

RESILIENT, INCLUSIVE, AND TRANSPARENT SYSTEMS

Building Resilient Education Systems in Emergencies and Crises

INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe's resilience toolkit to ensure the right to education in times of emergencies and crises (EDURES Toolkit) stems from a Ministerial Resolution and the work of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) thematic working group.

The concept of the EDURES toolkit was presented at the 26th Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, held at the organisation's headquarters in Strasbourg on 28–29 September 2023. It is designed to support implementation of the Ministers' Resolution on education in times of emergencies and crises.

A focus group was formed under the auspices of CDEDU to face those challenges and to support implementation of the Ministerial Resolution and the CDEDU guidance.

EDURES was designed by the Council of Europe's Education Department with expert support from the International Institute of Sociology in Gorizia (ISIG) to respond to a fundamental challenge also outlined in the Council of Europe's Education Strategy 2030 "Learners First": guaranteeing the right and access to quality, inclusive education for all, at all times.



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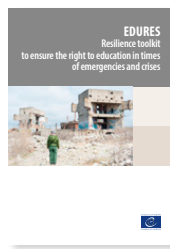
CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

The EDURES toolkit was developed on the basis of and aligned with the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), with particular emphasis on its competence-based model.

The RFCDC defines “democratic competence” as the capacity to use psychological, social and cultural resources—such as values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding—to address democratic situations. These competences lie at the heart of the toolkit, making education systems more resilient regardless of the type of crisis.

Within the EDURES context, the concept of “resilience competence” is highlighted. It refers to a learning environment's ability to deploy resources effectively in emergencies and crises. Like competences for democratic culture, resilience competences encompass values, attitudes, skills and knowledge. In the same vein, EDURES empowers education systems for current and future challenges and contributes to more sustainable and inclusive democratic European societies.

These competences serve as a framework for assessing how a learning environment aligns with the Council of Europe's six Resilience Principles for Education. This assessment aids in the development of strategies that ensure quality, inclusive education even in the face of emergencies and crises. It also fosters preparedness for educational systems and informs strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation for more sustainable, fair and inclusive education systems.



EDURES

Resilience toolkit to ensure the right to education in times of emergencies and crises



CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS

The emergencies and crises faced by our societies are complex and constantly evolving. The consequences of such emergencies (e.g., conflicts, natural hazards, climate change, epidemics, etc.) are severe, and education is not spared. Consequences range from damage to school infrastructure and a reduction in the number of teachers and education personnel, to an increase in gender disparities and overall system dysfunction. In critical situations, access to quality education is also at stake, as it is inextricably linked to general well being, mental health and social and emotional learning, and is thus jeopardised by emergency events.

- 01** Therefore, ensuring that education systems are prepared to face different types of emergencies and crises and that they continue to provide quality education has become an urgent and challenging task involving multiple stakeholders.
- 02** In times of emergency and crisis, ensuring that children and young people have access to quality education has countless benefits. At the individual level, educational continuity protects children's rights and provides a sense of normalcy, improving psychological and emotional health. Maintaining access to quality education allows learners to increase their awareness and understanding of the crisis they are living through, thus reducing trauma and alienation, while supporting long term processes of recovery and peacebuilding.
- 03** At the social level, recognising the pivotal role that education provision plays in building and enhancing community resilience reflects the recent paradigmatic shift in policy-making from more traditional disaster management views to a proactive approach to building strategies that reduce risk, enhance resilience and focus on recovery and functionality.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 Strategic Priorities

Since its inception, the Council of Europe has consistently integrated **education** into its broader initiatives, embedding it in numerous documents and recommendations to its member states. Education, including the fundamental **right of access to quality education for everyone**, has been recognized as a central element not only in promoting human rights but also in fostering **culture and mutual understanding**, combating stereotypes, and advancing **diversity, equality at all levels, mutual respect, and democratic culture**.

In addressing the **resilience of communities**, it is essential to consider all the elements that contribute to their well-being. While **physical robustness**, such as environmental and infrastructural strength, is important, it alone is insufficient to define a resilient community. Rather, **preparedness** and **participation** are two critical components that ensure a community can withstand challenges. Education plays a pivotal role in both of these aspects, helping to strengthen the community's foundation.

