of 1984. In August, students at the University of Liberia, which had become a center of political activism and protest, demanded political reforms to end corruption. On one such occasion, Doe's government violently entered the campus and opened fire on students, regardless of whether they were protest leaders or simply attending the university. Dozens were killed and hundreds injured, in addition to the unlawful arrests and disappearances of many others. It was a shameful event still remembered as an example of the brutality of Doe's regime.

This widespread discontent, together with the regime's repression, encouraged the emergence of armed movements. In December 1989, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Charles Taylor, launched an insurgency against Samuel Doe's government, beginning the First Liberian Civil War. In 1990, Prince Yormie Johnson broke away from the NPFL and formed the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), whose forces captured and killed Doe that same year. Later, in 1991, former Doe supporters formed the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO).

The war lasted until 1997, leaving more than 200,000 dead—some estimates put the figure as high as 250,000—more than one million displaced, and the country's social and physical infrastructure devastated. Ending the war required intervention by the West African peacekeeping force known as ECOMOG. Its consequences were so devastating that survivors were plunged into extreme poverty and famine.

After the war, NPFL founder Charles Taylor won the 1997 presidential election, establishing a government full of promises that also proved hollow. Corruption was once again widespread, repression and authoritarianism returned, and revolutionary groups that had allied with the NPFL during the First Civil War launched new rebellions

against Taylor's government. The Second Civil War began in 1999, when Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD, not to be confused with ULIMO) launched military attacks against the government in northern Liberia. The revolutionary group Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) later joined the conflict.

This war was violent and destructive, marked by the enormous number of atrocities and crimes committed by both sides, including murder, rape, and looting. Civilians were frequently caught in the crossfire, and neither side was willing to order a ceasefire, increasing the conflict's total casualties.

Taken together, Liberia's civil conflicts between 1989 and 2003 caused approximately 250,000 deaths, mostly among civilians, as well as mass displacement within and beyond its borders and extensive destruction of infrastructure. Essential services and basic necessities, including water, food, medical care, and education, were unavailable, plunging the population into extreme poverty. Society was traumatized by so much death and destruction in such a short period, so that even those who emerged "unscathed" experienced various manifestations of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and sleep disturbances.

Although the international community intervened to secure a peace agreement quickly, the efforts of the UN and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were insufficient. The conclusion was clear: neither side would yield until it had decisively defeated the other, because both wanted to ensure that history would never repeat itself.

The war did not end until 2003, when President Taylor, under pressure from advancing rebels and international outrage, resigned on August 11 and went into exile in Nigeria. This opened the way for negotiations to end the conflict. That same month, a peace agreement was signed by the remaining government leaders, rebel groups, and other political actors outside the conflict, including the Unity Party (UP), the Liberia Action Party (LAP), and the United Nations itself.

The pact, known as the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement, required a neutral location for its signing, and Ghana was ultimately chosen to host the event. It provided for a temporary transitional government until society had been restored, followed by democratic elections. Given concerns that one of the parties might violate the agreement, the United Nations Mission in Liberia, a UN peacekeeping force, was assigned to monitor compliance and provide security for civilians during the transition.

The mission also helped with the political and infrastructure reconstruction needed to stabilize the country. Finally, in 2005, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president, becoming the first woman democratically elected head of state of an African country. After serving two terms, she was succeeded in January 2018 by former soccer player George Weah, who had won the December 2017 presidential election.

Despite progress in politics and social development, tensions and memories of the conflict remain deeply rooted in society, leaving the country with major political and development challenges. Although Liberia has maintained democratic government since the war ended, corruption remains high, while economic and social development suffers from inadequate infrastructure. Liberia's health system was also dealt a severe blow by the 2014 Ebola crisis, worsening the already difficult conditions in which Liberians live.

This is a clear example of the damage a humanitarian crisis can cause and of the need for authorities in these regions to undertake comprehensive reform of their political and education systems in order to restart the process of development.

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters are devastating events inherent to the world we inhabit. When they occur near our communities, they can cause immeasurable damage to infrastructure. These violent events may injure a substantial share of the population, force people to leave their homes, and kill others, directly or indirectly. In recent years, growing urbanization has made natural disasters increasingly common and devastating. Developing early warning systems, protective measures, and evacuation protocols can therefore mean the difference between a society's complete destruction and one more historical event recorded in its books.

Contrary to what one might expect, immediate destruction represents only a small portion of the harm these catastrophic events can cause. Long-term effects—including the disruption of basic services, loss of social infrastructure, mass displacement, and collective hysteria among survivors—often have profound and lasting impacts on communities unfortunate enough to experience them.

These violent and unpredictable events often have a psychological impact equal to or greater than that of armed conflict. This gives accounts of natural disasters a sense of awe and deep emotion, enabling any of us to connect profoundly with the victims of such extraordinary yet destructive events.

Through these accounts, we will analyze their consequences, the lessons they have left us, and the differences between effective and ineffective responses to natural disasters. We will also discuss the importance of urban planning for resilience and international cooperation in disaster risk reduction.

The cases analyzed here had a distinctive impact on our research, evoking empathy and interest in ways that the armed conflicts did not. We hope they will have a similar effect on you and that this information will deepen your understanding of the dangers we face and the importance of promoting measures to prevent such disasters.



Hurricane Katrina in the United States (2005)

The United States is the oldest modern independent state in the Americas. Its vast territory of approximately 9.8 million square kilometers borders Canada to the north and Mexico to the south, with access to the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west.



Its population is approximately 331 million, making it the world's third most populous country, behind only China and India. In terms of diversity, it may be one of the most fascinating countries imaginable: its population includes people of European, African, Asian, Latin American, and Native American ancestry. Its association with the "American Dream" has historically made the United States a major destination for migration, reflected in the infrastructure of its largest cities. English predominates in administration, education, and public life, although the country is home to substantial communities that use many other languages.

The history of the United States is remarkable. Following the European colonization of the Americas, Spain, France, Great Britain, and other powers established settlements and colonies in different parts of what is now U.S. territory. Thirteen British colonies took shape along the Atlantic coast and grew considerably in population and economic activity during the eighteenth century. Tensions between the colonists

and the British soon emerged, however: when Great Britain incurred debt after the Seven Years' War, it imposed additional taxes on the colonies through measures such as the Stamp Act and the Tea Act.

The colonists felt cheated: the British Crown exploited colonial resources without granting them any representation in Parliament. In response to this resistance, Great Britain introduced the Intolerable Acts, punitive measures that restricted the colonies' development. The most famous example was the closure of Boston Harbor in 1774, depriving the colonists of a key center of colonial trade.

In response, the colonists formed the First Continental Congress to coordinate opposition to these laws. Under the already familiar slogan "No taxation without representation," they expressed a clear position: either they would be granted representation in Parliament, or they would pursue independence. In 1775, the Second Continental Congress met to manage colonial military forces and establish a military strategy that would enable them to advance toward independence from the British Crown.

The War of Independence began in April of that year with the Battles of Lexington and Concord. In 1776, the Continental Congress appointed a committee to draft a formal declaration of independence. The committee was chaired by the well-known figure Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the document approved on July 4, 1776, in which the colonies declared themselves free and independent states, separate from Great Britain.

As we have seen in the previous cases, however, declaring independence is one thing; achieving it is another. The war continued for several years, and the now-free colonies sought support from other European powers. In 1778, the United States entered a military alliance with France, later joined by Spain and the Netherlands. With so many forces arrayed against the Crown, the inevitable occurred: after defeat at the Battle of Yorktown, British General Charles Cornwallis declared the surrender of the British army in 1781. Nevertheless, the war did not formally end until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783.

In 1787, the Thirteen Colonies, now formally known as the United States of America, drafted their Constitution. It was ratified in 1788 with a promise to add a Bill of Rights and entered into force in 1789. The first U.S. government could then be established, with George Washington as president, elected unanimously, Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state, and Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the treasury. The story of American independence marked the beginning of colonial revolutions around the world, leading European colonies in the Americas and Africa to view it as an example of what they too could achieve if they organized effectively.

For the purposes of the natural disaster examined in this report, however, we will move past the rich modern history of the United States and turn to the beginning of the twenty-first century. George W. Bush became president in 2001. That same year, the U.S. economy entered a brief recession linked, among other factors, to the end of the technology boom of the 1990s and the collapse of the dot-com bubble.

On September 11, 2001, the United States suffered the most painful terrorist attack in its history, culminating in the destruction of New York's Twin Towers and the federal government's declaration of war on al-Qaeda terrorists. The United States launched a military campaign in Afghanistan against al-Qaeda and the Taliban regime that sheltered it. In 2003, a coalition led by the United States and the United Kingdom invaded Iraq in a separate conflict, publicly justified, among other arguments, by the alleged presence of weapons of mass destruction and considerations of international security. Some of the information used to support these claims would later be challenged or proven false.

In 2004, a particularly intense hurricane season caught Florida and other Caribbean areas by surprise. Hurricanes including Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne caused significant damage across the southeastern United States. Responsibility for preparedness protocols and natural disaster response rested with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which, following the Department of Homeland Security's restructuring in 2003, faced repeated criticism for being inadequately prepared to respond effectively to larger disasters.

The New Orleans area's levee and pumping systems had already been the subject of warnings and improvement projects, but not all existing vulnerabilities had been addressed, leaving them exposed to potential disaster.

On August 23, 2005, a tropical depression formed in the Bahamas and strengthened rapidly over the following days. By August 25, after making landfall on the Florida peninsula, it had officially become a Category 1 hurricane and was moving into the Gulf of Mexico. It then intensified dramatically, reaching winds of 280 km/h on August 28 and becoming a Category 5 hurricane on the Saffir–Simpson scale. Its size was enormous: extremely high-speed winds extended more than 160 kilometers from its center, while tropical-storm-force winds reached as far as 370 kilometers.

Hurricane Katrina caused severe damage in several southern U.S. states. In New Orleans, storm surge, overtopping, and failures of flood defenses inundated much of the city. The disaster's mechanism therefore cannot be explained solely by wind acting directly on the levees. The National Hurricane Center report, updated on January 4, 2023, estimated 1,392 deaths associated with Katrina, including deaths attributed directly, indirectly, or indeterminately to the hurricane. The disaster also injured many people and caused mass displacement. Difficulties evacuating the population and meeting people's needs worsened the emergency's consequences.

The destruction was extreme: hundreds of thousands of homes and elements of general infrastructure were destroyed or severely damaged, at a cost exceeding \$125 billion. Hurricane Katrina's terrible consequences, together with the responsible authorities' ineffective response, exposed both FEMA's shortcomings and the need to restructure emergency policies. This history shows us that, when catastrophe strikes on a large scale, countries are rarely adequately prepared for the consequences, regardless of their resources.

This underscores the need to focus on much less developed regions, which may not even have a modern action plan for an unexpected disaster.



Haiti Earthquake (2010)

Haiti is a Caribbean country on the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with its neighbor, the Dominican Republic. It has a predominantly young population of approximately 11.4 million, which has grown steadily in recent years. Its official languages are French and Haitian Creole, the latter derived from French with linguistic influences from African languages, Spanish, Portuguese, English, Taíno, and others.



Its culture is rich in history and the arts, and its population is predominantly of African ancestry, with small mixed-ancestry and European minorities. Its economy centers mainly on agriculture, local textiles, and tourism, suggesting that society has not developed substantially during this century. Its characteristics are typical of an African country, but located in the Caribbean.

Its history is fascinating. The Spanish arrived on the island in 1492 as part of colonization, giving it the name Hispaniola. It remained under Spanish rule until 1697, when the Treaty of Ryswick was signed between France and an allied coalition of England, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Netherlands, ending the Nine Years' War. Among its many provisions, the treaty recognized French sovereignty over western Hispaniola, which France had occupied since the mid-seventeenth century. What is now Haiti became the French colony of Saint-Domingue, considered one of the wealthiest colonies in the world because of its production of sugar, coffee, cotton, and tobacco.

This “wealth,” however, rested on the inhumane exploitation of enslaved Africans whom France had brought to the island to work the land. They lived in absolute misery under a white minority that, because an enslaved person’s life expectancy after arrival was only a few years, offset the high mortality rate by bringing more enslaved people from Africa. There was a tiny minority of free people of mixed African and European ancestry, but they faced pervasive discrimination. This situation, which we have already seen in other countries, offered no stability whatsoever.

With the French Revolution, ideas of liberty and equality took on a new political dimension. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, adopted by the French National Assembly in August 1789, proclaimed principles of freedom and legal equality that also reverberated through Saint-Domingue’s social tensions. These principles encouraged demands for equal rights among free people of color, while the profound inequalities of colonial society heightened the existing instability.

Haitian historical tradition dates the Bois Caïman ceremony to August 1791. Associated with figures such as Dutty Boukman and Cécile Fatiman, it is regarded as one of the revolution’s symbolic precursors. A few days later, on the night of August 22–23, a mass uprising of enslaved people began in northern Saint-Domingue. The rebellion spread rapidly across the region, initiating a revolutionary process that would culminate in Haiti’s independence in 1804.

François-Dominique Toussaint Louverture was born into slavery around 1743 on the Bréda plantation and was freed around 1776. He learned to read and write and acquired a range of knowledge that would later prove useful during his political and military rise.

Louverture joined the 1791 uprising and gradually assumed greater military responsibilities. Initially, he aligned himself with Spain, which was fighting revolutionary France on the island. After France abolished slavery in 1794, however, Louverture switched sides and joined the forces of the French Republic, subsequently fighting the Spanish and

British. Over the years, he consolidated his position as one of Saint-Domingue's leading political and military figures.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Louverture proclaimed himself governor for life under an authoritarian regime, imposing a constitution that abolished slavery and guaranteed freedom and equality for all inhabitants of Saint-Domingue. His efforts were short-lived: in 1802, Napoleon Bonaparte, seeking to regain control of the colony and enslave its population, sent a military force to the island under his brother-in-law's command. Louverture was captured in June 1802 and deported to France, where he was imprisoned at the Fort de Joux in the department of Doubs. He remained there for several months in extremely harsh conditions and died on April 7, 1803.

His story inspired the people of Saint-Domingue to continue their struggle. Led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines, one of Louverture's lieutenants, local forces defeated the French at the Battle of Vertières in November 1803 and proclaimed independence on January 1, 1804. They renamed their country Haiti, the island's Indigenous name before colonization, entering history as the modern world's first Black republic and the second independent nation in the Americas, after the United States.

One could say that Haiti planted the seed in the Americas that made European powers fear the possibility of rebellion, serving as a historical precursor to all the struggles for independence that followed. Yet Haiti's future was far from trouble-free. Despite its overwhelming success on the battlefield, its independence, and the control imposed by its new emperor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who took the name Jacques I, the country began to experience the first domestic and international disputes facing a newly independent colony.

To inspire confidence that independence was secure, the emperor ordered the massacre of the French colonists who remained in Haiti, killing thousands. Although the international community condemned this act, it was viewed locally as a necessary evil to demonstrate the

country's determination to remain independent and ensure that France would not attempt to retake the territory by force.

As ruler, Jacques I tried to set the country on a path toward development, taking advantage of its early independence. Unfortunately for his government, the independent nations of the time were unwilling to recognize a state governed by formerly enslaved people, fearing it might inspire other colonies to follow suit. Haiti therefore faced diplomatic and economic discrimination that, despite its early independence and potential, prevented it from beginning a process of development.

The emperor's limited achievements, combined with longstanding racial tensions, generated domestic discontent and opposition. On October 17, 1806, Jacques I was assassinated in a plot involving his own senior officers, Alexandre Pétion and Henri Christophe. This was a pivotal event in Haitian history because it triggered a civil war. After his death, the country was divided between a southern republic led by Alexandre Pétion and a northern state headed by Henri Christophe. The latter became a kingdom in 1811.

