



International Day for Disaster and Risk Reduction

"Building a Resilient Future: Education, Inequality, and the Power of Partnership"

On the occasion of the International Day for Disaster and Risk Reduction, the theme this year is "Fighting Inequality for a Resilient Future." As climate change-induced disasters increase, understanding the complex connection between disasters and inequality becomes essential to ensure timely and relevant responses. Disasters and hazards, while not intentionally discriminatory, tend to have a disproportionately severe impact on vulnerable communities due to pre-existing vulnerabilities, limited access to resources, and information. This often results in long-term disparities in health, income, and well-being as these communities' struggle to recover.

Recently, on October 7, 2023, a powerful earthquake struck Afghanistan's Herat Province, causing significant damage. The Zindajan district was hit the hardest, with 1,294 lives lost and 1,688 people injured. Many homes were completely destroyed. Six schools, three early child development centers, and two community-based education classes that served 60 vulnerable children were also destroyed. Additionally, eight schools suffered significant damage ([OCHA, 2023](#)). Sadly, on the morning of October 11, a significant 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck Herat Province, likely worsening the damage to the education sector ([OCHA, 2023](#)).

This disaster happened in a region already dealing with many challenges, including ongoing armed conflict. During complex crises, girls and boys from marginalized backgrounds face a serious risk of never going back to school. This can make their already tough lives even harder, trapping them in a cycle of poverty. When hazards like armed conflicts, natural shocks, or economic crises disrupt education, they often hit the most vulnerable children and adolescents. Instead of attending school, they may be forced into child labor, and girls may be subjected to early child marriages or engage in survival strategies. Deprived of access to education, their chances of improving their lives become severely limited.

Education is a powerful way to fight against inequality. It gives people the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to become agents of change in their community. Education nurtures active citizenship, fosters critical thinking, empathy, and acceptance of others, while combating prejudice and contributing to a fairer world. As we reflect on the International Day for Disaster and Risk Reduction, we emphasize the imperative of integrating risk reduction as a fundamental element of emergency responses and post-disaster recovery within the educational sector. This proactive and effective strategy empowers individuals, cultivates a culture of safety, and, most crucially, saves lives in the face of natural hazards.

By investing in education as a conduit for resilience, we not only protect our communities in the present but also sow the seeds for a more secure and sustainable future. Recognizing the urgency of incorporating risk reduction into our emergency responses within the education sector, GADRRRES proudly announces its new partnership with [Education Cannot Wait](#). In its unwavering commitment to assist and empower communities, schools, organizations, and governments, GADRRRES advocates for the widespread adoption of the [Comprehensive Safety School framework \(CSSF\)](#). This aims to provide strategic guidance to duty bearers and their partners to promote safe, equitable, and continuous access to quality education for all. For an in-depth review of the framework and to join us in our advocacy efforts, please visit our [website](#) or stay updated through our social media channels ([Twitter](#) and [Linkedin](#))

Let's keep supporting the emergency responses and recovery of Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and other regions grappling with complex, long-lasting crises. Together, we can combat inequality and contribute to build a resilient future, with a focus on the well-being of children, adolescents and the entire education community.

Our members worldwide are doing amazing work to ensure Disaster Risk Reduction in education is a key aspect to fighting inequality. You can also click [here](#) to find out more about Save the Children's partnership with Prudence foundation and how we have collaborated around the CSSF.