Building **resilient communities** through education means assessing the educational ecosystem comprehensively. This involves integrating **social, economic, institutional, and physical elements**, identifying educational needs, resources, and capacities, and ensuring that **participation in decision-making processes** is encouraged. Promoting awareness of the six guiding principles of resilience is also vital. Ultimately, resilience should be embedded within the community's long-term vision, reflected in its policies, strategies, and overall **strategic community planning**.



In emergencies and crises, the Council of Europe's approach to education underscores the role it plays in fostering community resilience. This approach champions a holistic understanding of education's role in times of crisis, based on six key principles: **strengthening governance, ensuring continuity, expanding the role of education, increasing accessibility, fostering cooperation, and increasing efficiency**. Despite differences in contexts, these principles are fundamental to creating robust educational ecosystems that can withstand and adapt to various challenges.

02 Implementation at National and Institutional Levels

The **toolkit** provides step-by-step guidance and frameworks that enable public authorities—especially **educational authorities**—to assess the strategies and mechanisms that underpin their educational systems. It helps gauge the **resilience** of these systems under stress, identifying the necessary actions to enhance their robustness. The goal of co-developing the six **resilience principles** for education in times of emergencies and crises is to set a common framework for policies and actions at all levels of governance. This approach promotes **inclusiveness** and the provision of **quality education** at all times, regardless of challenges.

Through this process, **public authorities** are empowered to assess how their educational systems respond to stress and pinpoint the actions required to improve their resilience. The toolkit encourages the alignment of the **competences** and assets within education systems to complement **resilience-oriented emergency and strategic planning** at the community level. This integration helps ensure that educational systems are not only responsive but also forward-looking, capable of facing both current and future challenges.

The overarching aim of **EDURES** is to empower education systems to meet these challenges, contributing to more **sustainable and inclusive democratic European societies**. The toolkit supports a broad range of **educational stakeholders**, from national policymakers to school leadership, by providing practical tools and guidance. This includes fostering **preparedness**, informing **strategic planning**, and facilitating **monitoring and evaluation** processes to create more sustainable, fair, and inclusive educational systems.

Users of EDURES include **educational leaders** such as headteachers, institutional managers, educational department coordinators at municipalities, national policymakers, and other stakeholders committed to developing, implementing, and maintaining **resilience strategies** for education. These individuals are engaged in a participatory process aimed at strengthening educational systems through comprehensive, action-driven planning. The **EDURES toolkit** specifically addresses the capacity of an educational ecosystem to **withstand, recover, adapt, and persist** during crises. The strategies developed through EDURES focus not only on institutional preparedness and recovery but also on enhancing the performance of **public authorities** and improving the **overall quality of education**.

03 Piloting Examples and Global Significance

About a dozen member states have expressed interest in piloting the toolkit, and an initial piloting stage is currently being carried out in two member states, namely Italy (Friuli-Venezia Giulia regional level) and Albania, at the national level and in the cities of Durrës, Kavaja and Tirana.

In Albania, piloting activities started in April 2024, and in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region of Italy the piloting activities commenced in February 2024. Both pilots are planned to be completed in 2025, following feedback from the CDEDU.

With this work, the Council of Europe's Education Department is also contributing, as region Europe, to the implementation of the political orientations stemming from the 2022 UN Transforming Education Summit, including the Youth Declaration on Transforming Education, and the Council of Europe's and its member States' contribution towards the implementation of the Common Agenda and the specific initiative "Education in Crisis Situations: A Commitment to Action".



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

In recent years, the Council of Europe has developed several tools and initiatives devoted to providing quality education in times of emergencies and crises.

Within this perspective, an important initiative is represented by the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) and other work developed through capacity building and cooperation programmes implemented by the Education Department of the Council of Europe, as well as the tools developed by the Council of Europe's Centre for Modern Languages that support high-quality learning environments for migrants, for example.

OTHER REFERENCES



CM/REC(2025)6

Recommendation on qualifications and linguistic competences of refugees in Europe



UNESCO · 2023

Education Resilience in times of emergencies and crisis: EDURES TOOLKIT



CM/REC(2012)13

Recommendation on ensuring quality education



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European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)



COUNCIL OF EUROPE · 2024

Providing language support to migrants



CM/REC(2010)7

Recommendation on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education



REC(2002)12

Recommendation on education for democratic citizenship



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Council of Europe Education Strategy 2024-2030