Henri Christophe, whose ideals were more authoritarian and militaristic, established a monarchy and a feudal system in the northern kingdom, proclaiming himself king. His state compelled peasants to work on plantations and construction projects, with the aim of using this discipline to accelerate national and infrastructure development and achieve exponential growth compared with its southern counterpart.

Alexandre Pétion, by contrast, was a republican with more liberal political ideas than those of the northern kingdom. He made himself president and established a system of land distribution among soldiers and peasants in the southern republic, promoting education and development through citizens' political participation. Neither model bore fruit. Pétion faced shortages of resources and labor but died of yellow fever in 1818. Christophe, meanwhile, took his own life in 1820 under pressure from opposition to his authoritarian, militaristic government.

Haiti's history then took a particularly interesting turn. After both rulers had died, Jean-Pierre Boyer, who had succeeded Pétion, reunited the country as a single state and declared himself president. He went further in 1822, introducing stabilization reforms that included taking control of the eastern part of the island and unifying all of Hispaniola under Haitian rule. As impressive as this may sound, the former French colony had not resolved one of the greatest obstacles to its development: integration into the wider world.

Boyer realized that without the support of other independent nations, Haiti would never achieve a prosperous economy. In 1825, his government had to pay France an indemnity in exchange for formal recognition of Haiti's independence. This decision, which might initially appear strategic, condemned Haiti to a debt that destroyed its economic growth potential for decades, further delaying its development as an independent nation.

The Dominican Republic's independence in 1844 compounded these difficulties, confining Haiti to its former territory on the western side of the island. The nineteenth century thus brought Haiti a succession of unstable governments, coups, and an economic crisis stemming from its debt to France, among other problems, setting the stage for the final blow in the twentieth century. In 1915, the United States invaded and occupied Haiti under the pretext of stabilizing the country and protecting its interests. The U.S. occupation, which lasted until 1934, had major consequences for Haiti's subsequent political development, although it facilitated the construction of complex infrastructure that would not have been possible under other circumstances.

In 1957, François Duvalier took power and established a brutal dictatorship that continued under his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, until 1986. After the Duvaliers' fall, Haiti experienced a succession of civilian and military governments. Jean-Bertrand Aristide was democratically elected in 1990 but overthrown in a coup in 1991, then reinstated in 1994 through another U.S. intervention. As this brief overview of Haiti's twentieth century shows, its development as a nation was repeatedly interrupted by military rule, authoritarianism, and foreign intervention

or occupation, preventing it from embarking on a path of development and keeping it in poverty.

These were the conditions in which Haiti entered the twenty-first century, when the final ingredients were added for the natural disasters it would experience, one of which gives this section its title. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the president reinstated by the United States, was elected again in 2000 but left the country in 2004 amid a severe political crisis and armed conflict. In this context, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) on April 30, 2004.

The mission aimed to restore order and support political development, providing security for elections and stability against possible contingencies such as another coup. MINUSTAH's presence helped stabilize the country temporarily, but Haitians regarded this interference as abusive and unethical, alleging that international forces subjected local people to excessive oppression.

It was then that all this instability and underdevelopment revealed their most destructive side. In September 2004, Haiti was struck by a powerful tropical storm that rapidly intensified into Hurricane Jeanne. Beyond its lack of infrastructure, Haiti's topography and geographical location are extremely important factors because they make natural disasters more frequent than in other regions. Although Hurricane Jeanne did not make landfall in Haiti, its intense rainfall caused massive flooding and landslides in northwestern communities, destroying the country's limited existing infrastructure.

Approximately 3,000 people died in these floods, and many thousands more were displaced after their homes and communities were completely destroyed. Despite extensive international assistance, inadequate infrastructure for such events, combined with ineffective government, meant that these efforts could not adequately address the damage.

Contrary to what one might expect, the hurricane's effects were not enough of a warning for the country's governments. Ignoring such warnings is a decision that has often cost many lives throughout history. So it was when the worst catastrophe in the country's history—and in recent history—struck. On January 12, 2010, at 4:53 p.m., a powerful earthquake with a moment magnitude (Mw) of 7.0 shook Haiti, with its epicenter near Léogâne, west of Port-au-Prince.

The earthquake caused a human catastrophe whose social and material effects were comparable to those of armed conflict. Official Haitian estimates rose from approximately 230,000 deaths in 2010 to 316,000 in a later revision. Both figures have been disputed and should therefore be read as an estimated range rather than a definitive count. More than 300,000 injuries and approximately 1.5 million displaced people were also reported. Schools, hospitals, government buildings, and homes were severely damaged or destroyed, diminishing precisely the institutional capacity needed to respond.

For a vulnerable and underdeveloped Haiti, these consequences were even worse than those of a local armed conflict in a developed country. Vast numbers of displaced people had to live in improvised camps without access to food or drinking water, creating a second humanitarian crisis of famine and dehydration. The lack of emergency medical services caused many injured people who could have been saved to die. The international community mobilized humanitarian assistance, including rescue teams, medical supplies, food, water, donations, and even armed forces.

The humanitarian response faced major difficulties in coordinating and distributing aid. A cholera epidemic also began in October 2010. Research by Piarroux and colleagues (2011) linked its onset to contamination of the Artibonite River and one of its tributaries downstream from a MINUSTAH camp and documented inadequate sanitation in Meille. In December 2016, the United Nations secretary-general apologized to the Haitian people for the organization's role in the epidemic and its inadequate response.

Today, fourteen years after the catastrophe, its consequences remain evident and devastating. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and its post-earthquake situation seems to worsen with every new disaster. Its infrastructure has never recovered: reconstruction has been slow and precarious, and its fragile economy cannot afford the costs of development.

Most Haitians still live in precarious conditions, and access to resources and services such as drinking water, food, and health care is a luxury they cannot afford. Insecurity and violence have consequently taken hold, with armed gangs controlling large areas of the country, especially the capital. This situation has prevented vital contemporary sources of income, such as tourism, from developing in Haiti.

Political instability also remains the norm. In the early hours of July 7, 2021, then-President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated at his private residence, and his wife, Martine Moïse, was seriously injured. The attack was carried out by at least 28 foreign mercenaries believed to have links to organized crime. The international community tried to assist the investigation, but the mercenaries' ties to foreign individuals and organizations have obstructed judicial proceedings.

Moïse's assassination deepened Haiti's political crisis, creating a power vacuum in an already deeply divided country without a functioning parliament. Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph temporarily assumed control of the government, provoking tensions with Ariel Henry, who was reported to have been appointed prime minister by Moïse shortly before his death.

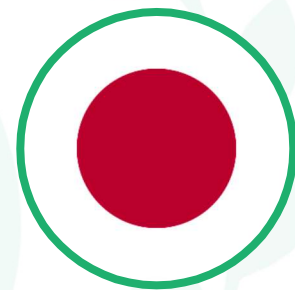
In August of that same year, another earthquake struck southern Haiti, causing further destruction and loss of life. The country is a clear example of a failed republic, brought down again each time an attempt is made to rebuild it. The humanitarian crises it has suffered, and the many more that will follow, are a direct consequence of its fragile social structure, which can no longer recover without intervention—something history does not recommend either.

This is a case in which educational and social reconstruction could prove difficult, meaning that even if the country is stabilized, this study may never be applicable. Time will tell whether fortune favors Haiti, the second and most unsuccessful independent republic in the Americas.



Tōhoku Tsunami/Earthquake (2011)

Tōhoku, formerly known as Michinoku, is a region in the northeastern part of Japan's island of Honshū. It comprises six prefectures: Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, and the best-known, Fukushima. Its defining features are its mountainous landscape and extensive coastline, with access to the Pacific Ocean to the east and the Sea of Japan to the west.



Tōhoku was one of the last regions to come under Japanese government control because of a wide range of political, cultural, and even geographical factors. These made its integration into the rest of the country difficult and hindered its development. Today, the region has more than 9 million inhabitants, approximately 7% of Japan's total population.

Like Japan as a whole, its history extends back to prehistoric times. Archaeological evidence of the Jōmon culture—prehistoric hunter-gatherer communities—dates back more than ten thousand years. Unlike the previous cases, however, ancient Japanese history is not relevant to this article. We will therefore note only that Tōhoku was among the regions most resistant to incorporation into the centralized Japanese state during the Yamato period (250–710 CE), delaying its full integration and development until the Nara period (710–794 CE). This provides useful historical background, particularly when we observe

that, despite its importance, the region never received the development and attention enjoyed by the rest of the country.

With modernization, Japan restored the centralized imperial authority lost during feudalism, beginning an unprecedented era of progress and development. The Meiji Restoration began in 1868 and ushered in the Meiji era (1868–1912), during which Japan moved from a feudal order toward a modern, centralized state. This process profoundly affected the entire country and met with different forms of resistance and adaptation in Tōhoku. Before the Meiji Restoration, the region was divided into various feudal domains, and its economy was predominantly agricultural, with substantial production of rice and other crops.

Although some industries, such as mining, existed, Tōhoku was considerably less developed than urban regions. The Meiji government abolished the feudal domains, enabling industrial growth and modern development throughout Japan. This deepened inequalities in Tōhoku, which did not receive the same support or opportunities as regions that had moved away from feudalism more rapidly.

After World War II, the region's casualties were considerably lower than those in major centers such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya because it had not been a focal point of the conflict, although it had been bombed. Nevertheless, destruction across the country severely disrupted the local economy, particularly affecting these underdeveloped areas that depended entirely on interregional trade and rationing. This caused major shortages of food and essential resources, leaving local people facing famine and low productivity across their economic sectors.

When the war ended, Japan's reconstruction policies focused on repairing and restoring destroyed infrastructure to recover the connections between regions that had been lost. With U.S. support and the well-known Dodge Line, Japan rapidly stabilized its economy and infrastructure, assisting regions such as Tōhoku through land reforms that quickly increased agricultural production and improved farmers' living conditions.

However beneficial this may sound, we must remember that a substantial development gap already separated Tōhoku from the rest of urbanized, modern Japan. Although these advances improved infrastructure and diversified the economy, the region remained below Japanese development standards. This gap, also found in peripheral regions of other developed countries, can perpetuate itself through adverse demographic dynamics: with fewer employment and educational opportunities, some young people migrate to major cities.

In the short term, this produces significant population aging, which eventually causes a substantial decline in productive capacity. This further widens the gap between urban areas and the underdeveloped region, placing a burden on productive regions.

Together, these factors create a perfect recipe for disaster, much like those in all the previous examples: a society with a low quality of life, by Japanese standards, of course; a population with limited productive capacity because of underdevelopment and limited industrialization; fragile infrastructure largely dependent on outside support; and young people who prefer to try their luck in major cities rather than remain in a less developed region with few opportunities. These were the conditions in which, in the twenty-first century, Tōhoku experienced one of the most destructive events in human history.

On March 11, 2011, at 2:46 p.m., an extremely powerful earthquake struck the coast of the Oshika Peninsula for six minutes. Its magnitude was determined to be 9.1 on the moment magnitude scale, which should not be confused with the Richter scale. Its epicenter lay in the Pacific Ocean, approximately 70 kilometers east of Tōhoku. It was the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in Japan and the fourth-largest recorded instrumentally worldwide since 1900.

The earthquake, however, was only the beginning of the catastrophe. It generated a tsunami whose maximum run-up reached approximately 40 meters in parts of the Iwate coast. On the Sendai Plain, floodwaters traveled several kilometers inland; some summaries place their maximum reach at around 10 kilometers. These measurements describe

different phenomena and locations, but together they reveal extraordinary destructive power: the water swept away communities, infrastructure, and livelihoods along the Tōhoku coast.

As devastating as this already sounds, the situation became even more tragic because Fukushima had a nuclear power plant that was severely affected by the natural disaster. Infrastructure destruction, electrical failures, and the release of radioactive materials added a major nuclear crisis to the emergency, requiring the evacuation of approximately 154,000 people within a 20-kilometer radius of the plant.

The combined toll of the earthquake and tsunami was approximately 19,000 people dead or missing, more than 6,000 injured, and hundreds of thousands displaced or evacuated. The Fukushima nuclear accident expanded and prolonged displacement and added health, psychological, and social consequences. The figures should not merge direct disaster casualties and nuclear evacuations into a single category, but they do convey the cumulative scale of the emergency.

Thanks to its international integration and effective government, however, Japan was able to receive and provide the humanitarian assistance needed to address the situation quickly. The international community supplied resources and support for rescue efforts and future economic recovery, while the Japanese government introduced reconstruction and economic recovery measures to help the region return to normal rapidly. This is significant because the emergency's economic cost was estimated at more than \$200 billion, making it the most expensive humanitarian crisis caused by a natural disaster in history.

Without Japan's strong economic and geopolitical development, the consequences would have been incomparable to those of any previous natural disaster. Yet we cannot ignore that the damage was also amplified by the development gap between Tōhoku and the rest of modern Japan. A system focused on prevention, infrastructure standards, and available crisis funding could therefore have reduced those figures further.

The consequences remain evident today. The nuclear crisis has left lasting effects in Fukushima, where some areas still present challenges for radioactive decontamination. Meanwhile, in Kyūshū, Mount Shinmoedake was already undergoing an eruptive episode that had begun in January 2011. The volcano erupted again during March, including a major eruption on March 13, two days after the Tōhoku earthquake. Because its eruptive activity had begun before the earthquake, however, the Tōhoku earthquake should not be presented as its direct cause.

The tsunami also carried debris from destroyed infrastructure into the ocean and onto land, contaminating and disrupting coastal ecosystems and cultivated areas. This was particularly problematic for a region whose economy depended on local fishing and agriculture, highlighting the need to diversify Tōhoku's sources of income.

Despite this, the case offers a positive example of resilience and humanitarian crisis management. Following this precedent may be challenging for less developed societies with weaker connections to the wider world, but it is undoubtedly a way to overcome such situations with fewer losses and casualties, substantially reducing recovery time. It also provides a strong example of how effective management of international resources, together with efficient local authorities, can make the difference between a smaller humanitarian crisis and a major, prolonged disaster.

Forced Displacement and Migration Crises

Conflicts, disasters, and other crises can trigger population movements within a country or into other territories. Their causes and people's protection needs vary, so we must distinguish among internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants. The following examples allow us to examine this diversity and its implications for host societies.

This clarification brings us directly to three questions that radically change the circumstances: What happens if the process is not managed properly? What happens if we fail to integrate people into our societies? What happens if, once the crisis has ended, they decide not to return to their countries of origin?

