



Islamic Relief USA

presented in partnership with  
**ONE SADAQA**



# THINK. CARE. ACT.

Selections from  
**Empowering Youth Through Action**  
By Islamic Relief USA

The **Empowering Youth Through Action** series encourages you to think about the challenging questions and issues of our day and come up with innovative solutions to the problems that confront us.

The following topics are addressed in this toolkit:

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# THINK.

## Empowering Youth Through Action

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### Strength Through Storytelling

#### HIV AND AIDS ORPHANS: THE SAD STORY OF STATISTICS

Africa is said to have 70% of the world's AIDS sufferers and 83% of the world's AIDS-related deaths; Africa also has 95% of the world's AIDS orphans.

These statistics “tell of a generation of children deprived of their childhood.” The question is – are we hearing their cries? We should not be overwhelmed by the daunting statistics and seeming hopelessness of the situation. Instead, we need to listen closely, for although these children all share the same fate – they have all been orphaned as a result of HIV and AIDS – they each have a unique story to tell to the rest of us, because “Aids is our disease, a disease of the human family.”



For many of these children, their bereavement and healing process can be done through the traditional African art of storytelling.

Read the following tale:

There was this little boy who had no mother and father. The other children did not like him. He sat there crying. Then a dog came and sat with him until he stopped crying. It never left his side. The dog thought the little boy had no one to look after [him], so it could sit with him.

- Nobuhle, 7\*

# CARE.

Think of a time you wrote or told a story to comfort yourself or someone else; or used another art form – like drawing and painting or singing or play acting to help you through a frightening experience. Did it make the situation better? In what way?

After the loss of a parent, these orphans might live with a remaining parent; or

might end up in the care of an elder sibling, a grandparent or an aunt/uncle absorbed into a bigger family with other children and with few means. In some cases the loss of a parent, and no family support structure, may mean the orphan ends up in an orphanage or alone on the streets. Some of these children may be sick and requiring medical attention.

\*Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, South Africa



*“We construct our identity through the stories we choose to tell about ourselves. Stories reach across cultures and establish meaning. Stories form a language beneath our other languages. They place authority in the heart of the listener. Stories help us locate ourselves in time & place.”*

-The Storyteller and the Listener Online

# ACT. FURTHER REFLECTION QUESTIONS

You may have heard the African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child.” What does that mean?

Following are some other proverbs from around the globe that remind us of our responsibility for others. See if you can come up with a story that fits the context; if you send it to us we may just reprint it.

Besides sponsoring an orphan in one of the many countries where Islamic Relief works, how else can you help raise awareness around this issue and let these children know we hear their cries and their stories - indeed that we are listening with our hearts.

*Wisdom Tales From Around the World* by H. Forest, August House Publishers.

- One finger cannot lift a pebble. (Iran)
- When elephants battle, the ants perish. (Cambodia)
- Talk does not cook rice. (China)
- After the rain, there is no need for an umbrella. (Bulgaria)
- He that goes barefoot must not plant thorns. (England)
- It is one thing to cackle and another to lay an egg. (Ecuador)
- Step by step, one ascends the staircase. (Turkey)

## AS ALWAYS, WE CHALLENGE YOU TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

*“Indeed, within the next decade, the cumulative number of infections is projected to exceed 100 million. Unless something dramatic happens to change the dynamics, by early in the 21st century more people will have died of AIDS since it emerged on the world stage than died in all of the 20th century’s devastating wars.”*

# THINK EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH ACTION

Where we invite you to come up with innovative solutions to the problems that confront us.

Every Day 25,000 people die from hunger.

Source: [www.freedomfromhunger.org/info](http://www.freedomfromhunger.org/info)

Karen Ande / photographersdirect.com



More than 815 million people today are chronically undernourished (they consume less than the amount of calories essential for good health and growth) and more than 180 million children are significantly underweight. Vulnerable children weakened by hunger can succumb to common illnesses such as diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria.

# CARE

**"Hunger is the most extreme form of poverty."**

This year alone, 11 million children, younger than 5, will die needlessly. More than half from hunger-related causes.

What is school feeding and how does this compare to your school experience?

A UNICEF study found that of the world's 300 million hungry children, 134 million do not attend school. School feeding programs strive to end hunger by providing children with a low cost or free nutritious meal. When schools can provide a meal, enrollments can double and more girls can attend school. It also allows families to save that money to spend on other needs. Plus, fortified foods counter deficiencies from home meals thus helping school performance.

