



## TEACHING NOTES FOR GEOGRAPHY AND CITIZENSHIP

### Aim

To help students to explore the impact of disasters on people living in poverty.

### Learning outcomes

After using these resources, students should be able to:

- apply critical thinking to their interpretation of information and images
- identify a disaster
- explain the culmination of factors that result in disaster
- consider disasters in the context of human development
- analyse media coverage of disasters
- understand how and why disasters impact on people living in poverty
- investigate what communities need to cope with disaster
- understand the impacts of disaster in Haiti (earthquake) and the Philippines (flooding)
- explore the distinction between 'natural' and 'human-made' disasters
- make the link between climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of some types of disasters
- consider appropriate responses to a disaster.

There is an additional RE/RME activity for schools engaging in cross-curricular learning that looks at the issues of suffering and compassion from an RE perspective. It is available to download from [christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary](http://christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary)

### Curriculum links

The *Disaster Zone* resources support learning about key themes and topics through:

#### Geography/Environmental Studies/Social Studies

Key concepts: place/interdependence/physical and human processes/environmental interaction and social development/cultural understanding and diversity.  
Key processes: geographical enquiry/visual literacy.

#### Curriculum opportunities:

- to participate in informed responsible action in relation to geographical issues
- examine geographical issues in the news
- investigate important issues of relevance to Britain

and Ireland and globally using a range of skills, including ICT

- make links between other subjects, including citizenship and ICT, sustainability and the global dimension.

#### RE/RME

Study the work of a Christian charity/Stewardship/Caring for our world/Develop the skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking and deciding how to act when making moral decisions/Make a positive difference to the world by putting their beliefs and values into action.

#### PSHE/PSD/PSE/Citizenship

Participation/Responsibilities/Global awareness/Global citizenship.

#### Resources available:

- *Disaster Zone* PowerPoint presentation
- student worksheets
- case study notes
- film clips
- simulation games
- *Disaster Strikes* stickers
- *Disaster Strikes* poster.

The presentation, worksheets, case study notes and film clips that accompany these teaching notes are available to download from [christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary](http://christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary)

The two simulation games can be used to help students understand some experiences of people living through a disaster, perhaps as part of an off-timetable day:

- **'Typhoon town challenge'** asks students to make some tough budgeting choices when planning and building a town. But their town is located in the Philippines, and students don't know that a typhoon is on its way. What will they do when disaster strikes? How will they cope? And have they got what it takes to work as a team to rebuild? See [christianaid.org.uk/typhoon-town-challenge](http://christianaid.org.uk/typhoon-town-challenge)
- **'Emergency exit'** charts an evacuation from an environmental disaster. Which of their personal and household items are important to students – and which will they save when the going gets tough? See [christianaid.org.uk/emergency-exit](http://christianaid.org.uk/emergency-exit)

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The *Disaster Zone* materials are designed to be flexible and adaptable. You may wish to use these resources as

part of your regular timetable, for an off-timetable day, or in response to a disaster when it happens.

Use these materials to respond to a disaster in the news:

- 'Disaster alert' assembly
- 'Disaster analysis' worksheet
- *Disaster Strikes* sticker sheet
- *Disaster Strikes* poster.

- To download the assembly and worksheet, visit [christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary](http://christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary)
- To order the poster and sticker sheet (F2202), email [orders@christian-aid.org](mailto:orders@christian-aid.org)
- For more information on current emergencies, visit [christianaid.org.uk/emergencies](http://christianaid.org.uk/emergencies)

## **Activity 1:** **What happened here?**

**Learning outcome:** to apply critical thinking in relation to information and images.

Split the class into groups and hand out the '**What happened here?**' worksheet, which shows images of different disasters, and ask groups to guess what has happened and to add captions for each photo.

Once students have done this, show them slides 1 to 4 of the *Disaster Zone* presentation, which explain what has happened.

The first image (show slide 2) shows children playing on the beach created when tropical storm Agatha opened up a new estuary on the Pacific coast of Guatemala.

Communities here are at risk of flooding every year.

The second image (show slide 3) shows the devastation in Haiti, following a massive earthquake on 12 January 2010.

The third image (show slide 4) shows flooding in the Philippines, a country vulnerable to flooding and other extreme weather events.

Questions for discussion (show slide 5):

- What do the pictures show?
- What do they not show?
- In what ways might the impacts of different disasters be similar?
- In what ways might they be different?
- What have we learnt?
- What information would we need to understand a disaster situation properly?

