

## **Facing an emergency situation**



**FALE/UFMG-Curso de Especialização em Inglês – Ensino – Jan/2010**

**TCC**

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## Warm up

In the past few years natural disasters have taken over the news. We have witnessed an unusually high number of these occurrences: floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, avalanches, drought, epidemic diseases, etc.

In many cases, these occurrences are seen just as intriguing news articles and not given the proper attention. Let us make ourselves aware of the dangers that can strike unexpectedly.

1. What is a natural disaster?
2. How do people and nations respond to emergency situations nowadays?
3. In your opinion, how is the global warming affecting the climate all over the world?  
What are the consequences?
4. What are the main natural disasters affecting Brazil?





## Reading/Comprehension

Read the following article, in order to obtain a general idea of the contents.

### **Why did so many people die in Haiti's quake?**

By Lucy Rodgers

BBC News

The devastating earthquakes that hit China on 12 May 2008, Italy on 6 April 2009 and Haiti one month ago all measured above 6.0 and took many lives. But why was the human cost so much greater for Haiti?

When Pete Garratt, Red Cross head of disaster relief, received an alert on 12 January indicating a large quake had hit Haiti near its capital Port-au-Prince, he instantly recognized the seriousness of the emergency.

"I knew that meant deaths and injuries," he says.

The reason he predicted the effects of the quake would be so grave, Mr. Garratt explains, is that there are a number of critical factors, learned through years of experience, that contribute to the scale of devastation following such big shifts of the Earth's crust.

One is, perhaps obviously, the size of the quake, but also how near it is to the surface, the density of the population near its epicenter, as well as whether there are any heavily urbanized areas nearby. These all indicate a higher death toll - and were all features of the Haiti quake.

But poverty also plays its role, Mr. Garratt explains, as it exacerbates a country's or region's vulnerability to such disasters.

In places such as Haiti, where 72.1% of the population live on less than \$2 a day, and in cities like Port-au-Prince, where many are housed in poor and densely-packed shantytowns and badly-constructed buildings, the devastation is always expected to be greater.

"These countries have less money to put into buildings and there is less governance ensuring building codes are followed," Mr. Garratt explains.

"Corruption can also be an issue and so, even when there are government structures to ensure building codes are followed, there are bribes that enable people to take short cuts.

"Put simply - there are the technical elements of the earthquake and then the social elements on top of that."

Therefore, the fact that the Haiti quake hit close to a poorly-constructed, large urban area was crucial in reducing people's chances of survival.

"In Italy it was one town, and a few surrounding villages - not a large urban area. And in China, although it affected a large area and big towns, it was not a city," says Mr. Garratt.

"In Haiti, in a big city like Port-au-Prince, with so many structures coming down, this means more rubble will kill more people."

The resulting scale of destruction - of infrastructure, of government and other official organizations - also made it much more difficult to respond once the earthquake hit and had an impact on the number of people rescued from the rubble.

Haiti, unlike China and Italy, simply did not have the resources to act quickly, and it took time to get outside help in.

"The Chinese government was able to mobilize a very military response. Although some parts were hard to reach initially," says Mr. Garratt. "The resources they had were very impressive.

"The problem in Haiti was the airport was only half-functioning and you had one road route that took a day to traverse."

The dense urban environment in Port-au-Prince also made it a difficult place for rescue teams to work once they were there, he says.

"You could say that the resulting congestion in large cities meant there was less room for maneuver.

"But there were an enormous number of search and rescue teams there and considering the difficulties getting there, they did a good job."

However, the statistics on rescues may not necessarily reflect the true number of victims freed in and around Port-au-Prince, he warns.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/8510900.stm>

Published: 2010/02/14 13:07:55 GMT

### Check your comprehension:

A: Which of the following statements are in accordance with the text?

1. The earthquake in Haiti was more intense than the ones in Italy and China.
2. China and Italy were able to provide quick response to the areas affected without external help.
3. The Haiti government is corrupt.
4. Poverty and the high population density are directly related to the great number of deaths.

B: What does Mr. Garratt mean with the following statement?

"Put simply - there are the technical elements of the earthquake and then the social elements on top of that."