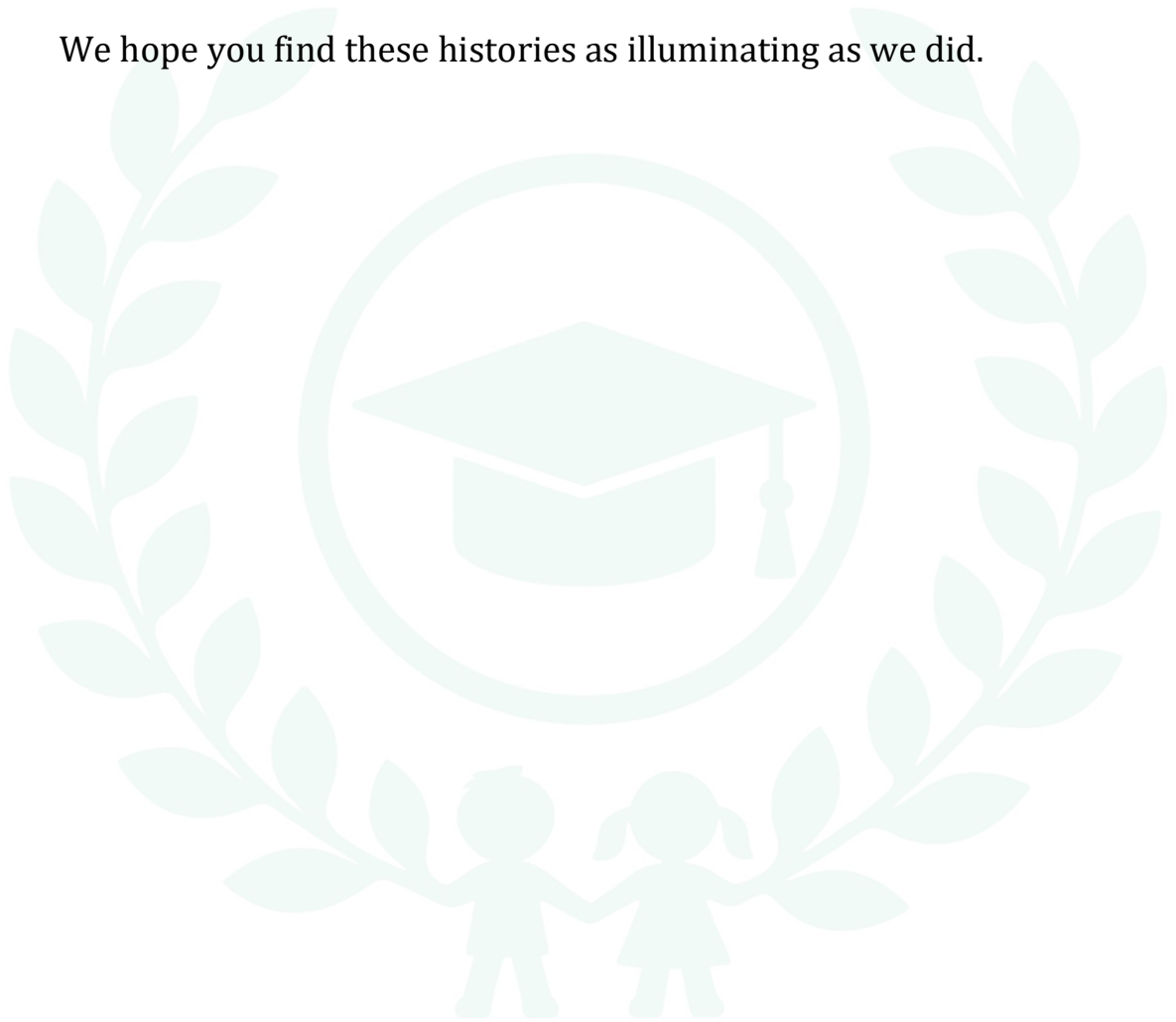
In this section, we will discuss three historical refugee crises that offer answers to these questions. Their outcomes will help us better understand the complexity of the situation and the potential consequences of mismanagement. We will also examine the challenges of integration, the sociopolitical tensions that led to these circumstances, and the long-term consequences for both refugees and host countries. When refugee integration is handled inadequately, it can lead to dangerous forms of marginalization that generate tensions and conflicts within host communities.

Effective policies and strong international cooperation can therefore turn a refugee crisis into a unique opportunity to develop a culturally diverse society. Developing countries, or those whose demographic structure limits their socioeconomic potential, may find in a refugee

crisis the missing piece that allows them to realize their full capacity and move to the next stage of development.

The selected cases emerged from a review of thousands of historical situations, choosing those that best represent each of the questions posed above. We also believe these particular cases provide a more revealing view of how societies face this type of crisis from both perspectives, while keeping in mind everything previously discussed.

We hope you find these histories as illuminating as we did.



Great Irish Famine (1845–1852)

Ireland is an island in northwestern Europe, historically divided into two political regions: the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. The former has approximately five million inhabitants, while Northern Ireland has around two million.



Irish and English are official languages in the Republic of Ireland, with Irish constitutionally recognized as the first official language. In Northern Ireland, where English predominates, Irish also has official recognition under legislation passed in 2022. Economically, the Republic of Ireland is a major European center for technology, pharmaceutical, and other highly productive industries. In 2023, chemicals and related products accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total value of its goods exports.

The history of the “two Irelands” has never been free from conflict and social problems, which date back to the period when the country was still a British colony. The independence movement had grown considerably since the late nineteenth century, a development dramatically reflected in 1916, when members of a secret organization called the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) joined forces with the Irish Citizen Army and took up arms against the British Crown. The uprising began on April 24, which fell on Easter Monday, and lasted six days. It therefore became known as the Easter Rising.

The insurgents seized several strategic buildings in Dublin, Ireland's capital. From there, one of the movement's leading figures, Patrick Pearse, proclaimed an independent Irish Republic and called on the people to join the struggle. Unfortunately for them, British forces rapidly deployed troops and artillery, suppressing the uprising and repressing those involved. The conflict caused numerous civilian and military casualties, significant destruction in Dublin, and the execution of revolutionary leaders. The brutality of the repression and executions planted the seed of independence even among those who had opposed the revolutionary movement that culminated in the Easter Rising.

These aspirations for independence reached their peak in the 1918 British general election, when Sinn Féin won a large majority of Ireland's seats in the British Parliament. The party was closely associated with revolutionary and pro-independence ideas, as the principal leaders of the Easter Rising were members or associates. Indeed, the British government wrongly blamed the party for involvement in the armed uprising, creating deep hostility between them. Despite winning their seats, Sinn Féin members refused to join the British Parliament and instead established an alternative parliament, Dáil Éireann, in 1919, declaring their intention to achieve independence.

Supported by the Irish Republican Army, Sinn Féin thus began a war against British forces with the aim of negotiating complete independence from the United Kingdom. The war lasted until 1921, when Irish leaders and the British government signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty. It established the division of the island into two political regions: the Irish Free State, a self-governing dominion within the British Empire, and Northern Ireland, which would remain part of the United Kingdom.

Ratification of the treaty was far from straightforward, triggering a civil war in the newly established Irish Free State. The conflict pitted treaty supporters against those who wanted complete independence and rejected any solution that retained a relationship with the British Empire. The war lasted from 1922 to 1923 and ended in victory for the

pro-treaty side, leaving tensions within the population that persisted into recent times.

As we have seen, Ireland's twentieth-century history was marked by internal and external conflicts. To understand their depth, we must return to the nineteenth century and the Great Famine. The famine did not create the independence movement on its own or originate all tensions with the British government, but it transformed them: the scale of mortality and emigration, together with a sense of abandonment, strengthened nationalism and left an enduring political memory. In a society whose economy depended heavily on agriculture, the catastrophe also became a historical turning point.

Because of widespread poverty, agricultural land was divided into small plots, leading peasants to focus their production on a single crop. The potato was the staple of the Irish diet because it was easy to harvest and could be used in many different ways. The population had become vitally dependent on this tuber, to the point that one-third relied on it almost exclusively for subsistence and food.

The situation appeared stable because the harvesting process was simple and offered few potential points of failure. One of those risks, however, was infestation by "*Phytophthora infestans*," a fungus-like microorganism. This pathogen causes a crop disease known as potato late blight, infecting plants through small wounds in leaf and stem tissues, particularly in the Solanaceae family, which includes potatoes and tomatoes. Once a plant is infected, the pathogen develops inside it and produces spores that spread through air and water, preferably in temperate, humid conditions.

Late blight reached Europe in 1845 and spread rapidly to Ireland. Historical and genetic evidence indicates that the pathogen had previously appeared in North America and that its international spread was linked to the movement of infected plant material. It destroyed the vast majority of potato crops for more than seven consecutive years, depriving Ireland's population of its main food source. British policy at the time favored economic nonintervention in the colonies, reflecting

free-market ideas, so the British offered little assistance, responding ineffectively and counterproductively to local needs.

Attempts were made to provide workhouses for the poorest people, but inhumane conditions in these institutions caused even more death and misery. Moreover, despite the desperate situation in its colony, the British government continued its policy of exporting food from Ireland to the United Kingdom, generating deep resentment among local people.

The consequences were devastating. Mass mortality and emigration drastically reduced Ireland's population, from nearly 8.5 million in 1845 to approximately 6.6 million in 1851. More than one million people emigrated during the famine years, mainly to Great Britain and North America. Mass migration became a major obstacle to the development of the region that would later become independent. The situation accelerated the collapse of Irish agriculture as tenant farmers were evicted, significantly reducing the rural population.

Resentment toward the United Kingdom, combined with the death sentence posed by famine, fueled migration on an extreme scale and significantly slowed societal recovery. This slowdown, in turn, left local people uncertain whether prosperous conditions would ever return. The resulting fear led Irish people to continue seeking shelter abroad even after the famine ended, increasing the number of refugees and drastically reducing the remaining local population.

This type of migration differs from that typically following armed conflict or a natural disaster, principally because the vast majority of families who emigrated never wished to return to their country of origin. Emigration to North America was extremely dangerous. Many people traveled on vessels later known as "coffin ships" because of overcrowding, poor sanitation, and high rates of disease during the crossing. Thousands died during the voyage or shortly after arrival, especially in 1847, although it is incorrect to claim that most passengers died before reaching their destination. Those who settled abroad subsequently formed major Irish communities.

Host countries saw their major cities develop with the support of the Irish communities that settled there. In New York, for example, one-quarter of the population was of Irish origin by the mid-nineteenth century, while in Boston, one-third was Irish. In Canada, their greatest impact can be seen in Montreal, where they supplied labor for essential infrastructure, including the construction of the Lachine Canal.

The refugees were unwelcome and faced repeated tensions with local people. Over the years, however, they prospered and helped develop society abroad, securing a promising future for themselves and their descendants. Despite discrimination, they contributed to cultural diversity and the demographic growth of major North American centers, while benefiting the economy through work in factories, construction, and services.

Irish people came to connect their identity and culture with their new homes. After this process, and given the difficulty of reaching and establishing themselves in those places, they no longer had any reason to return. This illustrates how migration could devastate the population left behind while benefiting host countries. It also shows that a migration crisis does not necessarily refer to the emergency created by migrants' arrival at a new destination.

Fortunately, despite the difficulties and the slow process of reconstruction, the Republic of Ireland is prosperous today and a leading economic and technological center in Europe. Northern Ireland, however, has not taken off in the same way as its counterpart. It depends heavily on the United Kingdom to maintain economic stability and faces major challenges in inequality and productivity.

Both the descendants of those who remained and those who emigrated have established comfortable lives where they settled, making this a story of success in the face of an emergency. Yet the consequences of such a situation leave traces in societies' collective memory. Educational intervention and a process of social integration were needed before light could be seen at the end of the tunnel. What I take from this history is the importance of education in such

circumstances, and how the educational decisions we make in extreme situations can profoundly influence the prosperity of generations to come.



Venezuelan Refugee Crisis (2014–present)

In Latin America, particularly since the beginning of this century, we have witnessed an overwhelming reality: our own neighbors have left their countries and dispersed across more prosperous nations. I will begin with the most significant of these migration movements, which has already become part of this region's history.

Venezuela is a Latin American country with an estimated population of 30.5 million, bordered by Colombia to the west, Brazil to the south, and the Republic of Guyana to the east. Its official language is Spanish, although Indigenous languages remain strongly present in certain communities, including those in Bolívar, the Guajira region, and the Orinoco Delta.



Its population is predominantly of mixed ancestry, with white, Black, and Indigenous minorities, a common pattern in this part of the world. Venezuela is also historically Catholic, so its main celebrations and customs are closely connected to its religious heritage. Its sociopolitical history is very likely among the most fascinating in Latin America. Venezuela had been a Spanish colony since the sixteenth century. On July 5, 1811, seven provinces formally declared independence from Spain, although the conflict continued over the following decade. The pro-independence victory at the Battle of Carabobo in June 1821 largely consolidated patriot control over Venezuelan territory.

Venezuela remained part of the Republic of Colombia, later known as Gran Colombia, until 1830, when it became a separate sovereign republic. This was due to multiple factors, some of which are familiar from the previous examples. First, the newly independent states did not receive immediate international support, largely because colonial powers feared triggering independence struggles throughout their own colonies.

Without such support, as we saw in Haiti, the newly independent republics could not enter international markets and begin their development projects. This was compounded by another consequence of achieving independence so early: the absence of other colonies willing to offer support. Pioneering a rebellious idea usually means that it is not yet widely accepted, making strategic allies difficult to find.

There was also a deep internal social divide between those who supported an independent republic and those who preferred to remain under Europe's wing, eventually benefiting indirectly from its development. The latter formed the Royalist forces, backed by highly trained and well-armed troops of the Spanish Crown. Their operations temporarily regained control of key cities and forced the independence fighters to retreat. Major clashes, including the Battle of La Puerta in 1814 and the capture of the capital that same year, demonstrated the Royalists' strategic superiority as they appeared to regain control for the Spanish Crown.

The final major factor delaying Venezuelan independence was the Church's support for Spanish interests. This was a deeply Catholic republic, so the Church's position carried considerable weight. Its unequivocal support for Royalist forces dealt a severe blow to the independence movement, as a substantial share of society lost its patriotic fervor and turned instead to faith and religious principles.

Yet this also had the opposite effect: patriots became strongly anticlerical, devoting some of their efforts to obstructing the Catholic Church by expropriating land and imposing regulations that prevented it from operating normally. This vicious cycle gradually heightened

tensions. The stronger the anticlerical movement became, the more the Church supported the Spanish Crown and influenced the population, further strengthening anticlerical opposition, and so on.

Clearly, this was a losing battle for the clergy: sooner or later, the efforts of independence forces would overcome the Crown's interests, making independence inevitable. As that point approached, a substantial portion of the clergy radically shifted its allegiance to remain an active political and social force after independence. Looking at present-day realities, it is clear that the Catholic Church managed to rebuild and adapt to this transformation, since Venezuela remains a deeply Catholic country today.

Perhaps the Royalists' greatest mistake was underestimating Simón Bolívar, who played a fundamental role from the proclamation of independence through its eventual consolidation. Although their defeats had dealt heavy blows, Bolívar's independence forces also achieved resounding victories, such as the Battle of Boyacá in 1819. Although fought in what is now Colombia, it gave Bolívar the opportunity to acquire resources, alliances, and strategic knowledge of the battlefield.

These advantages proved crucial at the Battle of Carabobo in 1821. Bolívar's forces included Colombian soldiers, and his offensive strategy drew on experience gained in campaigns abroad. Support from the new nations, together with overwhelming victories over Royalist forces, compelled the Spanish to withdraw from Venezuelan territory, securing its independence.

Venezuela's post-independence history is also highly interesting, with events fundamental to its present circumstances, such as the Federal War. During that conflict, the newly independent groups fought for political control of the republic, causing a devastating civil war that left the country unstable. Another significant period was the rule of Antonio Guzmán Blanco (1870–1888), when economic and social development policies sought to consolidate Venezuela as an emerging power.

The Venezuelan dictatorship under Juan Vicente Gómez (1908–1935) is also noteworthy. During this period, Venezuela regressed considerably in freedom, geopolitics, and development. For this report, however, I have chosen to move to the event that completely changed the country's historical trajectory. Venezuela's first oil deposits had already been discovered by the mid-nineteenth century, leading to the establishment of its first oil companies and attracting foreign firms interested in exploring the extent and characteristics of local oil fields.

Venezuelan oil production reached a new scale during the 1920s. The country's first legislation specifically addressing hydrocarbons was enacted in 1920 and subsequently amended in 1921 and 1922. On December 14, 1922, the Barroso II well in the La Rosa field in Cabimas experienced a spectacular blowout, releasing approximately 100,000 barrels of oil a day for several days. The episode demonstrated the enormous oil potential of the Lake Maracaibo Basin to the world and greatly accelerated the development of Venezuela's oil industry.

Industry revenues soon filled government coffers and created local employment, surpassing the returns from traditional industries such as coffee and cocoa production. Yet not all oil is alike: operating costs depend on multiple factors, including its "purity," proximity to the surface, and production capacity at each site.