## **Activity 2:** **Defining disaster**

**Learning outcome:** to identify a disaster.

Write the word 'DISASTER!' on the board and ask the class to brainstorm words associated with disasters. Split the class into groups and ask each group to come up with their own definition of what the word 'disaster' means.

Questions for discussion (show slide 6):

- What is the difference between a hazard and a disaster?
- What might the impacts of a disaster be?
- If a disaster causes damage, but does not kill anyone, is it still a disaster?
- If an event only affects a few people, is it still a disaster?

Let the groups feed their ideas in to develop a whole-class definition, which might read something like this: 'A disaster is an event that causes significant distress, damage or destruction to people'. (Show slide 7.)

Explain: *Disasters are usually defined as events on a significant scale that cause harm to people through injury or death or through damage or loss to their property, environments or livelihoods.*

### **Taking it further**

Share the '**Odd one out**' worksheet and ask students to identify the event that does not count as a disaster (the answer is the earthquake in Alaska, which caused an avalanche of rock over uninhabited land – although this was a huge and hazardous event, it was not a disaster because no people were harmed or affected).

### **Activity 3:** **What makes a disaster?**

**Learning outcome:** to explain the culmination of factors that result in disaster.

(Show slide 8.)

Questions for discussion:

- (What does the diagram show?)
- Which factors could increase people's vulnerability to disaster?

Explain: *(The diagram shows that disasters are the outcome of a combination of different factors.) A hazardous event on its own does not result in disaster – if an event occurs, but there are no/few people present (low population density), or those people are well protected (low vulnerability), then the event is less likely to result in disaster. But if a hazardous event occurs and there are lots of people present (high population density) and they are not well protected (high vulnerability), then it is much more likely to result in disaster.*

### **Activity 4:** **Mapping disasters**

**Learning outcome:** to consider disasters in the context of human development.

(Show slide 9.)

Share the '**Mapping disasters**' worksheet.

You could use *Disaster Strikes* stickers and poster (order reference F2202) to make a classroom display. These are available to order from [orders@christian-aid.org](mailto:orders@christian-aid.org)

Questions for discussion:

- Can students identify any pattern between disaster death tolls and economic development?
- Why might the impact of disasters have been particularly serious in less economically developed countries?

Explain: *Disasters in less economically developed countries might have particularly serious consequences because people living there might not have the resources – the time, the money, the savings and the materials – to prepare for or deal with disasters when they happen. It is often the very poorest people who are worst affected by disaster because they are usually the most vulnerable (for example, their homes are often in crowded areas and are poorly built; they might not have any savings to fall back on to help them recover from disasters, etc).*

### **Activity 5:** **Disasters in the news**

**Learning outcome:** to analyse media coverage of disasters.

Hand out some newspapers and ask students to do a media audit of disasters in the newspapers – remind them to look at the definition of disaster that they developed in activity 2. Once they have selected articles, they should sort these into those that report disasters affecting Britain and Ireland, and those describing disasters overseas.

(Show slides 10 and 11.)

Questions for discussion:

- Do the majority of articles describe disasters occurring in Britain and Ireland or overseas?
- Is there any difference in the way that disasters in Britain and Ireland and disasters overseas are reported?
- Is there any difference in the way that the same disaster is reported in different newspapers?
- Can students identify what help was provided to people experiencing disaster in Britain and Ireland?
- Can students identify what help was provided to people experiencing disaster overseas?
- Who provided this help?
- Is it clear what made people vulnerable to disaster in the first place? And were those things different in different countries?

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### Taking it further

Hold a discussion or debate around the following issues:

- Is it easy to differentiate between 'natural' disasters and 'human-made' disasters? Why/why not?
- What sorts of images are used to illustrate the stories?
- Is there any information missing – and what further questions would the students like to ask?
- Do all disasters only have negative outcomes? What might some positive ones be? Are any positive outcomes listed in the articles?

## **Activity 6: Poverty and disasters**

**Learning outcome:** to understand how and why disasters have the greatest impact on people living in poverty.

(Show the earthquake animation, available to download on slide 12.)

(Show slide 13.) Elizabeth Hausler, a famous seismologist (earthquake expert), once said:

'Earthquakes don't kill people, buildings do.'

Question for discussion:

- What do students think this means?

### Taking it further

Hand out the '**Not all earthquakes are equal**' worksheet, which shows a range of statistics for Haiti and Chile, and ask students to answer the question on the sheet.