In rural areas, school is often far from home. Children frequently have to leave home early and walk a considerable distance to school. Often there is no breakfast at home; one reason is it is not practical for many mothers to rise before dawn to spend the considerable time necessary to light a fire and prepare a hot meal.

School meals usually consist of a fortified cereal-based drink and simple gruel or fortified biscuits, prepared by parents or paid cooks (sometimes the students themselves are responsible for collecting the wood for the fire on the weekends). School feeding programs thus help children access nutritious meals, receive an education, and can improve health and family stability and community involvement in education. **All this for less than a quarter a day!**



Far more people die from causes related to chronic hunger than to famine. Chronically hungry people are exceptionally vulnerable when famine or other disasters strike; they have fewer resources to protect themselves and their families.

[www.freedomfromhunger.org](http://www.freedomfromhunger.org)

Some more “Food for Thought”: Many countries do not have preschool programs so children at their most vulnerable age are at risk of not developing properly - physically and/or mentally - in preparation for school. Moreover a large percentage of school-age children still are not able to attend school in many countries due to various reasons. Often these are children from the poorest families as well as children with disabilities. Then in some countries it is more common for boys than girls to have access to school. So while out-of-school children have the same nutritional and health needs as children attending school, they usually do not benefit from school meals and are often forgotten.

## WHAT IS FOOD FOR PEACE?



Photo courtesy of The Alliance to End Hunger

**IN 1954, US SUPPORT FOR OVERSEAS FOOD AID WAS FORMALIZED IN THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND ASSISTANCE ACT. WHILE IT HAS BEEN MODIFIED OVER THE ENSUING YEARS, ITS BASIC PURPOSE IS TO USE OUR ABUNDANT AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES AND FOOD PROCESSING CAPABILITIES TO ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD.**

**FOOD FOR PEACE IS A PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE PROGRAM. MOST OF THE COUNTRIES THAT NEED FOOD ARE IN AFRICA; BUT OTHER BENEFICIARIES INCLUDE VICTIMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS AND REFUGEES AND IDPS (INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE).**

**THE MCGOVERN-DOLE INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL FEEDING (PART OF THE US FARM BILL) IS CURRENTLY UNDER REAUTHORIZATION - BUT MAY SEE A CUT IN WHAT IS SPENT OVERSEAS; AS A CONSEQUENCE MORE CHILDREN COULD GO TO BED HUNGRY.**

# ACT.

PLAY ANOTHER ONLINE TRIVIA GAME AT AMERICA'S SECOND HARVEST, AND FOR EVERY QUESTION YOU ANSWER CORRECTLY, THEY DISTRIBUTE FOUR POUNDS OF FRESH FOOD FOR SOMEONE WHO DESPERATELY NEEDS IT. THERE ARE 50 QUESTIONS, WHICH MEANS YOU COULD HELP PROVIDE UP TO 200 POUNDS OF GOOD, FRESH FOOD FOR FAMILIES IN DESPERATE NEED!

## FURTHER REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Over 35 billion grains of rice have been donated just by playing an award-winning online game ([www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com))! Challenge yourself – test your vocabulary (or other categories) and feed hungry children in Bangladesh and elsewhere with every correct answer! You can also watch a short video seeing how the rice is distributed and prepared and see how you can have an impact – even from your very own home or school.

A recommended caloric intake is a 1,000 calorie diet for a toddler or children up to age five, and then adds 100 calories for each year thereafter.

Determine how many calories you need based on your age, and then go online and find one of the many caloric intake tracking sheets that are downloadable for young people. Spend a week filling it in to see how you are doing. Are you under or overeating; are you eating a variety of foods and exercising regularly? Do you bring lunch from home or buy school lunch? Look at these images - do *you* traditionally eat with your hands, fork, chopsticks, or other?

**Malnutrition** - caused by eating too little, too much or an unbalanced diet that does not contain all nutrients necessary for good nutritional status, which is different from undernutrition or being undernourished.

### AS ALWAYS, WE CHALLENGE YOU TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Let us know other ways you are helping those who do not have enough to eat – planting a vegetable garden, collecting cans for local food banks, preparing meals at soup kitchens for homeless families, volunteering at Islamic Relief's Day of Dignity during the month of Ramadan, to international efforts. We want to hear from you!



# THINK.

## Empowering Youth Through Action

Introducing our new resource page ...

We encourage you to think about the challenging questions and issues of our day and come up with innovative solutions to the problems that confront us.