1. What are the Technical elements of the earthquake?
2. What are the social elements?

### Vocabulary

Match each word/expression with its definition:

- |                  |                          |  |
|------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1.Tsunami        | <input type="checkbox"/> | the increase in the average temperature of Earth 's near-surface air and oceans.                         |
| 2.Flood          | <input type="checkbox"/> | an extended period of months or years when a region notes a deficiency in its water supply.              |
| 3.Global warming | <input type="checkbox"/> | the result of a sudden release of energy in the Earth's crust that creates seismic waves.                |
| 4.Drought        | <input type="checkbox"/> | series of water waves caused by the displacement of a large volume of a body of water, such as an ocean. |
| 5.Earthquake     | <input type="checkbox"/> | an overflow or accumulation of an expanse of water that submerges land.                                  |

(definitions from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>, accessed 15 march,2010 )

### Writing

In small groups:

Homework: Write a brief definition for the expression “natural disaster” using internet as a source for research.

In class: Elaborate a plan for response to a natural disaster ( e.g. flood ) or other emergency situation ( keep it simple and feasible, list 5 to 7 actions to be taken).

Identify ways a common citizen can help emergency situations in your community. (keep in mind the effects of stress on all persons involved in emergency situations).

## Listening

Watch the We Are The World 25 For Haiti - Official Video

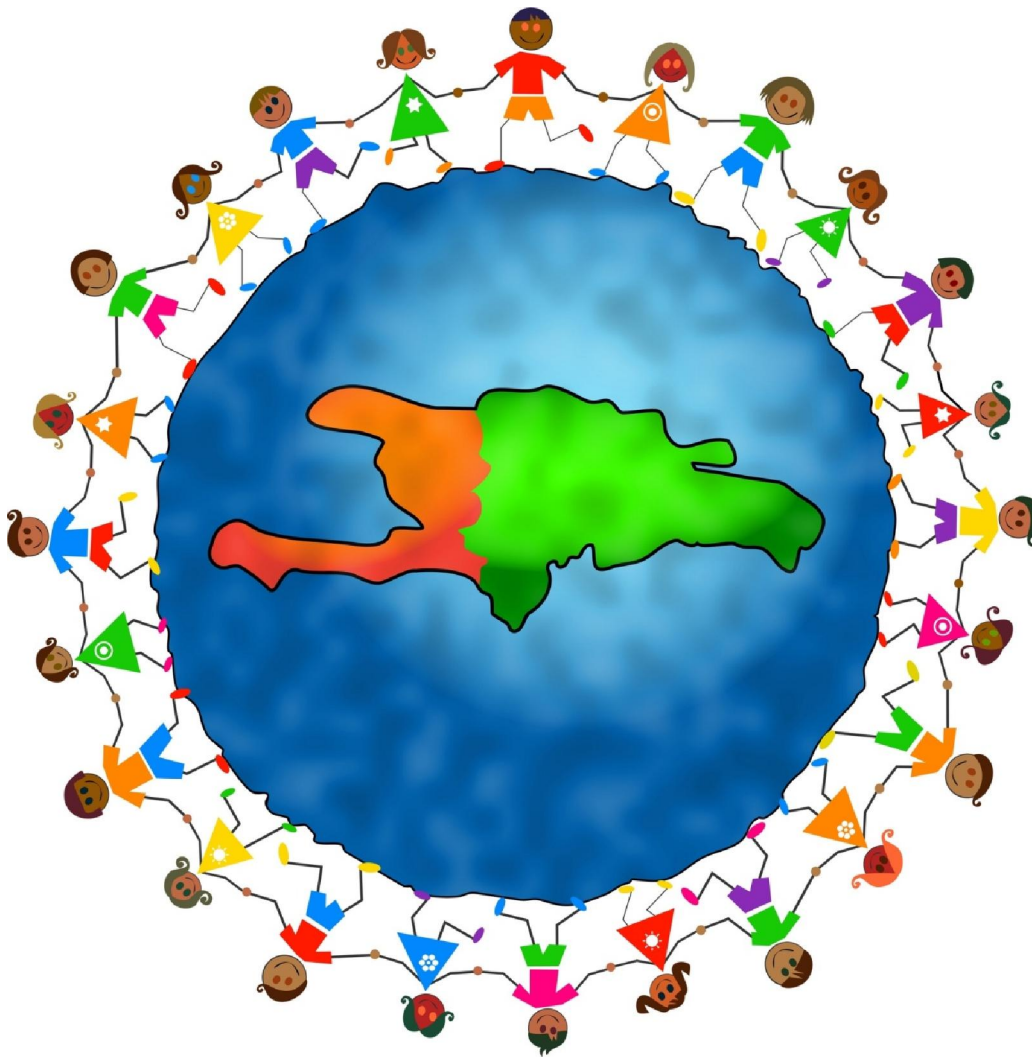
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Glny4jSciVI>, and give your opinion about the effectiveness of those aid efforts.