- Why might the death toll from the earthquake in Haiti have been so much higher than the one in Chile?
- What specific factors might have made people in Haiti particularly vulnerable when the earthquake struck – and why?

## **Activity 7: Coping with disaster**

**Learning outcome:** to investigate what communities need to cope with disaster.

Split students into smaller groups and ask each group to brainstorm on sticky-backed notes what they think people might need to help them cope with a major disaster, like an earthquake.

Ask them to organise their ideas in a scale ranging from 'most urgent' to 'least urgent'.

(Show slides 14 and 15.)

Questions for discussion:

- After a disaster, which things would be most important in the first few days and which would be most important for the longer term?
- Do the needs of people affected by disaster change over time?
- What things would help to protect people from future disasters?
- What are the emotional, as well as physical, impacts of a disaster?
- Who should be responsible for providing the things that people need to cope with disasters (eg the government, international aid agencies, families, communities)?
- From where should resources, such as the money, equipment and labour, come to provide the things people need after a disaster?

## **Activity 8:** **Case studies**

**Learning outcome:** to explore the impacts of disaster in Haiti (earthquake) and the Philippines (flooding).

**Aim:** to enable students to explore the impacts of flooding in the Philippines in 2012 and the earthquake in Haiti in 2010.

The case studies will help students to understand the context of the focus country and identify:

- what makes communities vulnerable to disaster
- issues of sustainability
- aspects of emergency relief (short-term disaster response)
- the importance of disaster risk reduction (long-term development programme).

Each case study includes a range of sources and multimedia content. (Show slides 16 and 17 to give students an overview.)

The **'Earthquake in Haiti'** case study and films are available to download from [christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary](http://christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary)

The **'Flooding in the Philippines'** case study is available to download from [christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary](http://christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary) and the films are available at [christianaid.org.uk/big-river-rising](http://christianaid.org.uk/big-river-rising)

Hand out copies of the **'Disaster analysis'** worksheet to help students organise the information they gather from the case studies and films.

### **Using the case studies**

Share the case studies with students, and show the films in class. Ask students to use the worksheets to explore the information they have been given in the case studies and films.

Adapt the case studies to suit your teaching requirements:

- If you are studying a particular unit, eg earthquakes/ river basins, you could look at just one case study, as a class or in smaller groups/pairs/individually.
- You could split the class into groups and hand out one case study per group if you want to look at different types of disasters.
- If you are running a unit on climate change or sustainability, explore the 'River hazards' and 'Climate change' sections of the ***Big River Rising*** resource in more detail.  
(To view the ***Big River Rising*** documentary, visit [christianaid.org.uk/big-river-rising](http://christianaid.org.uk/big-river-rising))

### **Taking it further**

- Use the *Disaster Strikes* stickers to locate where the disaster/s happened on a world map/*Disaster Strikes* poster. The poster and stickers (order reference F2202) are available to order from [orders@christian-aid.org](mailto:orders@christian-aid.org)
- You could use the stickers to chart any similar/ recurrent disasters that occur throughout the year.
- Ask students to produce a newspaper article for a paper in Britain and Ireland informing people of the disaster: students have to decide which is the most important information to communicate.
- You could use the **'Disaster analysis'** worksheet to analyse new disasters as they happen.

## **Activity 9:** **Are disasters natural?**

**Learning outcome:** explore the distinction between 'natural' and 'human-made' disasters.

Ask students to consider whether flooding in the Philippines and the earthquake in Haiti are natural disasters or not, and to give reasons.

Check that all students have understood that no disasters are completely 'natural'; all disasters have a human element (as they learnt in activity 1, events are only defined as 'disasters' when they impact on humans).

In both Haiti and the Philippines, 'natural' events, such as an earthquake or heavy monsoon rains, became

disasters because people were not equipped to cope with them. In both cases, poverty greatly increased the impact of the disasters because people were living in overcrowded conditions in weak buildings. And in both cases, poverty also reduced the ability of people to recover from a disaster, because people lacked the savings and resources to rebuild their lives.

Check that students also understand that scientists believe that some weather-related disasters, such as flooding in the Philippines, are intensifying partly due to climate change.

(Show slide 18.) Questions for discussion:

- What human factors were shown to have made both the earthquake in Haiti and the flooding in the Philippines more disastrous?
- How might the risk of future disasters be reduced?