Venezuelan oil generated extraordinary revenue but also created structural vulnerability. A substantial share of its resources consists of heavy and extra-heavy crude, classified by density and viscosity, requiring specific extraction, transportation, upgrading, and refining processes. While international prices remained high, these costs were more than offset. When the market changed, the same production structure became much less tolerant of inefficiency, underinvestment, and technological deterioration.

PDVSA was established in 1975 and began operating in 1976, when the nationalization of Venezuela's oil industry took effect. Through this company, the state nationalized the sector, assumed a monopoly over commercial production, and ensured that oil revenues flowed directly

into public coffers. This may sound like an intelligent way to capture the proceeds of a highly productive industry without sharing them with foreign companies. Yet it is an incredibly complex process that, if mishandled, can permanently destroy the industry.

Although all the revenue now belonged to the state, two fundamental problems sealed Venezuela's fate. First, despite the returns, the government did not reinvest profits in improving the industry's infrastructure, preventing production costs from declining over time. Indeed, insufficient reinvestment in maintenance, modernization, and infrastructure expansion could constrain operational capacity and increase problems such as oil spills and losses.

Falling oil prices during the 1980s sharply reduced revenue and exposed this vulnerability. The decline did not result from "almost nonexistent" demand, but from a combination of weaker demand, greater international supply, and market changes. Under these new conditions, operating costs, investment, and management quality were no longer secondary considerations: they determined how long an excessively oil-dependent economic model could be sustained.

Because the economy had become almost entirely dependent on oil, this brought severe economic crises with major social consequences and costs. In the 1990s, President Rafael Caldera and his team tried to resolve the problem through reforms known as the "oil opening," seeking to attract foreign investment again and create a new production stream without the costs of the Venezuelan industry.

This political and economic process changed considerably when Hugo Chávez came to power. Chávez had led a failed coup attempt in 1992 but subsequently reached the presidency through elections: he won in December 1998 and took office in February 1999. One of his most controversial policies was to redirect PDVSA toward a nationalist and social agenda, reinforcing state control over the sector. Taking advantage of stabilized oil prices, Chávez ordered revenues to be used to finance massive social programs called "missions," thereby politicizing the oil industry.

Among the best-known programs were Mission Barrio Adentro, which improved access to health care in poor communities; Missions Robinson, Ribas, and Sucre, which invested in education at all levels to eradicate illiteracy; Mission Mercal, which guaranteed food for everyone at subsidized prices; and Mission Vivienda Venezuela, which sought to reduce the housing deficit through subsidized housing units.

These programs were even praised internationally, receiving recognition from UNESCO and other humanitarian organizations. The problem lay in how the missions would be funded. Because Venezuela neither diversified its economy nor reinvested profits in improving its industry, all these social programs depended entirely on oil prices remaining above certain thresholds. Even a slight deviation from the projections would allow operating costs to consume the profits, leaving the entire state without funding.

The fall in oil prices in 2014 deepened a crisis already marked by export dependence, fiscal imbalances, deteriorating production, controls, and institutional weakness. Monetary financing of the deficit contributed decisively to hyperinflation but does not explain the entire process on its own. The result was severe shortages, the collapse of basic services, rapid impoverishment, violence, political repression, and a widespread loss of the conditions needed to sustain everyday life in Venezuela.

In December 2023, UNHCR and IOM reported more than 7.7 million Venezuelans outside their country, mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean. This movement creates protection and integration challenges, as well as needs for employment, education, and access to services in host countries. Receiving millions of people through already strained public systems has exposed the lack of adequate regional protocols and the limitations of many Latin American states.

The problem is not that governments must choose between their citizens and migrants: this false dilemma fuels prejudice and makes expanding services more politically difficult. A sustainable response strengthens local capacity and addresses the needs of new arrivals and

host communities together. Without such investment, competition for scarce resources can undermine social cohesion and turn a crisis of management into a crisis of coexistence.

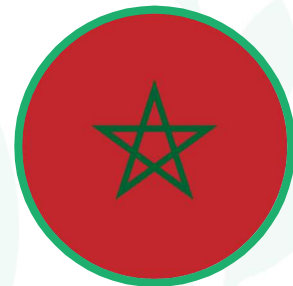
Venezuela is undoubtedly a historical example of how good intentions, when poorly implemented, can create a problem even greater than the original one. This experience taught Latin America to exercise caution toward unfunded subsidy and protectionist policies, while encouraging the development of migration protocols and measures for emergencies in the region. Organizations such as UNHCR and USAID have focused their efforts on helping Venezuelan migrants in their new countries, but international support and cooperation will remain vital for several more years.

As often happens in crises of this kind, however, Venezuela will find it very difficult to attract a substantial share of those who emigrated back home. Once people who have sought refuge abroad have settled into a new home and successfully adapted, the prospect of returning is unlikely to appeal to them. The trauma and difficulty of achieving this newfound stability in the host country often produce strong resistance to returning, even if conditions have improved. Only time will tell whether Venezuela regains economic strength and provides an acceptable standard of living for its people.

Even so, host countries and their populations must make a real effort to accept and welcome migrants, who are unlikely to reconsider returning to their countries of origin. A welcoming transition ultimately brings immeasurable benefits. For developing countries such as those in Latin America, these benefits may provide the missing element needed to establish a strong socioeconomic policy framework.

Mass Migration from Morocco (2021–present)

Morocco is a northwestern African country, bordered by Algeria to the east and Western Sahara to the south. Its population is approximately 37 million across 446,550 square kilometers, giving it twice Africa's average population density. Its official languages are Arabic and Berber, although French is widely used in business and international diplomacy.



The population is predominantly Arab and Berber, with very small European and sub-Saharan minorities. Islam is consequently the predominant religion, alongside small Christian and Jewish minorities. Morocco's history reaches back to antiquity. Amazigh populations inhabited the region when Phoenician seafarers began arriving on its shores between the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. A Carthaginian presence and influence later developed, before Roman rule expanded across North Africa.

After the Roman Empire fell, the region came under Vandal rule and was eventually controlled by the Byzantine Empire. With Muslim expansion across Africa in the seventh century, it gradually adopted Islam. The Berbers then regained control of Morocco under several dynasties, notably the Almoravids and Almohads, who controlled large parts of the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula, and the Saadians, who fought the Portuguese and Ottomans to preserve their independence.

Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Europe began seeking control of Morocco, one of the few African territories not ruled by a European country. A clash of ambitions complicated matters: France wanted to dominate North Africa, while Germany sought to prevent further French colonial expansion that might threaten its commercial interests. In 1905, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II visited Tangier, a major Moroccan city, and declared German support for Moroccan independence.

This created serious diplomatic tensions with France. To prevent escalation into a larger conflict, the Algeiras Conference was convened in 1906. Thirteen delegations participated: Morocco, the United States, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, and Sweden. The conference agreed on an international framework for reforms and foreign involvement in Morocco while formally maintaining the sultan's sovereignty.

Among the decisions reached were administrative, economic, and security reforms intended to modernize and stabilize the country. Morocco would also have complete freedom to trade with all European powers without favoring any one of them. Finally, although no European country would exercise total control over Morocco, France and Spain would oversee and manage the agreed reforms.

In 1912, the Treaty of Fez established the French protectorate over Morocco, while subsequent agreements defined the areas under Spanish protection. The treaty was signed during the reign of Sultan Moulay Abd al-Hafid. Following his abdication that same year, Moulay Youssef succeeded him. Youssef's son, Sidi Mohammed Ben Youssef, later known as Mohammed V, did not ascend the throne until 1927.

Although this arrangement helped ease European diplomatic tensions, which nevertheless persisted until World War I, it was less popular among local people, who had been content with independence. In 1921, armed rebels in the Rif region, led by Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi,

prevailed against Spanish and French forces, gaining sovereignty over the region until their eventual defeat in 1926.

This event awakened Moroccan nationalism, and political movements such as the Istiqlal Party, or Independence Party, promoted independence during the 1940s. Sultan Mohammed V himself expressed support for the nationalists in 1947. France exiled him in 1953, but he returned in 1955 to lead the independence process. Following intensive negotiations and agreements, Morocco gained independence from France on March 2, 1956.

Shortly afterward, on April 7 of the same year, Spain also recognized the independence of its protectorate while retaining certain enclaves, including Ceuta and Melilla. Once the foundations of a national government were established, Mohammed V became king of Morocco, a position he held until his death in 1961.

As in all the examples we have examined, the post-independence process was not without complications. Morocco had several advantages: modern infrastructure inherited from the colonial period, no war of independence as such, and direct recognition of independence by its former colonizers. Even so, it faced economic, political, and social challenges in establishing itself as a stable nation.

Unlike neighboring former colonies in Africa, however, Morocco did establish a relatively stable sociopolitical system, seemingly setting it on a path toward development unprecedented for a former African colony. Economic policy was where it never achieved stability: inequality, unemployment, and corruption remained the status quo. Despite development and modernization, Morocco's economy was—and remains—one of the principal drivers of migration. During the 1970s and 1980s, emigration to Europe became a widespread trend, facilitated by bilateral agreements between the countries concerned.

The search for employment and better living conditions has driven Moroccan migration to Europe. In 2020, international estimates placed overall unemployment at around 11% and youth unemployment at

approximately 26%, while territorial inequalities limited opportunities in many rural areas. These figures help explain migration pressures, but they do not justify assuming that all migrants arrive with the same skills or that Europe automatically guarantees their integration.

Communities of Moroccan origin have a longstanding and significant presence in France, Spain, the Netherlands, and other European countries. Their experience shows how migration can open opportunities unavailable in the country of origin while also reproducing inequalities in employment, education, and housing in the host country. As already established, successful migration also depends on policies for regularization, training, recognition of skills, and combating discrimination.

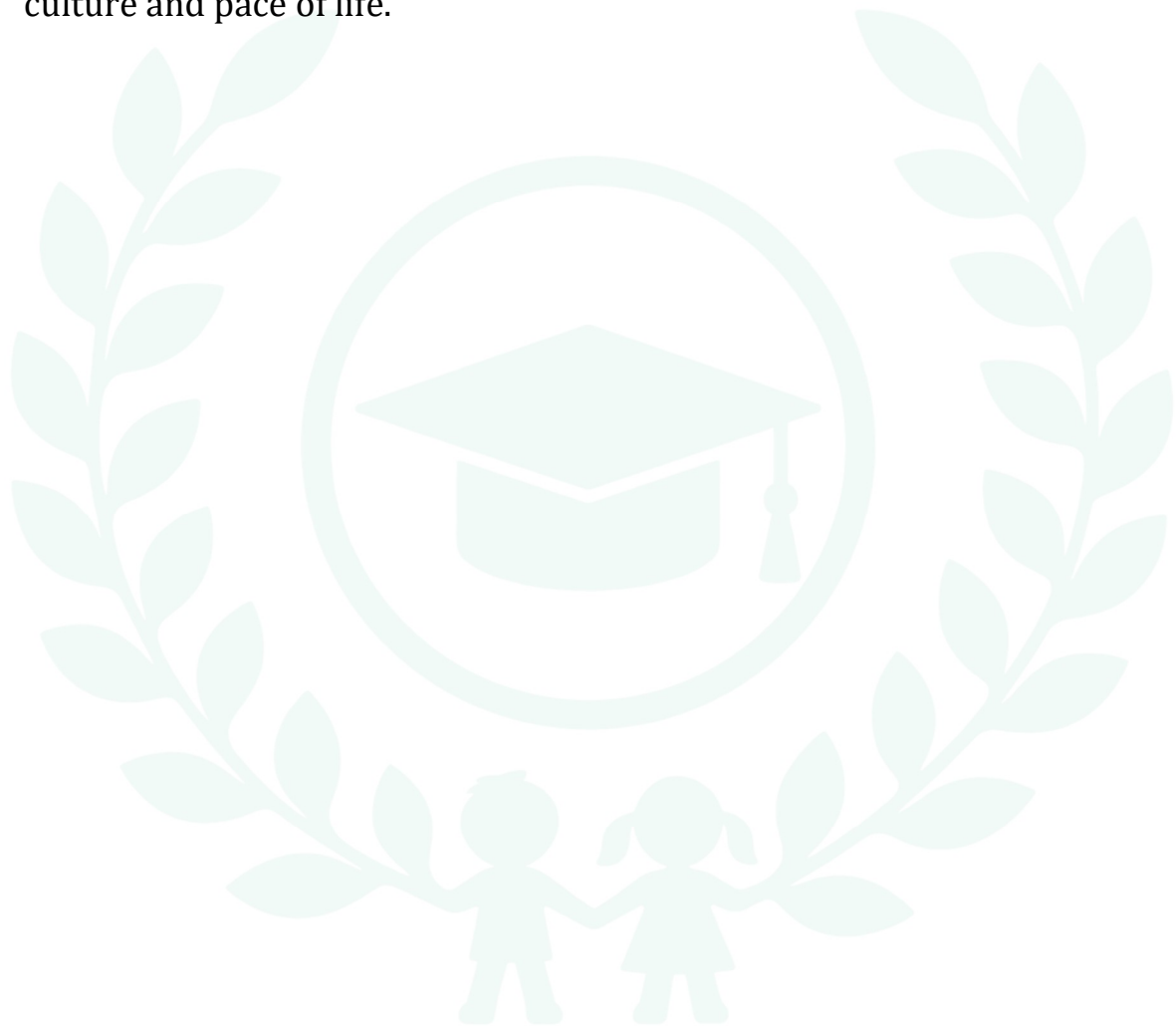
Episodes of large-scale arrivals, such as that in Ceuta in May 2021, also reveal how mobility can become entangled in diplomatic tensions and improvised border responses. Europe's challenge is not simply to control borders, but to create regular pathways and integration policies consistent with its own labor demand and protection obligations. Migration routes often involve dangerous Mediterranean crossings, in which thousands of migrants are estimated to have died while trying to reach Europe. Host countries have also faced international criticism for ineffective integration of Moroccans, with repeated allegations of xenophobia, discrimination, and conflicts with local people who argue that migrants have created more problems than solutions.

Religion has done little to ease these sentiments, and cultural differences can be decisive during a migration crisis. Integrating Moroccans into European labor markets has also proved complex. Their unemployment rates are considerably higher than those of the native-born population, making it difficult for their labor to contribute to the economy and offset the costs associated with their presence.

Today, Moroccan migration offers a clear example of how complex it can be to integrate a large population into a culturally very different host country. Mishandling the process can generate negative perceptions of

migrants, polarize the population, and create a hostile climate toward them.

The state is responsible for ensuring the conditions needed to make this process as welcoming as possible for both sides. This means raising awareness of migrants' needs and contributions while maintaining a functioning government in the face of the adversity and difficulties inevitably involved in integrating people into a radically different culture and pace of life.



Emergency Education Systems

Displaced people face a particularly delicate situation when it comes to returning to their studies. Someone who has just been forced by circumstances beyond their control to abandon their life cannot be expected to be ideally prepared to study the sciences and the arts. Their future is therefore especially fragile and uncertain, making education a fundamental source of reassurance and hope.

There are two forms of Education in Emergencies (EiE): education for internally displaced persons and education for refugees. Each presents different challenges that must be approached from radically different perspectives to find the best way to continue education after an emergency. Nevertheless, a clearly defined international protocol governs how to proceed in these particular circumstances.

To understand how this works, we must examine the main challenges of a crisis from the international community's perspective. The first is coordination: addressing a crisis successfully requires organizing and coordinating multiple organizations and authorities around a shared goal. Next comes strategy: how to resolve the problem and what role each actor will play. Resource management and optimization follow, requiring resources to be pooled and allocated efficiently to maximize the impact of planned actions. Finally, results must be analyzed to assess how effective the strategy has been and whether conditions have returned sufficiently to normal for efforts to be wound down and redirected toward a new emergency.

