

Climate change and emergency education: Entry points and funding options

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Overview of challenges and current options for the humanitarian system¹

The climate crisis is projected to challenge the humanitarian system in two fundamental ways: it will greatly increase the scale of need, further stretching a humanitarian system that already struggles to keep up with the current pace of disasters and conflicts; it is also expected to change the nature of crises, as less familiar natural hazards like heat waves, become more common, while others, such as typhoons, begin acting in new and less predictable ways.

It has been referred to as a “game changer”, directly confronting the overall model of international humanitarian action in a number of ways. As the Global North is more impacted by climate crises, humanitarian spend may drop even further, as the tendency to address needs at home may increase, as was seen with Covid-19. Assistance to disaster-affected countries is already being framed as one of justice and reparations by developed countries, with funds directed to national governments for managing and responding to disaster. The need for integrated approaches to risk and resilience will necessitate greater emphasis on local actors - their capacity, leadership and governance; the rising case for addressing the potential impacts of disasters before they occur already challenges a response-oriented model.

There is increasing pressure for humanitarians to determine how they will respond to the many challenges brought on by climate change, but at the same time, uneven awareness and confusion about response options. A [recent mapping](#) by Groupe URD found that many humanitarian actors are simply unaware of the need to take climate into account in their programming with increasingly evident gaps in adapting technical areas, and a sector-wide lag in understanding the skills and guidance needed to adjust. Research by the Centre for Humanitarian Action (CHA) reiterated this concern in its recent [paper](#): “the entire humanitarian system, along with humanitarian organisations, is ill-prepared and lacking the necessary financial, technical and capacity resources to effectively address the multifaceted impacts of the climate crisis.”

The long-standing division between humanitarian and development organisations has become increasingly apparent. The CHA research reveals how the climate crisis has further informed the debate about the boundaries of the humanitarian mandate and its connectivity to development assistance. While response after a disaster falls squarely in the humanitarian realm, it’s still debated what role humanitarians have when it comes to mitigating the impacts of climate related disasters or to work on the longer term approaches that would help communities better cope the next time.

Regardless, the climate crisis poses a wholesale change to how humanitarians approach what they do, and requires new approaches in the face of increased scale of need and changing nature of crises. These include:

¹ This section is adapted from ALNAP’s [The climate crisis and humanitarian action: current approaches and discourse | Briefing](#), June 2023, drafted by the same author as this paper.

- Reskilling and reprogramming: These shifts include adapting relief items for new kinds of emergencies such as heatwaves, by for example changing the type of roofing on temporary classrooms to be more adaptable to high temperatures, or developing new protocols and guidance for cascading or simultaneous crises such as climate-induced conflict. It may also include training staff who have worked in protracted crisis settings to the new realities of compounding crises and responding to sudden-onset disasters.
- Greening humanitarian assistance: Many organizations are in the process of reducing their own environmental footprint and finding ways to mitigate the humanitarian impacts on climate change. The [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations](#), adopted by nearly 380 humanitarian organisations to date, outlines commitments to reduce the impact of their actions on the environment. The commitments are specific and encompassing but are non-binding, and only a few so far have publicly stated their targets. UNICEF is a signatory but has not yet published its targets.

The United Nations [Greening the Blue's](#) initiative seeks to facilitate the transition of the United Nations system into an environmentally more sustainable operationalization modus.

The Humanitarian Environment Network (Reseau Environnement Humanitaire REH), established in France in 2012, is as a platform for sharing experiences, developing tools and advocating for the integration of environmental considerations within the humanitarian sector. Under its umbrella, eleven French NGOs committed to reducing their emissions by 50 per cent by 2030.

- Anticipatory Action- Shifting the timing of humanitarian action to before a crisis happens: These are activities ahead of a predicted event to prevent or reduce acute humanitarian impacts before they unfold, is a widely embraced approach for humanitarians.²

This is the area where humanitarians have made most inroads, but much of the anticipatory action approach remains ad hoc and falls to small scale, uncoordinated pilots. This work also takes place primarily in response to natural hazards and has not been adapted to address issues like famine or harder to predict hazards. The approach is also often considered as a stand-alone set of actions prior to a crisis, and is rarely integrated into longer term actions or considerations. Most vulnerable countries also face political disincentives, governance barriers and distrust of forecasts, limiting the extent to which they embrace a more anticipatory approach.