*“Do something: whatever you have no matter how big or how small, it all counts”*

Jamie Foxx

## We Are The World

(Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie lyrics)



There comes a time  
when we heed a certain call

when the world must come together as one.

There are people dying  
Ooohhh and it's time to lend a hand  
To life, the greatest gift of all.

We can't go on  
Pretending day by day  
That someone somehow will soon make a change.  
We are all a part of  
God's great big family

And the truth  
You know  
Love is all we need.

We are the world  
We are the children  
We are the ones to make a brighter day  
So let's start giving.

There's a choice we're making  
We're saving our own lives.  
It's true we'll make a better day  
Just you and me.

Well  
Send them your heart  
So they know that someone cares

And that life will be stronger and free  
As god taught us by turning stone to bread  
And so that we all must lend a helping hand

We are the world  
We are the children  
We are the ones who make a brighter day  
So let's start giving

There's a choice we're making  
We're saving our own lives  
It's true we make a better day  
Just you and me.

When you're down and out  
And there seem no hope at all  
But if you just believe  
There's no way we could fall  
Well now now now there's three alive  
Ohhhh there's a time that will come  
And we stand each other as one yeah yeah yeah yeahh

We are the world  
We are the children  
We are the ones to make a brighter day  
So let's start giving.

There's a choice we're making  
We're saving our own lives.  
It's true we'll make a better day  
Just you and me.

([http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/u/usa\\_for\\_africa/we\\_are\\_the\\_world.html](http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/u/usa_for_africa/we_are_the_world.html), accessed  
march15,2010)

### **Oral Practice**

#### **Share your experiences/opinion with your colleagues**

Have you ever been involved in a emergency situation ( accident or a natural disaster)?  
Describe an emergency situation in your community, city or country.

### **Pronunciation**

Read the following sentences from the text and underline the stressed words, then read aloud focusing on stressing the underlined words and gliding over the non-stressed words.

"The Chinese government was able to mobilize a very military response. Although some parts were hard to reach initially," says Mr. Garratt. "The resources they had were very impressive



## Teachers Page

The target public of this unit is high school and adult students with upper intermediate/advanced level of proficiency in English.

It presents an authentic news article where the social, economical and political context of a recent natural disaster is inserted.

A news article was selected because it is a familiar genre to most high school and adults English language students.

The following relevant aspects of the genre can be exploited by the teacher: language, text organization, vocabulary, etc. It requires interpretation of literal information but at the same time, calls students to reflect upon the social aspects present in natural emergency situations. In order to improve this activity, we can raise a few cross cultural issues regarding the differences of how people react to emergency situations in rich/poor nations, what are the human/economic resources available in each case (Italy/Haiti/China).

Learning opportunities found on the text:

### Warm up

As natural disasters have recently taken over the news, students are frequently exposed to this kind of information. Exploit the many different aspects presented by the diverse communications media. How is it treated by government authorities and the world society? This activity may take 10 to 20 minutes depending on the level of interest showed by students.

### Reading/Comprehension/Vocabulary

Students should read silently the text in order to obtain a general idea of the contents.

Vocabulary doubts, if any, should be clarified by teacher.

Teacher should challenge students to analyze how the article is written, layout, paragraphing, choice of words and to point out the particular characteristics of this genre.