Our first theme is: CLIMATE CHANGE

Questions to think about as you read this issue:

- How is the climate changing in your region?
- What will happen if trends continue this way?
- What is your role and responsibility in climate change?
- What can you do to help prevent this issue?
- What role do developed and less developed countries play in this problem?
- What are their responsibilities?
- Are recent extreme weather events—such as hurricanes, floods, droughts—due to global warming?
- What current conflicts arise around inequitable access to resources?
- Which future ones can you foresee?
- What measures can be taken to prevent such disasters?



# CARE.

According to The Climate Institute in Washington D.C., an increase in the frequency or intensity of floods would be catastrophic in several places around the world. Perhaps no country is more vulnerable than Bangladesh. Over 17 million people live at an elevation of less than 3 feet above sea level, and millions more inhabit the flat banks of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers. Past floods, occurring as recently as August 2007, have displaced millions in Bangladesh. Increased flooding in that area there would have tragic results.

While average global rainfall is predicted to increase under global warming, not every point on the planet would experience greater rainfall. Evaporation and precipitation occur at different places. While wet regions could receive even more rainfall if the planet warms, drier regions may have even more acute shortages of water as evaporation is accelerated in those areas. For example, the Sahel region in Africa—which is south of the Sahara Desert and north of the equatorial zone—has become drier over the past

several decades, accelerating desertification and placing an even greater premium on already-stretched water supplies.

**Look at the images in the featured article about climate change. Which photos exhibit evidence of these problems? One photograph shows Islamic Relief workers planting trees; another shows a young girl trying to stay cool in the shade of an umbrella. Can you explain how these are tied together? Can you link other photos in terms of casual relationships?**

# ACT.

Undertake your own environmental observations - measuring variables such as air temperature and precipitation in your community and keep a running journal over time.

Look up information on water in your local community and the United States from:

- Environmental Protection Agency:  
www.epa.gov/ow
- U.S. Geological Survey:  
water.usgs.gov/watuse

**Goal:** To gain an understanding of the daily activities of obtaining water in different situations.

**Choose** another country that you wish to compare your local community with. Information can be found on the internet or at your library.

**Compare** your local community's water statistics with another country.

## Where do we get our water?

Only X% of the population has access to safe drinking water. Find this number.

Most will not live in developed locations with piped water, and instead will have to use wells, hand pumps and water vendors. Many have to walk long distances each day to get water. Explain the specific circumstances here.

## What is the geological source of water?

Examples - snowmelt from mountains, rainwater, etc.

## How does water go from source to consumer? How clean is it?

In many countries, water is gathered directly from rivers or water wells. Unfortunately, most underdeveloped countries have unclean water sources.

## How much water is consumed each day?

Most nutritionists say that six to eight glasses of water a day is adequate...

Tell us what you're doing to raise awareness or combat climate change – from recycling efforts to tree planting to conserving electricity. Send us your thoughts and ideas and we'll publish them in our next issue. We challenge you to make a difference!

*We'd like to thank The Climate Institute in Washington D.C. and The Outreach Center at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University for their assistance in sharing their resources with us as we launch this new feature.*

*We invite you to visit them online at:  
<http://www.climate.org/topics/links/educational/teachers-links.shtml>  
<http://cmes.bmdc.harvard.edu/outreach/about>*

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# Disaster Risk Reduction

Islamic Relief was invited to attend an event on Disaster Risk Reduction at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C. on the occasion of International Disaster Reduction Day (IDDR) October 10th.

The theme selected for the World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2006-2007, coordinated by the UN/ISDR secretariat in cooperation with UNESCO has been "Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School".

The initiative helps children fulfill a role: to serve as agents of disaster risk reduction and to become agents for sustainable development. Children were – and still are – among the most vulnerable groups in society to disasters; they were – and still generally are – perceived as "passive victims." But this campaign has shown that children can play an active part in disaster risk reduction.



*"Children will be one day the mayors, the architects and the decision makers of the world of tomorrow. If we teach them what they can do from the early age they will build a safer world."*

*Salvano Briceño*

*Director, UN/ISDR secretariat*

# CARE.



One way for youth to learn more is through an interactive online video game in English, French, Spanish, Chinese and Russian - teaching how to protect urban areas and villages against natural hazards through disaster risk planning and management.

The game, "Stop Disasters" includes five natural hazard scenarios (flooding, tsunami, wildfire, hurricane and earthquake) set in five different geographic environments with three different

levels of difficulty that require critical decision-making and strategic planning.

In each scenario, you as a player have a specific mission to fulfill within a budget and limit time. Then a natural hazard strikes after which you assess damage and receive a score. The player who has protected the most people and their livelihoods (property and resources) wins the game.

You can play "Stop Disasters!" at <http://www.stopdisastersgame.org/en>.