Anticipatory action is still only a sliver of humanitarian financing and an even smaller part of development or climate financing. Research by the [Start Network](#) found that less than one percent of humanitarian funding is pre-arranged. More [recent mapping](#) by the Centre for Disaster Protection found that while pre-arranged financing is growing, it remains a very small proportion of international crisis financing - USD1.9 billion in 2021 or 2.7% of overall financing for preventing, preparing for and responding to crises. According to the report, anticipatory action, a subcategory of pre-arranged financing, is

² The approach is filtering into many humanitarian organisations: OCHA has committed to embedding anticipatory approaches as part of its 2023-2026 Strategic Plan; The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) pledged to dedicate at least 20 percent of its emergency funding to anticipatory action by 2025; Save the Children pledged to use 15 percent of its internal flexible funding towards this approach by 2024, to name a few.

also gaining momentum, but accounted for just 0.2% of humanitarian funding in 2021, as reported to the OECD DAC.

Donors remain hesitant to put money aside for a crisis that may never happen while funding for ongoing crises is already insufficient. Some argue that this is something development actors should be paying for. While an ex-ante approach is often touted as being cheaper, more effective and more ethical, the small number of activities in this space means that [the evidence](#) in support of these claims is limited. The Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) has recently launched a call to action for decision-makers to scale up and enable structures necessary for locally-led Anticipatory Action.

- Applying a risk reduction approach as opposed to, or at the same time as, responding to needs. This requires not only a shift in mindset, but also adopting new planning approaches that take into consideration hazards, exposure and vulnerability. Since 2020, UNDRR has worked with humanitarian actors to better integrate risk into planning and programming. They developed a [checklist](#) with recommendations for humanitarians to scale up disaster risk reduction at country and local levels and make it more integrated in all parts of the humanitarian program cycle. The GEC has already published a [paper in 2011](#) which discusses the intersection between DRR and Education with recommendations.

There are a number of obstacles when it comes to a risk-oriented approach: there are limited funds dedicated to pursuing DRR outcomes in crisis and conflict contexts; accurate and reliable data needed to understand risk and its impacts is often scarce and it is rarely used to inform planning.

Humanitarians working in crisis affected countries are already struggling with what are considered “heavy” and “burdensome” planning and coordination processes. Adding additional exercises to systematically include risk takes time and bandwidth and there is pushback from humanitarians who say they don’t even have time to respond to the emergencies at hand. Analysing and planning for crises in the future is unfeasible for many. This sentiment is especially true in places where conflict is the predominant driver of needs.

Addressing risk means moving outside of narrow approaches and budgets like anticipatory action, and integrating into what’s referred to as a [‘resilience continuum’](#), linked with climate change adaptation, resilience initiatives and development programming. For people affected by crisis, humanitarian offerings are [misaligned with their longer-term adaption needs](#) and priorities such as finding permanent solutions to persistent riverbank erosion. On the one hand, the humanitarian sector has been responding to climate shocks and prioritizing immediate needs. On the other hand, the climate sector has tried to address the long term climate risks to be able to better prepare for the impacts of climate variability and climate shocks. The disconnect between sectors in developing countries has meant that support has not been sustainable, coherent and sometimes wasteful.

- Working through local actors: Skills, knowledge and expertise exist within national, local and community based organizations, or local private sector stakeholders who have been on the front lines of response. Some have begun to share their experiences, knowledge in global debates, especially around resilience and adaptation, but on the

whole, locally led approaches and knowledge are [not being profiled](#) or fed into the development of tools and guidance.

Acknowledging this gap, eight [Principles for Locally-Led Adaptation](#) have been endorsed by 80 governments, leading global institutions and local and international NGOs who commit to changing their current practices towards enabling more sustainable and effective adaptation at the local level and giving vulnerable and excluded communities greater agency over prioritising and designing adaptation solutions.