( key to the proposed vocabulary activity is: 3,4,5,1,2).( 30 to 40 Minutes )

### Writing

Students will work in groups so collaborative work will be encouraged. Each team member will research about natural disaster by using websites, newspapers, magazines and come up with a 5 to 7 step aid plan.( homework )

### Listening

The song selected is very popular, well known by most students. It was written by the late Michael Jackson, co-authored by Lionel Richie for the US for Africa, famine aid campaign, in the 80's. Although students may not have vocabulary doubts they should be encouraged to interpret the challenge presented by the lyrics.( 20 minutes )

## **Speaking**

Have the students talking about how this kind of disaster situation affects them.  
( 10 to 20 minutes depending on level of interest showed by class ).

## **Assessment**

The students will be assessed through their written group production and participation in the whole class oral discussions.

## **Additional material**

The following graphics may be presented to enhance comprehension and enable students to visualize how the same natural disaster have different consequences depending on their geographic features, political and economic conditions, human development level.( they are part of the Story from BBC NEWS:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/8510900.stm>  
Published: 2010/02/14 13:07:55 GMT).



**Magnitude**

Amount of energy released by quake

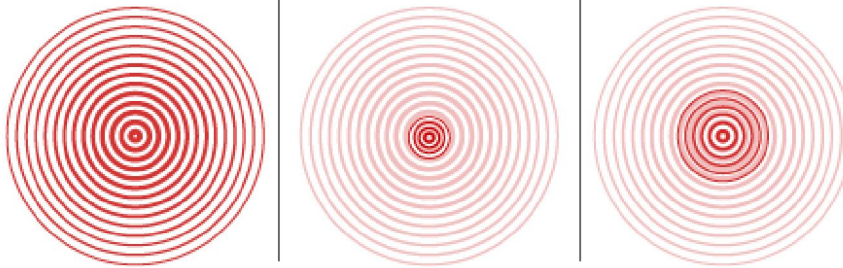
**7.9**

**6.3**

**7.0**

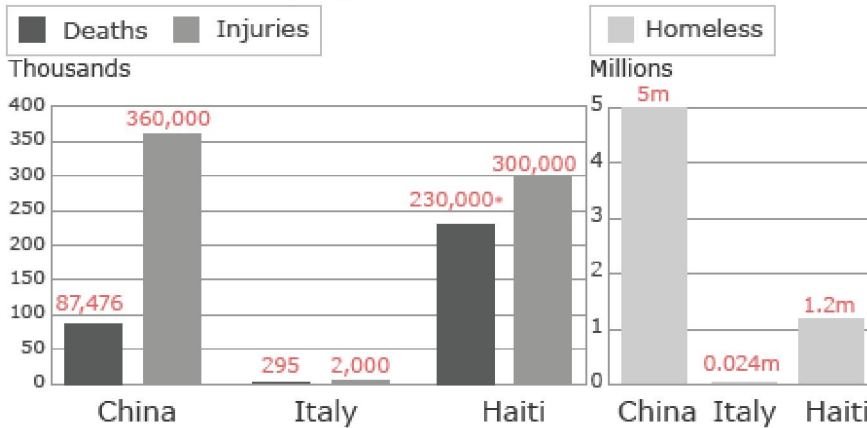
**Amplitude**

Each step in magnitude = 10 times increase in amplitude (amount ground moves)



Source: USGS

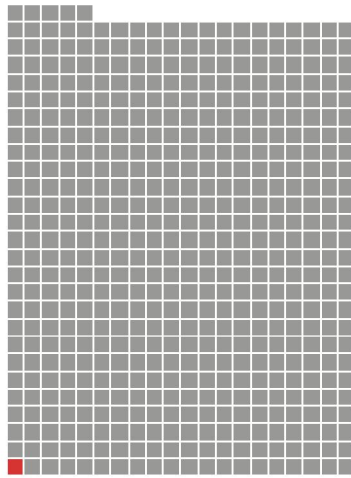
**Number of deaths, injuries & homeless**