If international organizations acted independently, it would be impossible to overcome all these challenges and provide accountability for each emergency. For this reason, in 2005, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) began a comprehensive reform of its emergency response protocols, adopting a management approach based on “clusters.”

For those unfamiliar with the concept, a cluster is a group of designated organizations working together toward a specific objective and concentrating their operations and resources in a particular location. There are 11 designated emergency clusters, activated when both of the following conditions are met:

- Gaps in response and coordination emerge following a sharp deterioration or significant change in the humanitarian situation.
- Existing national response or coordination capacity cannot meet needs in accordance with humanitarian principles.

A cluster may be considered for deactivation when at least one condition that prompted its activation no longer applies. This may occur because the humanitarian situation improves and needs and coordination gaps decrease significantly, or because national structures acquire sufficient capacity to coordinate and address remaining humanitarian needs in accordance with humanitarian principles. Deactivation is neither automatic nor immediate, however. It must be based on an assessment of the context and national capacities, together with appropriate transition planning and, where relevant, the transfer of responsibilities.

The information gathered is compiled into a report and published as soon as possible. It includes the objectives, strategy, demographic profile of those affected, severity of their needs, and resources requested to implement the action plan. For this report, we will focus on the Global Education Cluster, whose designated organizations, UNICEF and Save the Children, co-lead it from Geneva, Switzerland.

Established in 2007, this cluster helps coordinate the education response within the humanitarian system. The Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) guides needs assessment, planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring, and response review. Its application requires coordination among participating actors and adaptation as the situation evolves.

In the education sector, the HPC operates through these same elements. In addition, the Education Cluster performs a number of core sectoral coordination functions, including:

- Supporting the delivery of emergency education services implemented by local authorities.
- Informing strategic decisions on education by the Humanitarian Coordinator and humanitarian teams in the country.
- Planning and refining the formal national strategy to be implemented.
- Monitoring and evaluating the education sector's performance following implementation of the strategy.
- Building national capacity for preparedness and contingency planning.
- Advocating on education-related issues and accountability to affected people.

All this is possible only if the Education Cluster maintains relationships with numerous actors during an emergency, including the affected population, NGOs seeking to contribute, the national humanitarian team, donors, external development actors, and, of course, the national government.

No education intervention can be sustainable if it ignores local authorities and capacities. The general rule should be to work with and strengthen the Ministry of Education, avoiding parallel structures that disappear when the emergency ends. Coordination does not, however, mean unconditional subordination. When the state is a party to the conflict, discriminates against a population, or obstructs access to basic rights, humanitarian actors must preserve their operational independence and act in accordance with humanitarian principles. Local legitimacy and independence are two requirements that must be balanced.

As you can see, a clearly defined strategic plan has been central throughout. Yet developing such plans in a crisis setting can be extremely challenging. The Education Cluster must develop and document its strategy, accounting for every variable it can identify. This work is undertaken with partner organizations and the national government, based on an assessment and analysis of the needs to be addressed and a coordinated plan for the best ways to meet them.

UNICEF describes plan development in stages: an initial consultation gathers information; the data are then organized and analyzed in depth; a harmonization process integrates local authorities' existing plans; and, finally, a process of ensuring compatibility and continuity establishes the strategy's monitoring plan.

Eventually, the time comes for accountability. The commitment, participation, information, and feedback generated through the cluster's work must be communicated to society calmly and clearly. Even when the national government does not adequately cooperate with implementation, partner organizations remain responsible for speaking out in defense of affected people's human rights.

For example, if measures promoted by local authorities are insufficiently inclusive or responsible, or fail to account for victims' rights and needs, a process known as "advocacy" is initiated. UNICEF defines it as a "deliberate process, based on demonstrated evidence, to influence decision-makers, stakeholders, and relevant audiences

directly and indirectly to support and adopt measures that help ensure the fulfillment of women's and children's rights."

In simpler terms, advocacy involves organizations, individuals, and the entire international community speaking out against a poorly managed emergency and demanding that those directly responsible for crisis management change their strategies to reflect the affected population's needs and human rights. It is a political movement that places particular pressure on influential individuals in a society facing an emergency by bringing the country under international scrutiny. It must nevertheless be conducted properly, without destabilizing an already delicate situation. Five basic principles guide its development:

1. It must always serve the interests of the affected population and must not be used to convey a message that does not represent them.
2. It must be grounded in facts, whether statistics, surveys, academic studies, or other evidence. It cannot rest on an opinion merely because it appears popular.
3. It must remain rooted in human rights and defend them at all costs.
4. It must focus on partners and local authorities, since the aim is cooperation, not confrontation.
5. It must be designed specifically for its context and respect local culture, political dynamics, and social and institutional conditions.

Having identified the relevant organizations, their relationship with the national government during a humanitarian crisis, and the successive steps of their operational strategy, we now turn to two specific cases of post-emergency education crises: those affecting internally displaced persons and those affecting refugees. We will explain the conditions in which people typically find themselves after these events and the main strategies and tools communities can use to facilitate sustainable, efficient recovery.

Education for Internally Displaced Persons

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) can face some of the most difficult educational challenges in an emergency. They remain within the same state, which may have lost capacity, exercise uneven territorial control, or even be involved in the conflict that displaced them. As a result, they do not always have access to the international mechanisms available to people who cross a border. This does not mean that all refugees are adequately integrated, nor does it establish a universal hierarchy of suffering. It does, however, justify examining internally displaced persons as a population facing specific barriers and frequently receiving insufficient attention.

This does not mean that a general action protocol is impossible. An organization, or group of organizations, can implement one in cooperation with the national government, drawing on preventive resources and available technologies. At the most basic level, an emergency must be sufficiently stabilized for people to concentrate before an educational structure can function.

Educational recovery does not necessarily coincide with the formal end of an emergency. To compare the cases examined, this report proposes its own analytical criterion: a point of stability will be considered reached when the emergency is at least partly under control, basic educational infrastructure is functioning, students have been relocated, and policies to restore learning have been introduced. This is

not a standardized international measure, but a comparative tool for identifying approximate timescales and informing decisions.

Applied approximately to the cases reviewed, the model yields the following intervals: for Poland, setting a fixed timeframe would be irresponsible because educational reconstruction overlapped for years with national postwar reconstruction; in Rwanda, the initial point of stability can be placed at around three years; in Liberia, between three and four years; after Katrina, around one year; in Haiti, between two and three years, although serious consequences persisted; and in Tōhoku, around one year, with territorial variations. These periods are analytical estimates developed in this report, not directly equivalent official figures.

The comparison suggests a relevant pattern: armed conflicts tend to make educational recovery more difficult because they destroy institutions, prolong insecurity, displace human capacity, and erode social trust. Natural disasters can also be devastating, but reconstruction generally proceeds more quickly where strong institutions survive and fiscal capacity exists. The contrast among Tōhoku, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, and Poland shows that recovery depends on the damage sustained, preexisting capacity, and subsequent investment.

This is precisely the operational conclusion: a single protocol is insufficient. Measures must be adapted to the nature of the crisis, institutional capacity, available resources, and the length of time educational obstacles persist. This report will therefore go beyond listing good practices. We will organize educational proposals for internally displaced persons according to the capacities needed to implement them, and develop an index (IGIC) to discuss those capacities on a comparable basis.

Its parameters will be potential crisis risk, based on Alliance Development Works' WRI; the current socioeconomic situation, based on the International Institute for Management Development's WCI or the World Economic Forum's GCI when the former is unavailable;

perceived corruption, based on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI); human development, based on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI); and national fragility, based on The Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index (FSI).

Combining these indices, we propose a new exploratory measure called the Internal Crisis Management Index, or IGIC. Its components must be expressed on a common scale from 0 to 100, with higher values consistently representing more favorable conditions for crisis management capacity. For the HDI, whose original values range from 0 to 1, we will use the following conversion:

$$\text{HDI}_n = 100 \times \text{HDI}$$

For the WRI, where a higher result represents greater risk, we will reverse the scale:

$$\text{WRI}_n = 100 - \text{WRI}$$

Finally, the FSI must also be reversed and normalized from its scale of 0 to 120:

$$\text{FSI}_n = 100 - (\text{FSI}/120 \times 100)$$

Using these normalized values, the IGIC formula is:

$$\text{IGIC} = 0.35 \cdot (\text{WCI} \mid \text{GCI}) + 0.25 \cdot \text{WRI}_n + 0.20 \cdot \text{FSI}_n + 0.10 \cdot \text{CPI} + 0.10 \cdot \text{HDI}_n$$

The WCI and GCI are not methodologically equivalent. When the WCI is unavailable and the GCI is used as a substitute, the result is an approximation and must be identified as such. With that limitation, we

propose four operational IGIC ranges: “Weak,” below 55 points; “Moderate,” at least 55 but below 65; “Strong,” at least 65 but below 75; and “Very Strong,” at least 75. The weights and thresholds are methodological choices made in this report. Their value lies not in implying a precision that does not exist, but in making explicit the dimensions we consider relevant and allowing the proposal to be discussed, recalculated, and improved.

An exploratory application of the IGIC using the latest available data for the cases studied yields the following results: Poland, 73.80 points (**STRONG**); Rwanda, 60.96 points (**MODERATE**, no WCI data); Liberia, 51.31 points (**WEAK**, GCI not updated since 2018); United States, 77.36 points (**VERY STRONG**); Haiti, 45.76 points (**WEAK**, no WCI data); and Japan, 74.00 points (**STRONG**).

The differences among countries do not allow conclusions to be drawn about their crisis management capacities. The United States, for example, achieves the group’s highest IGIC despite significant exposure on the WRI; Poland has favorable overall indicators but shares with Rwanda relative weaknesses in its general crisis indicators. This tension shows why the score must be published alongside its disaggregated profile.

The IGIC’s contribution is to organize capacities and enable transparent comparison, not to deliver a definitive verdict on a country. Its categories should therefore guide the selection of measures and the level of support they receive, while final decisions must account for the type of crisis, territorial inequalities, and actual available capacities. Within this framework, we will organize the proposals into three groups. “Universal Actions” address basic needs and should be attempted in every context, with their scale adjusted accordingly. “Sustainable Actions” require continuity of resources, institutional capacities, or sufficient international support. “Strategic Actions” require greater investment, coordination, and long-term planning. The IGIC category helps anticipate the support that will be needed, but does not impose an automatic restriction: a society with lower capacity can

implement complex measures with sustained cooperation, while a high-scoring society can fail if it allocates its resources poorly.

We will begin with universal actions. Examples include:

1. Establishing and operating education areas in displacement camps. This would require trained teachers alongside medical and military personnel. Their purpose would be to explain the next steps to younger people, provide reassurance, and allow adults to receive the assistance they need without worrying about their children.
2. Preparing educational materials that illustrate emergencies and their protocols, including learning activities and information cards. Some materials could also be designed to train teachers in crisis management.
3. Providing emotional support through qualified education personnel. Some children may have lost immediate family members or be severely traumatized. The presence of empathetic educators versed in child psychology will be essential in helping them remain calm.

Examples of sustainable actions include:

1. Constructing temporary classrooms in displacement camps for education and community activities. These must withstand adverse weather and provide suitable conditions for large groups of children.
2. Introducing technology for distance education, using international learning platforms to enable displaced people to continue their education if access to physical institutions is interrupted.
3. Establishing community training and rehabilitation centers that provide technical and vocational training for displaced adults, supporting their post-crisis reintegration into employment and society.

Finally, we must consider strategic actions, which would require extensive resources. These might include:

1. Developing resilient educational infrastructure so that existing institutions can serve as temporary shelters or command centers during a crisis. Such infrastructure must be planned strategically in terms of location, structural resilience, and facilities.
2. Creating specialized government organizations to research and develop education strategies tailored to humanitarian crises. These would link the international community with national management of education in crises. Their value would lie in continuously gathering information on potential disasters, available resources, and humanitarian management to make the response far more efficient.
3. Establishing comprehensive post-crisis relocation and reconstruction programs that address not only immediate assistance but also long-term rebuilding, including the relocation of entire communities, construction of durable housing, and creation of new economic opportunities.

Turning to another issue, we must define how infrastructure and emergency education planning for internally displaced persons should work. These areas are governed by the Minimum Standards of the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), organized into five main domains: Foundational Standards; Access and Learning Environment; Teaching and Learning; Teachers and Other Education Personnel; and Education Policy. Here, we will draw on the second domain, “Access and Learning Environment.” Its three standards are:

Equal Access: *“All individuals have access to quality and relevant education opportunities.”*

Protection and Well-being: *“Learning environments are secure and safe, and promote the protection and the psychosocial well-being of learners, teachers and other education personnel.”*

Facilities and Services: *“Education facilities promote the safety and well-being of learners, teachers and other education personnel and are linked to health, nutrition, psychosocial and protection services.”*

We will begin with the first of these issues: so-called “temporary learning spaces.” To establish a temporary educational site in accordance with INEE’s reference standards, we must ensure several conditions. For example, it must be safe and easily accessible, away from the center of the humanitarian crisis.

It must also be separated from major roads, strategic sites, distribution points, military areas, and contaminated or unhygienic locations. Dangerous or potentially dangerous objects must be excluded from the temporary learning space, including weapons, metal objects, sharp objects, and items that could break and cause injury. The space must be close to children and free from geographical barriers to transportation, especially where children have special needs.

The infrastructure itself must be sturdy and spacious, with appropriate hygiene and basic services such as drinking water and sanitation. Electricity is important but not indispensable. It must also provide protection from sun, wind, rain, and other weather conditions. This directly requires quality building materials and planning for resilience.

The space must be large enough to accommodate substantial numbers of students and education personnel and include areas for storing school supplies and, where appropriate, water, food, and basic hygiene items, among other necessities. Coordination between local authorities and partner organizations would provide engineers, architects, and other shelter specialists to determine whether existing structures meet the requirements or could do so through quick, low-cost work.

Organizations could also use their capacity to manage donations and international funding to ensure the necessary supplies and staffing are available.

One challenge for a temporary learning space is ensuring that it opens only once all necessary materials and resources are available. Otherwise, it may quickly become a shelter for displaced people. A physical distinction must be maintained between where children learn and where adults seek shelter. A structure whose resources have been carefully planned for students and education personnel should therefore not be used as an emergency shelter.

Achieving this depends entirely on supplying the space quickly and ensuring that displaced people find shelter in camps designed for that purpose, rather than in the educational facility. Once appropriate infrastructure is in place, we must plan the emergency curriculum. Although our aim is to prevent education from being interrupted indefinitely, traditional education programs are clearly not feasible under such adverse conditions.

Again, we must draw on the INEE Minimum Standards, focusing on the third and fourth domains: “Teaching and Learning” and “Teachers and Other Education Personnel.” Without examining any individual standard in detail, we must understand that their purpose is to ensure curricula are properly designed for the relevant context and that education personnel are adequately trained to teach students.

The first question concerns the features an emergency education plan should have. At a basic level, it must be adapted to students’ context, culture, and language, incorporating active participation and intrinsic motivation so that learning can take place under adverse conditions. More than ever, students’ strengths and weaknesses must be identified, every effort made to prevent frustration with the knowledge being taught, and their educational and humanitarian needs addressed.

In an emergency involving internal displacement, it is entirely to be expected that younger people will be distressed, affected by lingering trauma, and uncertain about their situation. Trained personnel who are psychologically prepared to respond to doubts, questions, and significant demotivation are therefore essential.

Having addressed the general features of an emergency curriculum, we can turn to its content. There are two approaches: one focuses on crisis risk reduction, environmental education, and conflict prevention; the other on conventional educational development, including foundational literacy and mathematics alongside social and emotional skills. In our view, the best approach lies between the two, combining traditional educational elements with foundations grounded in students' particular circumstances.