A new financing facility from the Start Network, [Start Ready](#), enables locally led anticipatory action, whereby local organisations prioritise risks and provide input on the advance help they most want and need. The mechanism ensures that local actors have the funding to respond quickly and appropriately. The approach has been used in a number of contexts, for a range of crises - DRC for river flooding, to Madagascar for cyclones, to Somalia for drought.

Overall, the lack of climate finance reaching people affected by crises and conflict is a considerable obstacle for humanitarians. COP28 may present major policy shifts, mainly with the new Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace, currently garnering endorsements across a range of actors - from governments, to international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, to climate, environment, development, humanitarian and peace actors. Signatories recognise that people affected by conflict, fragility or humanitarian crises are “largely unaddressed” by the existing climate resilience work.

The Declaration is the first of its kind, bringing climate and humanitarian policy together, to make a collective commitment to increase climate action, investment and absorption capacity in countries and communities affected by conflict or protracted humanitarian crisis, as well as present an accompanying package of finance, policy, programmes and practices to operationalize the commitment.

While COP28 may unshake new sources of funding, it is likely not going to be seen for some time and may not amount to much for humanitarian contexts. The EU has announced a “substantial” contribution to the Declaration’s fund, but financing concerns abound as public budgets in the Global North remain tight.

Potential entry points for education and coordination

With that background, there are a few options for the education sector and the cluster to integrate climate action into its work.

- **Children from crisis-affected contexts are a demographic group whose distinct and heightened needs are [under-recognized by climate funds](#).** There is a need to highlight children’s education and learning needs.
- **Education for Resilient Climate Change Adaptation offers [numerous entrypoints](#),** including making both formal and informal education infrastructure child-friendly and learning conducive (even in crisis-affected circumstances); making teaching and curriculum climate-change informed; and creating a socio-emotionally caring and socially-cohesive learning environment for children affected by crisis. GADDRES is a key stakeholder when it comes to school safety and should be approached for further conceptualizing climate-safe schools.

- **The Global Education Cluster** presides over 30+ national partner networks, and must get donors interested in supporting through these networks the delivery of climate change HPC guidance and capacity development products, to many geographic locations in hard-to-reach contexts.
- **Use anticipatory action and disaster risk reduction as an entry point, as this is where most of the funding for humanitarian related activities largely sits.** Although this is only a sliver of the already insufficient resources for humanitarian action, these are well established areas of work and the cluster could capitalise on its role to leverage partners' capacities to engage.
- **Identify contexts where country EiE strategies integrate climate into their work and expand and replicate those.** Some contexts have already included climate in their EiE strategies. Find what has worked in those contexts and provide guidance for other contexts who have not yet integrated climate issues into their planning.

The cluster could also identify where EiE can offer anticipatory support, perhaps for example, providing cash for school prior to a crisis when we know that school will be interrupted. Other specific actions and recommendations around anticipatory action and risk reduction for education actors are laid out in the recent paper, "Leveraging Education Coordination for Climate change Adaptation and Mitigation."

- **Don't go directly for international climate finance, but seek partnerships with sister agencies who have.** The international climate funds are very difficult to access, but some UN agencies like WFP have been accredited into the Green Climate Fund in 2016 with a focus on anticipatory action, restoration of degraded ecosystems and establishing climate resilient infrastructure, and protection for the most vulnerable people with financial safety nets and insurance. Many global EiE stakeholders are reluctant to go for climate funding directly due to the competition and the lengthy proposal process. More needs to be understood on WFP's experience in getting accreditation to the GCF. Consultation with them could help enlighten the process or identify partnership opportunities with them. The IFRC has also had success garnering climate funding through its Global Climate Resilience Platform which aims to channel one billion CHF into locally-led climate action and adaptation efforts. Its overall goal is to increase community resilience to the impacts of climate change and climate-related disasters.
- **Link with UNDRR who is leading work to integrate risk into humanitarian action.** Aside from the above mentioned checklist, UNDRR has led a number of in-country workshops bringing together typically silo-ed stakeholders from - from climate change experts, to conflict monitoring specialists, to members of the private sector, government and civil society - to identify drivers of risk, potential impacts, and to develop a most likely scenario outlining responsibilities and next steps. Position the cluster to be involved in those workshops to hear from partners and colleagues about ways to best collaborate and engage.
- **Identify the added value that the cluster offers in this space, and approach GEC existing donor base with proposals to mainstream long term climate risks into coordination and programming** such as adapting school construction, teacher training, developing risk curricula and guidance, etc. Honing in on the unique advantage that the cluster and education offers in this space and starting with small pilot grants will help test new approaches and provide proof of concept and a window for additional funding.

