

## *A menu of possible educational responses in the context of disasters*

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The paper is addressed to public and private organizations that include education among their interventions to relieve and mitigate the effects of disasters. The paper focuses on two questions to sharpen discussion of what educational responses are most appropriate:

Who do disasters affect most?; and

What can be done after the disaster event?

Each disaster event is unique, and educational needs vary according to a complex set of variables that include prior calamities, age, gender, social organization and internal conflicts of the victims, as well as the social and political context of the country in which they are located. The variety of situations is too great for the short review proposed. To simplify the problem, the paper focuses on the position of relative power within the community or society of the group that is to be helped through education; and on the severity of the disaster in terms of its impact on the social organization of the community.

The term "education" is reserved in this paper for activities designed to produce learning, in which there is a "teacher" or person responsible for the design and evaluation of the process, and a "learner" in whom the changes will be incorporated. We generally understand by "education" activities in which there is a defined set of elements to be learned, and prescribed procedures and materials for teaching. Excluded from the term "education" is all that learning which takes place daily without benefit of formally designated teachers, instructors or trainers.

### MAJOR TASKS FOR EDUCATION

Each society (or self-contained community) relies on educational institutions to insure the continuous resolution of three major problems. These are:

- the production and accumulation of wealth, which includes not just goods but also the means to produce them;