This entails education in risk reduction, psychosocial development and responsibility, human rights, and educational inclusion. In certain contexts, such as armed conflict, awareness of weapons and common battlefield traps can make a difference in reducing prevalent risks. Relevant content includes first aid, survival knowledge, awareness of persistent threats such as landmines, and health precautions. Personnel use a clear strategy based on risk analysis, social policies, and human needs in the specific context, ensuring that educational planning remains resilient throughout the stages of a humanitarian crisis and that learning continues.

The Global Education Cluster identifies six education components that support this strategy in light of the typical consequences of an emergency: disaster risk reduction in education; climate change education; school health and nutrition; conflict-sensitive education and peacebuilding; child protection in education; and social protection in education.

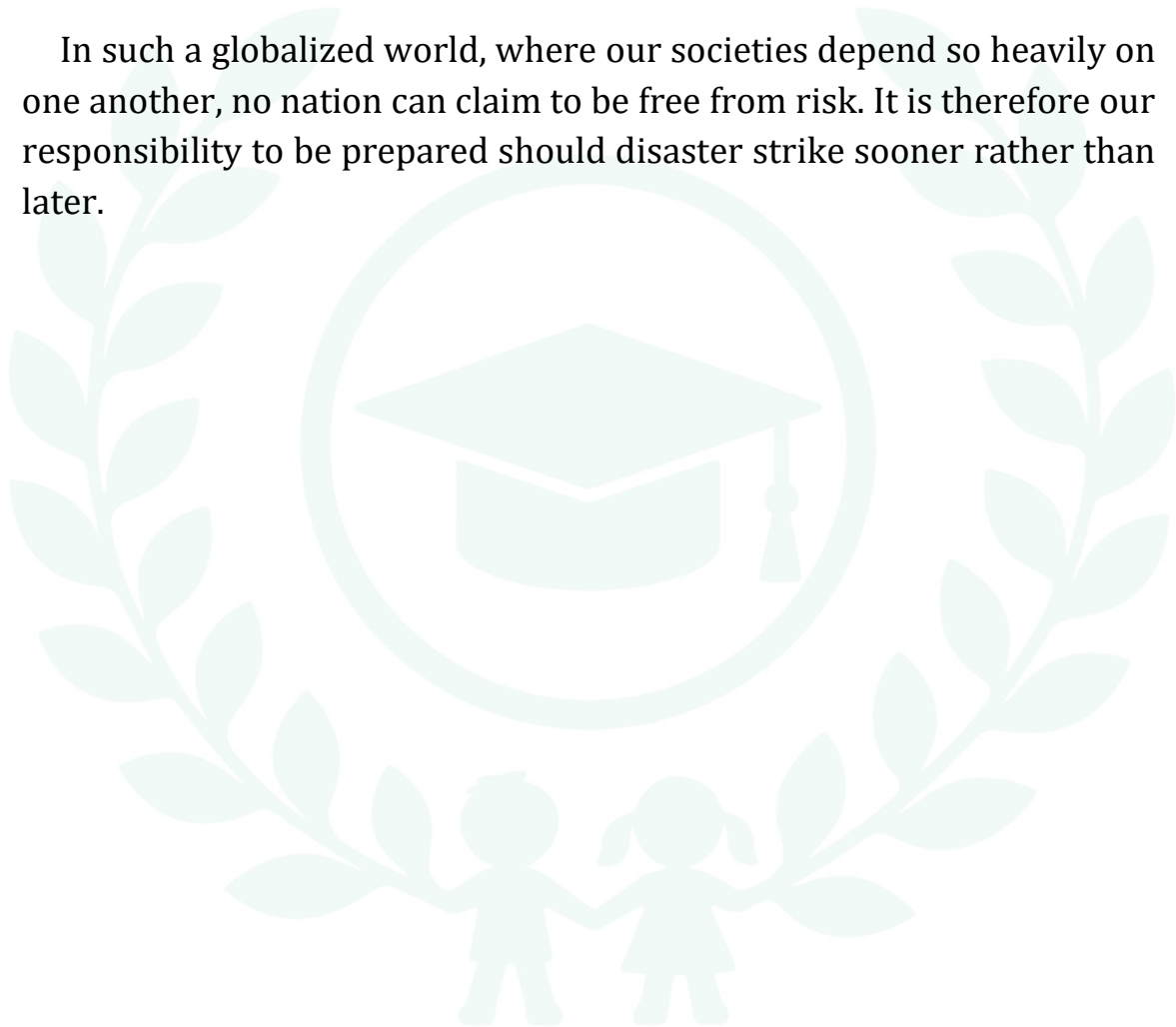
All this must be accompanied by preparation and training for all emergency education personnel. This includes courses on education in crisis settings, professional support, and training in physical and mental health first aid, among other activities. Where such opportunities were unavailable before the disaster, the international community must provide trained, experienced personnel to support and advise local staff.

The Global Education Cluster can deploy and work with highly qualified personnel while local staff acquire the necessary skills. Once the cluster is deactivated, this training will provide a foundation for

education personnel, encouraging them to continue improving their capacities and skills in case they are needed again.

Including this content in educational planning will better prepare the target society for humanitarian crises while enabling children and young people to continue learning normally, even in a crisis setting. A predesigned, structured local education response system should therefore be a priority for every government, regardless of its region.

In such a globalized world, where our societies depend so heavily on one another, no nation can claim to be free from risk. It is therefore our responsibility to be prepared should disaster strike sooner rather than later.



Education for Refugees

The educational inclusion of refugees should be promoted from the earliest stages of reception, with the support they need to participate in society. Education is part of that process and should not depend on complete prior adaptation. Education authorities, working with the relevant institutions and organizations, must facilitate continuity of learning, recognition of studies, and support for linguistic and pedagogical needs. The aim is to prevent prolonged interruptions and provide an appropriate learning pathway for each student.

In 2012, IOM introduced the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF, document MC/2355), designed to coordinate complementary responses to human mobility in crisis settings. The framework was supplemented by a document published in 2022 under the title “2021 Addendum.”

The MCOF does not contain a detailed education protocol. This absence, however, leaves room for development that this report explicitly undertakes. Applying its mobility management principles to education, the response should integrate recognition of studies, assessment of prior learning, continuity of documentation, language training, and coordination between social protection and education from the outset. This is a proposal derived from the MCOF, not a list attributed verbatim to IOM.

Operationally, the host country must establish procedures that recognize credentials where available and reconstruct educational histories where documents have been lost. Initial assessment should be used to place each student appropriately and design the necessary support, not to exclude them. Where learning differs from the national curriculum, the response should combine curricular catch-up, language support, tutoring, and flexible learning arrangements without turning these differences into a permanent barrier.

Providing catch-up support, however, requires understanding the nature of the gaps, which is achieved through diagnostic assessments. The difficulty with these “tests” is that they are feasible only if we are clear about what we expect of the student taking them. In other words, to design and subsequently score a diagnostic assessment, teachers must first define the key knowledge they expect their students to possess.

This requires prior agreement on what we regard as essential knowledge at each educational level. For example, we might agree that a student completing primary education—in Uruguay, at age 11–12—must understand basic mathematical operations, have developed reading and writing skills, and possess foundational knowledge of the natural and social sciences.

A refugee entering our system at an age appropriate for completing primary education should therefore meet these minimum general knowledge requirements. This can be checked through the diagnostic assessment mentioned above, which we will discuss in greater detail below.

Although the breadth of this essential knowledge framework may be debated, it need not be identical to the expectations for local students, provided our aim is to prevent refugees’ education from being interrupted indefinitely.

Language, civic education, culture, and social integration will be central to refugee education. Programs for students aged 6–12, or the

national equivalent of the ages for entering and completing primary education, will closely resemble those for local students, with limited additional instruction. This instruction, which public policies could provide free of charge, would focus on learning the language and common local expressions, together with basic cultural information.

These programs should not be limited to migrants. Local students' participation can broaden their benefits, reduce segregation, and make integration a shared experience. When introduced early and sustained over time, such programs significantly reduce later academic adjustment difficulties, although they do not eliminate them or replace individual support.

At ages above those specified, or their national equivalent in secondary education, we find the greatest differences among education programs. A student migrating to the country who is ready to enter directly at the secondary level is highly likely to fall below the national standard. Because there is no global consensus on what should be taught at each educational level, moving to another country amounts to a complete change in the underlying national curriculum.

Tutoring and catch-up programs can help, but only if the educational gap remains within acceptable limits. It is not possible to create a tutoring system capable of bridging several levels of secondary education in record time, especially when these programs run alongside conventional schooling.

Within the model we propose, a government facing a crisis of migrant reception has two main routes toward sustainable educational progress. The first is to develop a secondary education model based on experience and basic practical knowledge that effectively prepares students for higher education. The idea is that, without “gatekeeping” subjects that hold disadvantaged students back in secondary education, knowledge acquired through experience and career guidance could be sufficient for a successful transition to tertiary or university education.

A model of this kind, however, requires planning, implementation, measurement, modification, and many other processes that may take years or even decades. At CERLI, we have proposed alternatives to the traditional model that meet the necessary requirements for these purposes. We recommend reading our reports *“Sobre Propuestas Educativas de Modernización y Orientación Vocacional”* and *“Para la Creación de un Sistema Educativo Modular.”*

Another variation on this idea, often attractive to governments that prioritize literacy and workforce figures over professionals’ actual educational attainment, is to rely on the tertiary system. When a substantial group of students is prevented from progressing to the next educational level, a government could create an alternative initiative that offers the affected population “easier routes through education.”

In everyday terms, governments create completion programs that remove all passing standards and do everything possible to award diplomas, requiring only absurdly low levels of basic knowledge. Although this may sound inherently negative, its actual value depends on how it is implemented.

One moderately functional model would involve a country whose tertiary or university system teaches each field of study from the ground up. If secondary education in the host country simply establishes a common foundation of academic skills and helps students identify their preferred career, then, once those interests are clear, assessing core skills in a few key areas could be sufficient to consider a student “qualified” for a secondary education diploma.

Once you have chosen a university degree, higher education would take over responsibility for ensuring that you acquire all the knowledge needed to become a professional. This model, however, does not exist in a practical, operational form anywhere in the world.

We can also consider the U.S. model of secondary education equivalency, which includes the GED and HiSET. We will focus on the GED (General Educational Development), which assesses four subject

areas and, when passed, leads to an equivalency credential under the issuing jurisdiction's rules. Recognition of the credential and requirements for further study depend on the institution and applicable regulations.

The GED covers the key areas of literacy, science, social studies, and mathematics. The full examination generally takes around seven hours, with each section scored on a scale of 100 to 200. The minimum passing score is 145 in each of the four areas, although certain states may impose stricter requirements. Under a similar model, and after tutoring in the most challenging areas, a refugee could establish secondary education equivalency without repeating that level of schooling.

Personally, I tend to favor measures like this last example because they avoid significant discrepancies between the educational requirements for local students and those for migrants. They also protect employers by providing some confidence that they are not hiring staff whose skills fall below expectations, while preventing migrants from being pushed into precarious employment because their secondary education is unrecognized. The final decision, however, must reflect the country's political and economic capacities, making it essential to have a wide range of options to draw on.

The final issue is the diagnostic assessments administered to refugees. These are vital because, regardless of how refugees enter the education system, we must be able to assign them an initial educational level. Where no prior tools are available, the assessment would guide governments and educational institutions in understanding refugees' actual educational circumstances. The parameters for designing it are essentially those already discussed: because it serves as an entry point into the country's education system, it needs the same adjustments that the refugee requires. These include language considerations, the student's biological age, their expectations, and potential cultural challenges.

Educational inclusion should begin as soon as possible, accompanied by appropriate language, pedagogical, and psychosocial support. Initial

assessment must identify prior learning and student needs in light of each individual's educational history and personal circumstances. Proficiency in the local language and family stability must not become general prerequisites that prolong exclusion from education. Support and transitional arrangements should facilitate continuity of learning and inclusion in the system.

Assessment formats can vary considerably, from complex and challenging to simple and relaxed. We might instinctively begin by choosing the mode of delivery. Personally, however, I find it more useful to start with the curricular approach, because this makes it much easier to identify suitable methods and delivery modes.

If the curriculum emphasizes critical thinking, research, digital adaptation, and technology use, among related skills, an in-person, project-based approach would be our best option. We could also choose a more traditional assessment combining open-ended and multiple-choice questions. This might work more efficiently in person or through synchronous online delivery, but never asynchronously: the refugee may have experienced a prolonged interruption in formal education and need real-time guidance.

If, on the other hand, the curriculum is “outdated,” emphasizing general knowledge in mathematics, linguistics, social sciences, and the arts, we could use any delivery mode and choose a written assessment with open- and closed-ended questions, delivered in person or synchronously online as in the previous case. This type of assessment, of course, provides the weakest reflection of students' actual academic competencies and should be avoided at all costs. Its use is nevertheless a consequence of an underlying national curriculum that has not been adequately modernized.

Whatever assessment we choose, its results may be affected by numerous factors, including language barriers, prolonged interruptions in schooling, curricular differences between the country of origin and the host country, familiarity with the assessment format, and the student's emotional and cultural circumstances. Results should

therefore be interpreted as only one of several factors in determining educational needs and the most appropriate placement. Where possible, initial assessment should be complemented by school records, interviews, teacher observations, and subsequent assessments.

Ultimately, refugee education offers no single formula for establishing curricular equivalence, except where participating countries already have an educational agreement. Organizations and public institutions must work together to develop the appropriate tool for each crisis, using the parameters described above as a contextual guide to curriculum and academic expectations.



Additional Resource Considerations

One issue often overlooked in proposals for educational reform or change is the cost of development and implementation. At CERLI, we have consistently emphasized the importance of appropriate economic and return on investment (ROI) analyses. Fortunately, international organizations involved in emergency response have already conducted this kind of analysis. Through research, we have been able to understand the parameters used to determine whether a measure is applicable, useful, and, above all, economically feasible.

Beginning with internally displaced persons, we must recognize that the cost and implementation capacity of humanitarian measures can vary considerably, whether the response is led by a nongovernmental organization or the public sector. Factors such as available personnel, existing infrastructure, logistical capacity, and preexisting international agreements can raise or lower intervention costs and change their feasibility. These variables must be analyzed alongside the IGIC because they are not directly included in its formula.

To understand the associated costs, however, we must refer to the economic frameworks established by the organizations supporting the interventions. We will use UNICEF's human and financial resource protocols for humanitarian crises as an example. Personnel deployments, for instance, fall into two categories: internal and external. Internal deployments include staff from UNICEF's office in the region concerned, other regional offices, or its emergency response team.

External deployments include personnel provided through global standby partnership agreements associated with the organization identified above or individuals hired for a specific mission. In every case, personnel assigned to a humanitarian response team entail significant costs, including psychological care, training, travel allowances, salaries, and other incidental expenses.

Because financial considerations shape education response options, planning must identify needs, existing capacities, and available resources from the earliest stages of an emergency. Where appropriate, country-level clusters are activated under IASC criteria, with support from the relevant global structures. Education actors must help ensure that their needs are included in applicable humanitarian plans and appeals and assess the financing mechanisms available to them.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which supports coordination of the international humanitarian response, plays a central role. Its institutional framework dates to General Assembly Resolution 46/182, adopted on December 19, 1991, which strengthened the humanitarian coordination system and established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

OCHA was subsequently created in 1998 through the reorganization of that department. Mechanisms associated with its work include two major financing instruments, CERF and Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs), as well as operational response and coordination mechanisms such as UNDAC. We will explain these in greater detail:

CERF

The Central Emergency Response Fund is a pooled fund—that is, one formed from multiple international contributions—used in the initial stages of response. It can finance urgently needed emergency measures, especially when a situation escalates rapidly.

