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RESOURCING THE CURRICULUM

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES: UNDERSTANDING HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

How often do you wish that you had activities and lessons to use with your students that directly address something that is happening in the news TODAY?

UNICEF Canada has developed a curriculum-connected resource guide to help primary and secondary teachers across Canada initiate a conversation about current humanitarian emergencies with their students, and is

designed to be a go-to resource for you in your classroom. It supports teachers' efforts with age appropriate activities that encourage students to explore their reactions to these crises, develop empathy and understanding, and see themselves as global citizens with an ability to act.

Teachers are challenged to convey the hardship and complexity associated with humanitarian emergencies to their students, and the creation of this guide was prompted by the requests of teachers to address the questions of their students about the January, 2010, earthquake in Haiti, in which nearly 1.5 million children have been directly affected.



UNICEF CANADA RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS



UNICEF Canada advocates and works for Haiti's children in its recovery and long-term planning efforts.

Its 365 DAYS FOR HAITI campaign encourages Canadians to donate to UNICEF each month over the next year to help build a better future for all of Haiti's children.

www.unicef.ca/haiti365

TRY THIS ACTIVITY IN YOUR CLASS!



This activity is taken from the Elementary Resource Guide, [When disaster strikes: Understanding Humanitarian Emergencies](#). It has been designed for use with grade 4 – 8 students, but could be easily adapted for use with younger and older students.

Note: This activity requires the use of the attachment [When disaster strikes: Haiti Earthquake Insert](#).

WHAT IS A HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY?

Organize students into groups of three. Hand out one copy of the story from the 2-page insert [When Disaster Strikes: A Humanitarian Emergency Response](#) to each student (attached). Have them read the story and then answer the discussion questions with their group. When all groups are finished, facilitate a large group discussion.

Discuss: What thoughts came to mind after reading this story? What would it be like to live through such an emergency? Ask students to share a few of their responses to the discussion questions.

Hand out a pad of sticky notes to each group. Explain that the story they read was about a humanitarian emergency. Based on that story and what previous knowledge they have, students record words and phrases that come to mind when asked: **What is a humanitarian emergency?** The group chooses its three best ideas and records each on a sticky note. Students post their ideas on chart paper at the front of the room.

Rearrange the sticky notes so that similar ideas and trends in thinking are grouped together. Identify the common themes and elicit student suggestions for a definition of a humanitarian emergency. Share the definition provided here:

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES result when a natural disaster, human-made crisis or a combination of both, overwhelm the affected population's ability to cope. Humanitarian Emergencies can unfold gradually or strike suddenly.

Discuss some well-known examples of humanitarian emergencies: Haiti earthquake, Hurricane Katrina, Sudan Conflict, 2004 Tsunami.

A PLACE TO START

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: www.cbc.ca

Google News: www.news.google.ca

Reuters World News: www.reuters.com/news/world

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

CLASSROOM

UNICEF on 

May 17th was **World Information Day**. Bring Children's Rights alive in your classroom with UNICEF's accurate and current information on global issues for teachers and students.

Get plugged in with www.youtube.com/user/unicef

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

REGISTER NOW!

Mount Royal College (Calgary, AB), Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension, is offering a fully online 4-course program called Child and Youth Human Rights Certificate. It focuses on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for professional practice within a Canadian context. For more information and online registration visit: <http://conted.mtroyal.ca/childrights>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

REGISTER NOW!

Check out another online course being offered this fall on The Right to Education. Human Rights Education Associates organises specialised certificate courses via distance education for human rights defenders and educators, development workers, and staff members of social justice organisations, international and inter-governmental organisations. For information and registration visit: www.hrea.org/index.php