# ACT.

## Further reflection questions:

After reading this issue and seeing updates about those still affected by the Pakistani earthquake or the recent devastating fires in Southern California, what are the lessons learned?

**Goal:** To learn about safety and natural hazards.

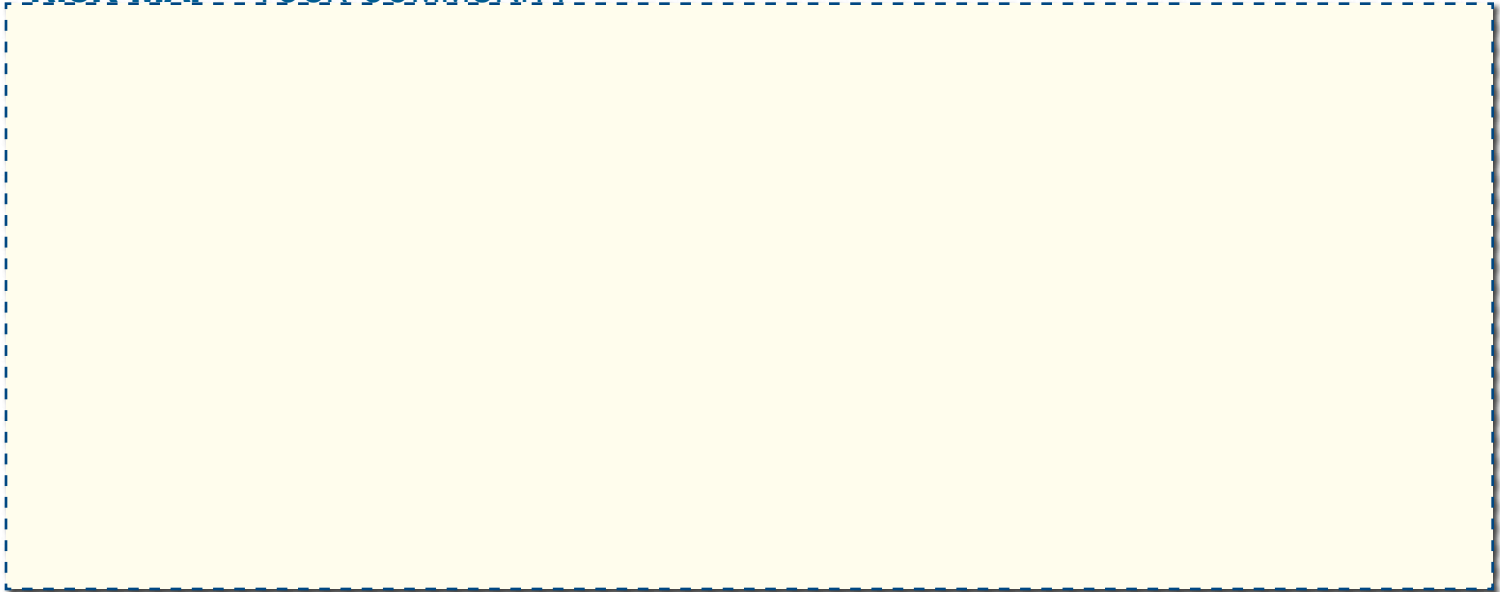
- With a critical eye map the geographical surroundings of your community. This is called a **risk map**. All you need is paper and pencil.
- Begin by drawing the most important buildings. Also draw structures that could be dangerous (dams or power plants for example). Identify all roads, rivers, electricity lines, water sources and sewage systems, etc. You can invent your own symbols. Identify where the people who will need the most help in the event of disaster live.
- Finally, look up in books or in old newspapers, or ask elders in your community, what important disasters have



occurred in the past. Ask what did people do at that time? Find out which people and institutions in the community can help now.

- **Then think about...**
  - a. What actions could reduce the impact of disasters in your community?
  - b. What actions could increase the vulnerability of your community?
  - c. What you should do individually to be prepared (such as creating a family emergency plan)?

## RISK MAP - YOUR COMMUNITY



Tell us what you're doing to raise awareness on the effects of human actions and environmental degradation (you may want to get a free copy of "Let's Learn to Prevent Disasters: Fun Ways for Kids to Join in Risk Reduction" and the highly popular board game "Riskland" from the ISDR/UNICEF) or

look to groups such as Architecture for Humanity which seek to find solutions to humanitarian crises and even have ongoing open design challenges where students are encouraged to apply.

We challenge you to make a difference and create a culture of prevention!

We wish to thank the ISDR Secretariat in NY and Geneva for allowing us to cite their materials.