CERF finances humanitarian interventions through two main windows: Rapid Response and Underfunded Emergencies. Proposals must address clearly identified humanitarian priorities and meet the fund's requirements and criteria. Project duration depends on the window used: Rapid Response projects normally have a maximum duration of six months, while those funded through the Underfunded Emergencies window may last up to twelve months. Funds are granted directly to eligible United Nations agencies and IOM. NGOs may participate as implementing partners but do not receive CERF grants directly.

CBPFs

Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) are humanitarian financing mechanisms established in countries affected by major crises. They combine contributions from different donors into a common fund that finances priorities identified for the local humanitarian response. OCHA administers them under the authority of the relevant Humanitarian Coordinator. Unlike CERF, CBPFs can directly finance United Nations agencies, national and international NGOs, and Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations, according to each fund's eligibility and allocation mechanisms.

UNDAC:

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system is one of OCHA's principal emergency response mechanisms. It supports national governments, the United Nations system, and other humanitarian actors through assessment, coordination, and information management during sudden-onset emergencies. Its teams can generally deploy within the first 12 to 48 hours after an emergency.

Mobilized resources may fall short of humanitarian needs. The initial appeal in the Global Humanitarian Overview 2024, published by OCHA in December 2023, estimated funding requirements of \$46.40 billion. These requirements are revised throughout the year as circumstances evolve.

As of September 30, 2024, OCHA recorded \$16.21 billion in reported funding for the coordinated appeals included in the Global Humanitarian Overview 2024. OCHA's update reported that 32.7% of requirements had been covered. These figures track humanitarian appeals; they do not represent the balance of a single cash fund available for any education intervention.

For this reason, emphasis is placed on funding dedicated to education in emergencies. The best-known fund is Education Cannot Wait (ECW), established at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. ECW is the United Nations global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. Its secretariat is administratively hosted by UNICEF, while the fund operates under its own independent governance structure. It aims to mobilize and coordinate resources to ensure educational opportunities for children and young people affected by conflict, displacement, and other humanitarian crises.

ECW mobilizes contributions from governments and private and philanthropic donors. Its 2023–2026 strategic plan set a funding target of \$1,500 million for that period. When describing its resources, we must distinguish this target from pledged contributions and actual disbursements. Its main country-level investment modalities include Multi-Year Resilience Programmes (MYRPs), designed to sustain education in protracted crises and strengthen education systems.

First Emergency Response (FER) supports interventions in new crises or deteriorating situations. Implementation and timelines depend on the circumstances of each emergency and coordination among participating actors. ECW also has an Acceleration Facility to support initiatives with a broader reach.

Yet even with all these potential sources of funding and action, the number of emergencies and the growing needs of affected people leave these multibillion-dollar budgets insufficient. It is therefore easy to conclude that, even when the international community provides substantial crisis management support, the financial and human resources available for education will fall short in the vast majority of cases.

Considering the past decade of humanitarian crises, available resources have not proved effective in meeting overall emergency education needs, at least relative to the scale of those crises.

Responsibility for change thus returns to each nation's domestic policy, whether through larger international contributions to crisis funds or the creation of national funds and government organizations for managing education in emergencies. If countries devoted a share of their resources to sustaining resilient education systems, the likelihood of severe educational disruption after any kind of crisis would fall considerably.

Even without increasing emergency funding, international organizations would benefit substantially if all countries invested in more effective channels of emergency communication and cooperation. Considerable time and resources are wasted on "poorly coordinated coordination" of action and response, leaving fewer resources for affected people's needs. Smoother communication between government response agencies and the international community could generate substantial savings in emergency resources.

Alongside interventions for internally displaced persons, planning must consider the resources needed to receive and integrate refugees and migrants. To illustrate the scope of a regional plan, we will use an example announced by IOM in 2018. In April 2018, IOM announced a Regional Action Plan to strengthen the response to Venezuelan flows in the Americas and the Caribbean. This was a specific initiative supporting the regional response, and its budget requirements must be understood within that timeframe and scope.

The plan estimated funding needs of \$32.3 million over two years. This figure relates to the plan announced in 2018; it is neither the total budget for assisting the Venezuelan population nor a general estimate of each person's education costs.

The plan sought to support and coordinate governments' and partner organizations' responses to Venezuelans' needs. Its stated objectives do not imply that all education for refugees and migrants is excluded from international financing. Educational inclusion requires combining national resources with the international cooperation and financing available in each context. Each mechanism's eligibility and scope depend on its objectives, priorities, and conditions, so planning must identify genuinely accessible sources and provide for continuity of interventions.

Estimating the education costs associated with receiving refugee or migrant students should not involve calculating the cumulative value of their entire educational histories. The relevant investment depends on when each student enters the system, their particular needs, and the available capacity of host institutions. It is therefore more useful to work with the concept of incremental education cost: the additional resources the system must mobilize as a result of enrolling new students. This cost will not be uniform and must be calculated for each context.

The first consideration is the ordinary education cost at the level the student enters. Specific integration costs may then be added, including diagnostic and recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessments, language support, curricular catch-up, educational materials, psychosocial support, teacher training, administrative management, and, where necessary, translation or intercultural mediation services.

The budgetary impact also depends on the system's spare capacity. Where existing institutions can absorb new students without substantially expanding their structures, additional costs may be relatively limited. A large or geographically concentrated influx, however, may require hiring personnel, adding school shifts, transporting students, or investing in further infrastructure. A useful

estimate should begin with the number and characteristics of incoming students, identify each group's additional needs, and calculate the marginal resources required to meet them. These elements can then inform different short- and medium-term budget scenarios.

Recognition of prior learning, equivalency assessments, catch-up programs, and other alternative pathways may also be used when appropriate for the student and recognized by the host education system. These tools should not be assumed to cost less than conventional schooling. Their suitability depends on implementation costs, the number of beneficiaries, and, above all, their capacity to support effective integration into education and employment.

There is therefore no universal figure that can determine in advance the cost of ensuring continuity of learning for a person affected by an emergency. The investment required depends on the context, the characteristics of the population served, the host education system's available capacity, and the additional needs that must be met for effective integration.

Resource planning must consequently be flexible and progressive. International funds can complement the national response but are unlikely to replace fully the infrastructure, personnel, and institutional capacities each country must maintain. Technical knowledge, logistical capacity, available infrastructure, information, technological tools, and cooperation networks can also be as important as direct financing. A sustainable education response will depend largely on the ability to combine these elements and mobilize them at the right time.

This is precisely where partnerships among educational institutions, public agencies, international organizations, and private actors become particularly important. Established cooperation networks can shorten response times, facilitate access to specialized resources, and expand available capacities when an emergency exceeds the education system's normal capabilities.

Partner Organizations

As an organization, we maintain multiple strategic partnerships with leaders in educational development. We work with them to improve their technologies and logistics, then seek to connect them with leading educational institutions. Developing this business network is not straightforward: each prospective partner must be studied individually before a mutually beneficial business and logistical relationship can be established.

This work generally considers factors such as available infrastructure, technology development budgets, existing digital systems, the compatibility of technologies with an institution's educational objectives, staff training, cost-benefit relationships, return on investment, and generational change, among many others.

During emergencies, this work is virtually impossible. All these parameters lose their meaning when meeting basic needs and accessing essential services become luxuries. We cannot think about educational objectives and generational change when students face starvation and dehydration. We cannot think about available infrastructure and existing digital systems when there is no infrastructure at all. We cannot think about cost-benefit relationships, ROI, or budgets in a war economy.

This report was developed to support institutions, governments, organizations, and professionals in providing education in crisis settings. The measures detailed above are emergency measures like any

others, with one difference: experts designed them in peacetime, allowing their benefits and consequences to be calculated precisely.

None of this would be possible, however, without the many organizations whose members devote their efforts to confronting harsh and challenging emergencies, risking their own lives. Some supported us directly or indirectly while we prepared this report. Their stories, values, and positive, hopeful attitudes in the face of disaster have moved us, as they share, with tears in their eyes, their pride in how far they have come.

At CERLI, we did not want to miss the opportunity to offer our academic readership a brief section describing and recognizing the work of humanitarian organizations whose actions can greatly influence the implementation of an emergency education system. We thank all the organizations and community leaders who generously and empathetically offered support and advice for this section and the article as a whole. Although we have had to select only some of them, we wish to recognize them all through this message and encourage them to continue making a difference in the lives of everyone unfortunate enough to be affected by a humanitarian crisis.

We also encourage everyone reading this section to learn more about these organizations' daily work and contributions and to find out how they can do their part.

INEE

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is an open global network established in 2000. Its distinctive value goes beyond that of another operational NGO: it brings together those who produce knowledge, set standards, finance, coordinate, and implement education responses. This position enables it to turn dispersed experiences into a shared language for advocating that education is an essential part of humanitarian action.



INEE brings together a global community of United Nations agencies, nongovernmental organizations, governments, academic institutions, research centers, professionals, and people connected to affected communities. Its diverse membership is one of its greatest strengths, enabling the comparison of experiences, development of shared guidance, and communication of educational needs from the field to international decision-making forums.

Its approach is particularly interesting because its humanitarian work spans many areas. One of its main objectives is to improve coordination among organizations and agencies working in education in emergencies. In crises involving multiple actors, coordination is essential to avoid duplication and ensure that resources reach those most in need. INEE also develops standards and guidelines for field practitioners, promoting coherent, high-quality education responses.

Another fundamental pillar of INEE's work is providing technical resources and training tools that help humanitarian actors improve their response capacity. By sharing case studies, research, and good

practices, INEE seeks to strengthen the knowledge base in education in emergencies.

One of INEE's best-known resources is the Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery. First published in 2004, the standards were updated in 2010, with a new edition released in 2024. They provide a framework for improving quality, access, and accountability in the education response. The following overview draws on the 2010 edition and covers these categories:

Foundational Standards: These bring together essential elements such as community participation, coordination among actors, and analysis of the situation.

Access and Learning Environment: Appropriate cooperation among the relevant sectors must ensure equitable access to education in a safe, protective environment.

Teaching and Learning: All standards of academic quality must be met, from curriculum relevance to pedagogical methods and student support.

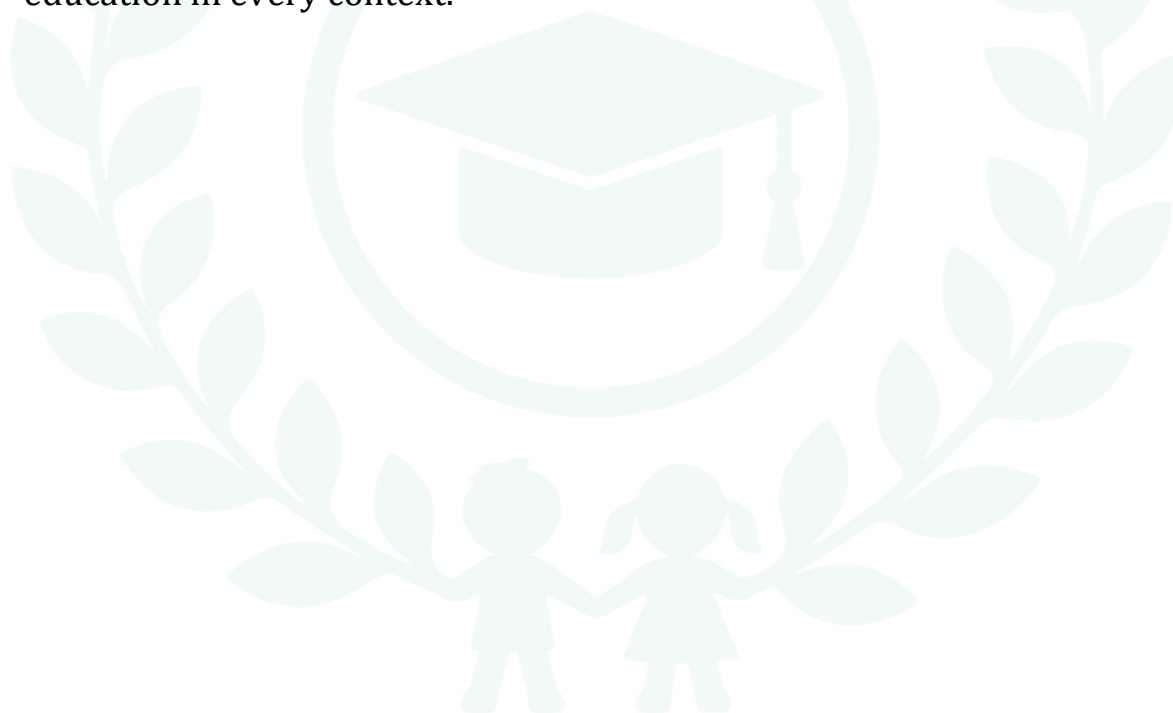
Teachers and Other Education Personnel: The recruitment, training, and well-being of education personnel in emergencies must be ensured.

Education Policy: This involves working with governments and local authorities to develop education policies that respond to the needs of populations in crisis. It is often the greatest challenge in such situations.

The network works closely with Education Cannot Wait, the multilateral fund established in 2016 primarily to mobilize resources and attention for education during humanitarian crises. Together, they seek to increase financing and ensure that education is central to humanitarian responses.

INEE does not directly implement interventions in every emergency. Its influence operates through the standards, tools, capacities, and networks used by field actors. In other words, it helps diverse responses share criteria for quality, protection, participation, and accountability. Its principal limitation remains structural: as long as education receives delayed and insufficient financing, even the best standards will struggle to translate into sustained services.

We are deeply grateful for INEE's work and wish it every success as it continues its mission. As an organization, we understand its challenge profoundly. With our best wishes, we hope INEE will continue influencing the lives of millions of children and adolescents forced to interrupt their education by emergencies. We also applaud the central role it has assumed in defending and promoting the right to safe, quality education in every context.



Doctors Without Borders

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an international humanitarian organization founded by doctors and journalists in Paris, France, on December 22, 1971. Events that influenced its creation included the war and famine in Biafra, Nigeria, and the 1970 floods in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. Doctors' and journalists' experiences of these crises led them to establish an organization capable of delivering emergency medical assistance rapidly, independently, and impartially.



Government limitations during crises, together with political and ideological conflicts of interest, can cause suffering and death among people who might otherwise have been saved. With this understanding, the organization was founded on four basic principles:

Neutrality: Doctors Without Borders does not take sides in armed conflicts. This principle guides its medical work and is compatible with bearing witness and speaking out about circumstances affecting the populations it serves.

Impartiality: The organization's care focuses exclusively on the affected population's medical needs. This means there is no discrimination based on race, religion, political ideology, role in the conflict, or any other factor unrelated to medical care.

Independence: To uphold these principles, Doctors Without Borders relies on private donations. Only a small share of its overall budget comes from public institutions and governments. This allows it to maintain complete autonomy over logistical decisions, including where and how to intervene.

Bearing Witness: One of Doctors Without Borders' defining features is that, alongside providing medical care, it bears witness to events in the areas where it operates. Its independence allows it to expose human rights violations, abuse, and mismanagement, among other problems. This was part of the reason it received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999, when the committee highlighted its impressive medical work in crises and its courage in speaking on behalf of those affected.