## **Activity 10:** **The impact of climate change**

**Learning outcome:** to make the link between climate change and increasing frequency and intensity of some types of disasters.

Climate change is making some types of extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and storms, occur more often. Around the world, people are taking action to limit their carbon emissions and to adapt to the changing climate.

Split the class into smaller groups and share a set of the

**'Match to adapt'** sorting cards with each group. Explain that each set of 15 cards contains five black cards with the name of a country on each, five grey cards listing a possible impact of climate change in a country, and five white cards listing ways people are adapting to the situation. Groups need to match country cards with one card that shows how climate change is affecting that country and one card that shows how people in that country are adapting to that change.

(Show slide 19.) Questions for discussion:

- How does climate change blur the distinction between 'human-made' and 'natural' disasters?
- What role might new technologies play in reducing environmental disasters?

## **Activity 11:** **Responding to a new disaster**

**Learning outcome:** to consider appropriate responses to a disaster.

Hand out the **'Disaster response'** worksheet to test if pupils can use all that they have learnt to correctly identify the way that Christian Aid responds to a disaster. An answer sheet is provided so that you can explore Christian Aid's approach with students.

The following materials can be used to help your students respond to a new disaster in the news:

- **'Disaster alert' assembly**

This assembly gives an overview of disaster response and encourages reflection and prayer for those affected by disaster. This can be downloaded from [christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary](http://christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary)

- **Disaster Strikes sticker sheet and poster**

Use the stickers to chart where a new disaster happens on a map or on the poster. To order the

stickers and poster (order reference F2202), email [orders@christian-aid.org](mailto:orders@christian-aid.org)

- **'Disaster analysis' worksheet**

This worksheet can be used in the context of any new disaster to help students ask questions and apply their global citizenship skills.

In the event of a major disaster affecting one of the countries where we work, Christian Aid will often launch an emergency appeal. You can find out more information at [christianaid.org.uk/emergencies](http://christianaid.org.uk/emergencies)

Taking it further:

- Are your students concerned about climate change and environmental issues? Ask them to write to their local politicians to find out what they are doing to tackle climate change and provide funding for adaptation in developing countries.
- Could your school think of any other creative ways to respond to a disaster? You could show them the Burma cyclone rap (available to download from [christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary](http://christianaid.org.uk/learn-disaster-secondary)), which was made by rapper Jahaziel, a Christian Aid supporter, in response to the cyclone that hit Burma in 2008. Encourage your students to think about inventive ways they could raise awareness of disasters.

(Show slide 20. )

### Fundraising

Please also think about how you might be able to support Christian Aid's emergency work through fundraising at school.

Ideas for fundraising in school:

- cake sales
- non-uniform days
- sponsored silence
- sports tournament
- art competition
- clothes swap.

Please note:

Christian Aid does not send collected items to developing countries. It is much more effective for us to work through our partners, which are local organisations working with communities in affected areas. Local partners are best placed to understand and meet the needs of people affected by disasters and to communicate effectively with local people to provide the best possible support for the immediate emergency response and the long-term recovery programme.

**The box opposite shows some ways fundraising could support the work our partners do to help communities affected by disasters.**

### Taking it further

Use one of our disaster simulation games to help students understand some experiences of people living through a disaster, perhaps as part of an off-timetable day:

**'Typhoon town challenge'** asks students to make some tough budgeting choices when planning and building a town. But their town is located in the Philippines, and students don't know that a typhoon is on its way. What will they do when disaster strikes? How will they cope? And have they got what it takes to work as a team to rebuild? Download from [christianaid.org.uk/typhoon-town-challenge](http://christianaid.org.uk/typhoon-town-challenge)

**'Emergency exit!'** charts an evacuation from an environmental disaster in the Philippines. Which of their personal and household items are important to students, and which will they save when the going gets tough? Download from [christianaid.org.uk/emergency-exit](http://christianaid.org.uk/emergency-exit)

**£15** could buy a tarpaulin that can be used to provide a family with emergency shelter in the days after a disaster such as the earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010.

**£33** could buy a relief package for a family who have been displaced by a typhoon, including sleeping mats, blankets, hygiene kits, mosquito net, candles, kitchen starter kits (utensils, plates, cups), basic cooking equipment (pan, ladle, kettle) and water purification tablets.

**£59** could buy one month's emergency food package for a family displaced by flooding in Pakistan.

**£325** could buy a loudspeaker system to alert a village to flood danger in Guatemala.