- **Follow donor commitments coming out of the the [Humanitarian aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment](#), launched at the first European Humanitarian Forum in March 2022.** It was designed to mirror the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations, and provide concrete steps for donors to take. According to the first [progress report](#) on the commitments taken in the declaration, most donors are integrating climate-related considerations in humanitarian specific policy frameworks and funding for specific climate related work remains small-scale. These are summarized in the table below and gives a sense of the kinds of climate-related projects donors are funding, how they're getting involved and also the relatively small amounts of funding they are offering to this kind of work.

Traditional government donors	
Denmark	Denmark, among other initiatives, provides specific support to the Danish Red Cross's work with Anticipatory Action and resilience to climate-related shocks, as well as supports Forests of the World working to strengthen drought resilience in Ethiopia through preservation of wetlands and soil.
ECHO	<p>The 2021 Communication on the EU's humanitarian action ("New challenges, same principles") emphasises the importance of ensuring that climate and environmental considerations (including risk awareness) are always taken into account in humanitarian action, with specific focus on supporting CCA and environmental resilience as part of humanitarian programming.</p> <p>The European Commission's humanitarian budget supports around 30 ongoing projects with anticipatory action components, amounting to approx. EUR 50 million. It also supports preparedness for disasters caused by natural hazards through its European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC), for example in Latin America and the Caribbean. ECHO has also dedicated funding for preparedness by building capacity of local actors and strengthening preparedness systems in line with their Disaster Preparedness Guidance Note. The budget for this work has increased steadily every year, reaching EUR 78 million in 2023.</p> <p>The European Commission is funding WFP (EUR 1 million contribution from the EU for two years) in Mozambique, to work on the strengthening of the institutional capacities to effectively anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and support recovery from shocks. WFP will also continue to strengthen national institutional capacity to effectively assist vulnerable populations by adjusting the design of social protection programmes in order to make them more shock-responsive.</p> <p>DG ECHO launched the Minimum Environmental Requirements and Recommendations in 2020, aiming to promote an environmentally sustainable approach across projects, programmes and the organisation itself ('DG ECHO's Approach to Reducing the Environmental Footprint of Humanitarian Aid' n.d.). Although some of these measures have already been</p>

	<p>implemented, the DG ECHO requirements are expected to be fully operational and obligatory for organisations receiving DG ECHO funding, spanning organisational and project levels, as well as initiatives for greening DG ECHO itself, by 2024.</p>
<p>Finland</p>	<p>Finland supports UNDRR with EUR 1 million a year to support integrating disability inclusion into UNDRR’s work, including with an earmarked one-off contribution of EUR 500,000.</p>
<p>France</p>	<p>France finances the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) with EUR 1 million dedicated to two projects addressing the consequences of climate change on migration flows.</p> <p>France has provided 750,000 for a project to strengthen resilience to natural disasters, including for the most vulnerable, in the Pacific. The overall goal is to support community-based evacuation centres that are inclusive and locally managed. The project also supports efforts for disaster risk reduction and strengthen local aid actors in the context of increasing climate and environmental crises in the region.</p>
<p>Germany</p>	<p>Germany allocated 5% of its humanitarian budget for anticipatory action in 2023 mainly for pilot projects that emphasize improving local climate disaster risk analysis, building capacities of local communities and reaching “last mile” communities.</p> <p>Germany contributes to WFP’s corporate Trust Fund for Hunger-related Climate Change (THCC), the FAO’s Special Fund for Emergency and</p>

	Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA), Start Fund and Start Ready – the latter two having a special focus on localised action. It has also supported the German Red Cross and Lebanese Red Cross to develop a vulnerability and capacity assessment training package.
Ireland	In 2022, Ireland started the development of a climate-proofing strategy to strengthen the integration of climate action and resilience across all channels of Irish development finance, including humanitarian assistance. From 2023 onwards this strategy will continue to be developed and implemented with humanitarian and development partners.
Italy	The Italian Cooperation contributes to the implementation of the “Africa Roadmap for Improving the Availability, Access and Use of Disaster Risk Information for Early Warning and Early Action, including in the Context of Transboundary Risk Management”, through an EUR 8 million project that supported the set-up of the African Union Commission situation room and DRR capacity building activities to strengthen early warning systems across Africa.
Luxembourg	Luxembourg revised its humanitarian strategy in 2022, prioritizing coordination with development actors and the integration of DRR and CCA in its programming
Sweden	SIDA supports anticipatory action in partnership with FAO, anticipatory action of the CERF and to DRR through its environment, climate change and biodiversity strategy. It has allocated around 14% (EUR 380 million) of its total budget to environment and climate. Its development budget supports a number of other climate related initiatives such as locally led adaptation and making social protection programmes more shock-responsive. One example is to Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net programme (PSNP), which includes adaptive and shock responsive social protection models to mitigate the risk for vulnerable households to fall into poverty when the country is hit by cyclical weather-related shocks. Sida has contributed with SEK 352 million over six years (2017 – 2022) to this programme
Other funding sources	
OCHA managed pooled funds - CERF and CBPF	The CERF has invested in a number of Anticipatory Action pilots setting aside \$140 million for these activities. Recent research on the use of pooled funds finds that the life-saving activities implemented by agencies with the support of OCHA-managed pooled funds are often the same as activities and outcomes identified as adaptation priorities in countries’ national communications and other submissions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Education Cannot Wait	In its Strategic Plan 2023-2026, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) has made a series of commitments to address the climate crisis. This includes responding to climate emergencies, ensuring that all ECW investments are climate smart, implementing the CSSF, and exploring ECW's role in anticipatory action, amongst others.
Global Partnership for Education [GPE]	The Global Partnership for Education's Strategy 2025 aims to accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century. As Global Partnership for Education (GPE) partner countries convene in dialogue around key system transformation priorities, both the short- and long-term effects of climate change are risk multipliers for the achievement of universal quality education. At the same time, climate change is precipitating the need for shifts to better protect biodiversity, improve the management of the planet's natural resources and mobilize the human resources required to ensure a greener future. In response to requests from partner countries for support in addressing climate change in the education sector, GPE has developed this working paper to help maximize complementarity between presently siloed approaches and initiatives for climate resilience and climate action. Building on resources and efforts led by different education partners, in particular the Heat Is On publication series commissioned by UNICEF South Asia, a paper has been developed that proposes a seven-dimension framework to leverage potential entry points and address gaps within national education systems to strengthen the resilience and relevance of education to climate change and environmental degradation. It highlights opportunities for leveraging the role of education in wider climate change, disaster risk and environmental efforts. The paper also highlights existing frameworks and approaches related to the seven dimensions, where available, that policy makers can use to guide sector dialogue
ICRC	The ICRC has established a fund for climate action in 2022. This fund aims to support long-term climate and environment initiatives to address the climate and conflict interplay in FCS countries. This additional layer of finance to existing activities will enable the mainstreaming of long-term climate risks into programming.

➤ **Make inroads with global humanitarian entities already working in this area and identify potential points of collaboration.** Few of these, if any, specifically focus on education and the role it can play at a global and country level. The table below outlines a few of these global entities who are focused on this agenda.

Adaptation Fund

The Adaptation Fund has committed over 1 billion for climate change adaptation and resilience projects and programmes, including 160 concrete, localized projects in the most

vulnerable communities of developing countries around the world with over 43 million total beneficiaries. It also pioneered Direct Access and Enhanced Direct Access, empowering countries to access funding and develop local projects directly through accredited national implementing entities.