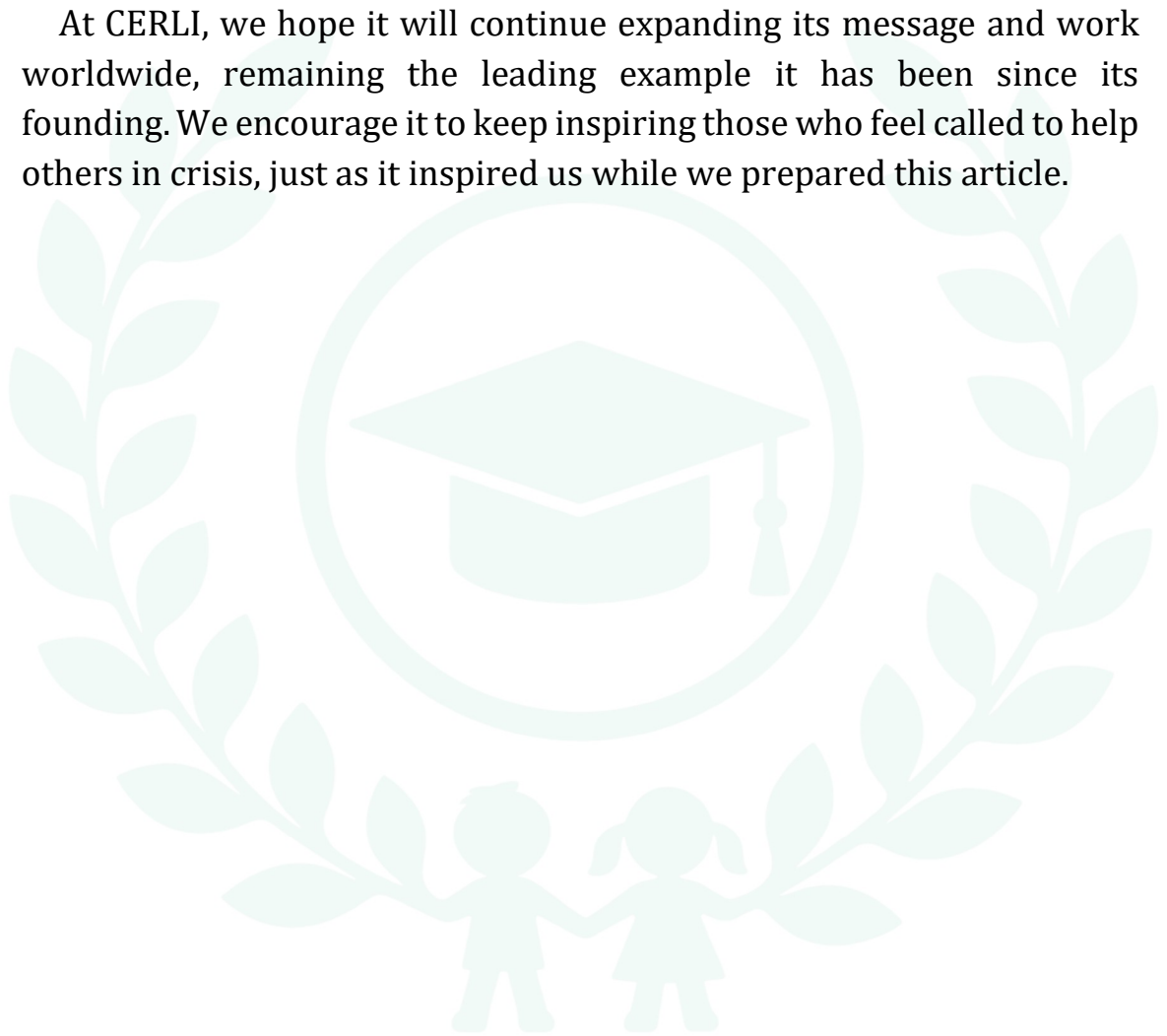
We also highlight the publication of activity and financial reports that explain Doctors Without Borders' work and use of resources. This information supports accountability to its contributors and to society.

Among its most significant humanitarian missions have been its responses to the Syrian Civil War in 2011, the Ebola outbreaks in West Africa between 2014 and 2016, and the Rohingya refugee crisis from Myanmar in 2017, among many others. Managing an emergency care team is neither straightforward nor free from risk. One of the greatest challenges for any organization, including United Nations bodies, is obtaining permission and freedom to operate from governments in crisis-affected settings.

Attacks on health facilities pose a serious obstacle to medical care in war zones. In October 2015, a U.S. airstrike destroyed the Doctors Without Borders trauma center in Kunduz, Afghanistan. MSF subsequently confirmed at least 42 deaths: 14 staff members, 24 patients, and 4 caregivers. The organization's courage and the risks it continually accepts in pursuit of its deeply rooted humanitarian mission make it a model organization, embodying the human values and empathy of everyone who feels a connection to people in crisis.

Its missions cannot guarantee safety in contexts that are, by definition, unsafe. They do, however, uphold a fundamental principle: medical need, rather than nationality, religion, or political affiliation, must determine care. This practice makes Doctors Without Borders a humanitarian reference point and reminds us that neutrality is not indifference, but a means of reaching people who would otherwise receive no assistance.

At CERLI, we hope it will continue expanding its message and work worldwide, remaining the leading example it has been since its founding. We encourage it to keep inspiring those who feel called to help others in crisis, just as it inspired us while we prepared this article.



Save the Children

Save the Children is a nongovernmental organization founded in the United Kingdom in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton. Its original mission was to relieve the suffering of children affected by World War I. Over time, it evolved to address any situation affecting children, including all types of disasters and humanitarian crises. It co-leads the Global Education Cluster with UNICEF in Geneva, Switzerland.



It currently operates through an international alliance of more than 30 national organizations working in more than 120 countries. Although each organization is autonomous, they act together on global campaigns and projects of shared interest. Like other NGOs, it receives funding from individual, corporate, government, and partner donations. It has also become known for distinctive fundraising campaigns directed toward international financing agencies.

Its work focuses on four main areas connected to the human rights of children and adolescents: education, health, protection, and emergencies. Building on these four pillars, Save the Children has launched high-impact projects encompassing school construction, vaccination and nutrition campaigns, protection against violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, and responses to more complex situations such as humanitarian crises. Among its best-known and most acclaimed projects are “Rewrite the Future,” a global campaign addressing the educational needs of children affected by emergencies, and “Every Last Child,” which focuses on children in precarious and marginalized circumstances and their basic needs, including health and education.

The organization faces the familiar challenges of emergency work: insufficient funding, restrictions imposed by local authorities or armed groups, and the difficulty of adapting to diverse but invariably complex contexts. Even so, it never abandons its mission and has significantly affected the lives of millions of children worldwide. It plays a crucial role in reducing child mortality in crisis settings, expanding access to education, and protecting children's rights.

Throughout its history, Save the Children has responded to humanitarian crises worldwide, including the Syrian Civil War since 2011, famines and armed conflicts in Somalia, the civil war in Yemen since 2015, the Nepal earthquake that same year, and Cyclone Idai in Mozambique in 2019. Over more than a century of activity, it has participated in numerous humanitarian crises and emergencies across the world. Since 2007, it has co-led the Global Education Cluster with UNICEF.

One of the most significant historical contributions associated with Save the Children was founder Eglantyne Jebb's drafting of a declaration on children's rights. This became the basis of the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. The document was one of the first international milestones in the specific recognition of children's rights and influenced later instruments. In 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Thirty years later, on November 20, 1989, it adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Its mission is deeply moving, and its work admirable. Save the Children is undoubtedly an example for all organizations seeking to protect children and meet their needs. We offer our full support and best wishes and hope it continues achieving success in the humanitarian work so urgently needed in today's world.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is an international nongovernmental organization founded in 1961 by British lawyer Peter Benenson. Its role is to ensure that all people fully enjoy and can exercise the rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In pursuing this mission, Amnesty International undertakes to investigate, raise awareness of, and expose human rights violations.



This is no easy task. Resources must first be rapidly mobilized to the crisis that requires them. A rigorous investigation must then clearly document human rights abuses. Because this often results in state and international bodies being identified as responsible, all the evidence needed to support allegations of this gravity must be available.

Once the investigation is complete, a report details the situation, pressuring the relevant authorities to act. Finally, Amnesty International organizes campaigns on the most common forms of human rights violations, seeking to raise awareness and mobilize everyone who hears its message so that the events are not forgotten.

Its most significant campaigns have addressed the death penalty; people imprisoned for ideological, political, religious, or other reasons, whom it calls “prisoners of conscience”; gender-based violence; discrimination; and abuse, among many other issues. For this article, we also highlight its humanitarian work for refugees and its campaigns

against abuse and prejudice toward people seeking dignified lives in neighboring countries, particularly after an emergency.

As you might imagine, exposing misconduct by a group of people or even an entire government can arouse suspicion among observers. If the organization must denounce multiple human rights violations involving a shared political or religious ideology, regardless of whether that ideology played a role, people who share it are highly likely to interpret Amnesty International's criticism as taking an ideological position against them.

Amnesty International is funded primarily by its members and individual donors. This financial foundation is an institutional choice, not an administrative detail: it seeks to reduce dependence on governments, political parties, and economic actors whose influence could compromise investigations or campaigns. Independence is never achieved merely by declaring it; it requires rules for accepting funds, transparency, and continuous monitoring of potential conflicts of interest.

Amnesty International is a highly important organization in contexts of oppression and emergency, bringing millions of voices together in pursuit of change. At CERLI, we wish it success in its humanitarian mission and in its responsibility to remain impartial and independent of ideologies, whatever their origin.

Norwegian Refugee Council

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent humanitarian organization dedicated to protecting and assisting people affected by displacement. Its institutional origins date to 1946, when Europahjelpen (“Aid to Europe”) was established in Norway after World War II. Initially, the initiative mobilized assistance for populations and refugees affected by the devastation of postwar Europe. Over time, it evolved into today’s Norwegian Refugee Council and gradually expanded its work to displacement crises around the world.



The Norwegian Refugee Council works in dozens of countries affected by conflict, disasters, and protracted displacement. One of its distinctive capacities is NORCAP, its global mechanism for providing specialists to humanitarian organizations, national institutions, and other partners. The model’s value goes beyond “sending experts”: it brings technical capacity where a crisis overwhelms existing resources while strengthening the institutions that must sustain the response.

Deployments can support both immediate emergencies and long-term processes. Their speed depends on the expertise required, availability, agreements with the receiving organization, access, and security conditions. NORCAP’s value should therefore be explained in terms of flexibility and specialization, not through a promise of a universal 48- to 72-hour deployment timeframe.

NRC receives a substantial share of its funding from governments and multilateral bodies, alongside private donations. This structure creates a risk of influence that must be managed rather than denied. In our view, NRC demonstrates that public funding can be compatible with independent humanitarian action when there are clear mandates, diverse donors, transparency, accountability, and a genuine capacity to maintain decisions based on needs. Independence depends not only on where money comes from, but also on the conditions under which it is accepted and used.

Some of its most notable missions include the refugee crises in Lebanon and Jordan, the Ebola crisis in West Africa, and floods in Southeast Asia. NORCAP responded to these and many other events, providing immediate emergency support, assisting social recovery in the medium term, and developing resilient systems and mitigation measures in at-risk countries over the long term. Its sustained and extensive work has earned it considerable international standing as one of the most respected and effective humanitarian organizations, especially in emergencies.

On behalf of CERLI, and particularly on my own behalf, I wish NRC success and good fortune. We are deeply grateful for its cooperation and encourage it to continue improving and saving the lives of those who need it most. Its work and commitment deserve our admiration, and we hope it can continue its humanitarian missions with the same goodwill.

Epilogue

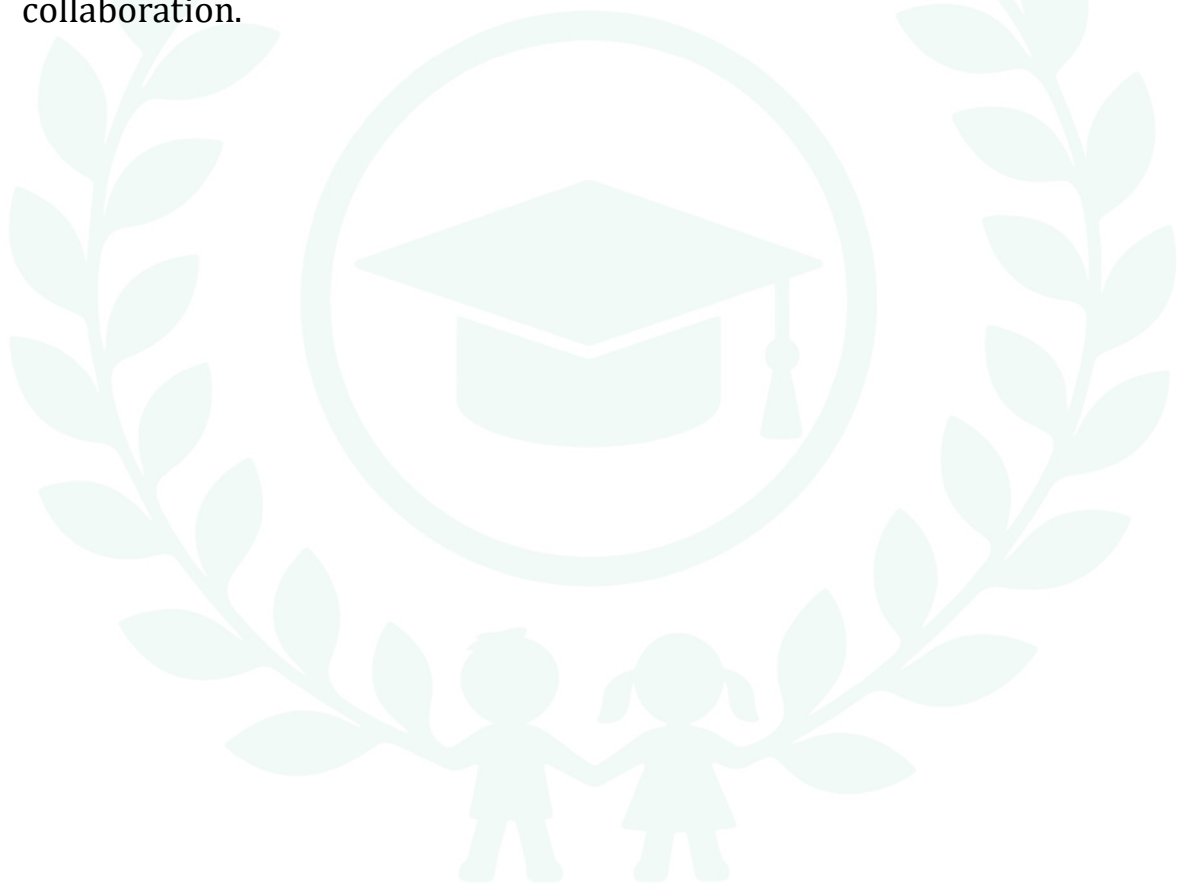
Throughout this article, we have explored the fragility of our world, our societies, and our own lives. We have witnessed the challenges and dangers of living through an emergency and how easily, from one moment to the next, we can lose everything we believe to be permanent. What may seem to most of us like just another story from the other side of the world is, in fact, a warning that no one is immune to the consequences of a crisis.

When I think about what truly constitutes an emergency, the simplest way I can express it is that it is like experiencing every problem a country could face, all at once. Our governments and political leaders therefore have a duty to plan national development sustainably and resiliently, preparing for the inevitable arrival of such an event. Yet, as in political life more broadly, education is often pushed aside and left with the scraps of the emergency budget. Cooperation among research centers, the international community, and humanitarian organizations is therefore essential to ensure that our governments do not neglect education.

This research seeks to give everyone committed to education a comprehensive understanding of how this fundamental need is addressed in an emergency. It also aims to reassure the wider public by showing that, even in such complex circumstances, we as experts have worked tirelessly to find innovative solutions. Yet one of our deepest intentions is also to encourage and compel governments everywhere to adopt models that are more resilient and better prepared. We must not be foolish enough to believe that these situations occur only elsewhere, or that favorable demographic conditions mean we need not prepare for them.

That was precisely the reasoning that pushed the entire world to its limits during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. We could cite hundreds of other examples in which societies denied risk and eventually paid the price. Let us not allow our politicians to see only what lies directly before them; let us be the ones who demand systems prepared for every threat.

May this report serve as a foundation for our colleagues to develop better, more resilient emergency education systems. As we have done before, we offer our contribution to the academic community and hope we have fulfilled our aims of sharing knowledge and encouraging collaboration.



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