Climate change is predicted to greatly affect the poorest people in the world, who are often hardest hit by weather catastrophes, desertification, and rising sea levels, but who have contributed the least to the problem of global warming. In some parts of the world, climate change has already contributed to worsening food security, reduced the predictable availability of fresh water, and exacerbated the spread of disease and other threats to human health.

Helping the most vulnerable countries and communities is an increasing challenge and imperative for the international community, especially because climate adaptation requires significant resources beyond what is already needed to achieve international development objectives.

[Anticipation Hub](#)

[2021-2024 Strategy](#)

Niche: Anticipatory action in humanitarian space

Who they are: A platform to **facilitate knowledge exchange, learning, guidance, and advocacy around anticipatory action** both virtually and in-person. The Anticipation Hub brings together partners across the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, universities, research institutes, (i)NGOs, UN agencies, governments, donors, and network initiatives.

Considered a 'One-stop-shop' that **brings together our collective knowledge, and drives innovation, cross-fertilisation and co-creation** across the wider anticipatory action community. Through **Learning, Innovation and Exchange; Guidance and Support** Capture the existing evidence and knowledge resources available across the anticipatory action community and make them available in user friendly tools and activities; **Policy and Advocacy** at the global, regional and local levels, helping encourage governments, international institutions and donors to integrate anticipatory action into programmes and policies, and invest in scaling up.

[Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative\(CADRI\)](#)

Niche: Capacity development in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation at the country level

Who they are: A global partnership composed of 20 humanitarian and development organizations who came together to build a unique facility for countries to access expertise in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. CADRI offers an unique

combination of expertise and experience to support countries to implement the Sendai Framework by promoting a coherent approach across agencies to deliver capacity development services in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation at country level.

[Global Disaster Preparedness Center](#)

Niche: Innovation and learning in disaster preparedness

Who they are: A reference center to support innovation and learning in disaster preparedness. Aims to enhance disaster management – namely preparedness – capacities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies through a service-oriented and demand-driven approach to building community resilience and preparedness.

[Global Framework for Climate Services](#)

Niche: Climate information and services

Who they are: A global partnership of governments and organizations that produce and use climate information and services. It enables researchers and the producers and users of information to join forces to improve the quality and quantity of climate services worldwide, to assist decision-making at all levels in support of addressing climate-related risks.

[Platform on Disaster Displacement](#)

Niche: Disaster displacement

Who they are: The Platform builds partnerships between policymakers, practitioners and researchers and constitute a multi-stakeholder forum for dialogue, information sharing as well as policy and normative development. Fill gaps on disaster displacement data and knowledge by harmonizing data collection, understanding how people move in response to slow-onset hazards, and making the best use of big data such as cell phone records and social media. Bring together partners States, international and regional organizations, research institutions, academia, non-governmental organizations and other civil society stakeholders in a community of practice on disaster displacement. Advocacy about disaster displacement into relevant global policy processes addressing issues such as climate change, disaster risk reduction, human rights, humanitarian action, refugee protection, and migration.

[Risk Informed Early Action Partnership \(REAP\)](#)

[Framework for Action](#)

Niche: Early warning and early action

Who they are: Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) brings together an unprecedented range of stakeholders across the climate, humanitarian and development communities with the aim of making 1 billion people safer from disaster by 2025.

Red Cross Climate Centre

2021-2025 Strategy

Niche: Support to Red Cross/Red Crescent in reducing the impacts of climate change and extreme-weather events

Who they are: The Climate Centre's works at the intersection of science, policy and practice to help the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its partners reduce the impacts of climate change and extreme-weather events on vulnerable people. Provides guidance and tools to National Societies and their partners, and fosters the exchange of experience, training and technical back-up for Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers, delegates and managers specializing in disaster risk management and health. In the international arena the Centre facilitates access to climate-related channels of funding and advocates for support to the most vulnerable people in debates on climate policy, especially the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) and the annual UN climate talks, but also related international discussions on development and humanitarian policy and finance.