Source: EM-DAT, Red Cross, Chinese government, Haitian government, EERI

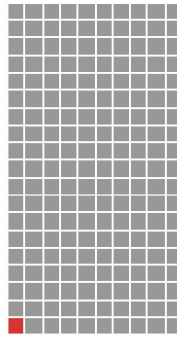
### Deaths : Affected

1 in every  
**595**  
affected died



China

1 in every  
**190**  
affected died



Italy

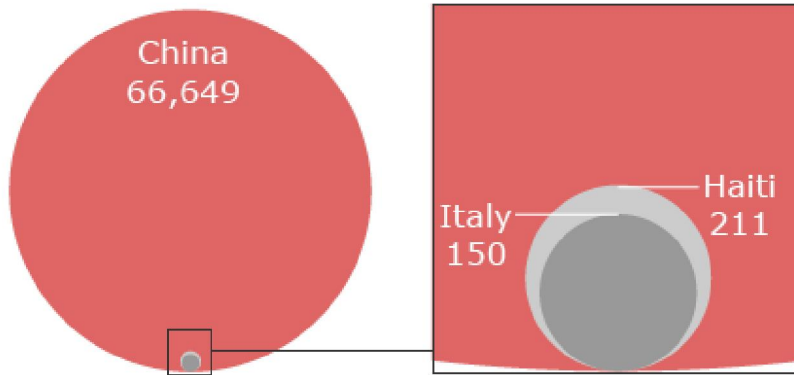
1 in every  
**15**  
affected died



Haiti

Source: EM-DAT, UN, Haitian government

### Number of people rescued



Source: UN, Italian government, Chinese government

### Rescued : Affected



1 in every  
**690**  
affected  
rescued



1 in every  
**373**  
affected  
rescued

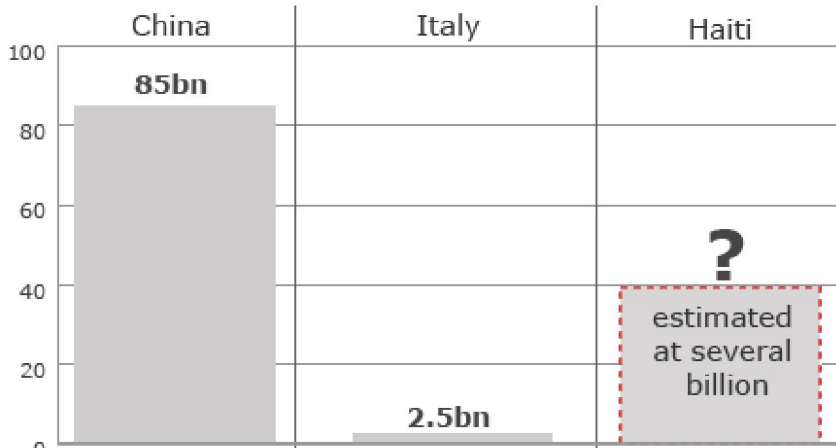


1 in every  
**16,588**  
affected  
rescued

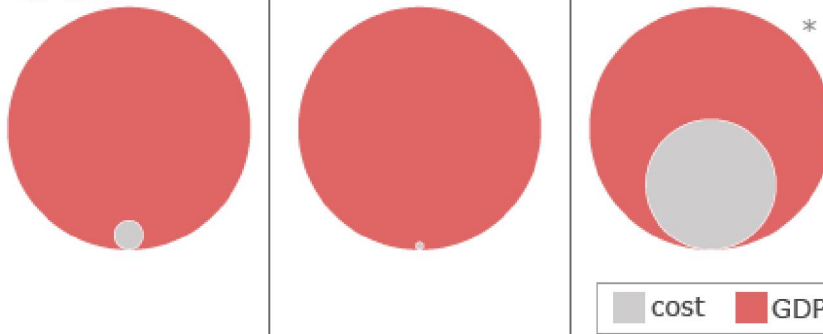
Source: UN, Italian government, Chinese government, EM-DAT

### Economic cost

\$billions



Cost relative to GDP



\*The cost shown here is \$2bn

Source: EM-DAT, World Bank

And as the Red Cross and others admit, their success in responding to the Haiti emergency will be judged not just on the first weeks of emergency aid, but on whether communities are left more resilient and better equipped when the next disaster strikes.

Photos Bibliography

Cover:

<http://www.dreamstime.com/stock-photography-life-in-the-earth-in-our-hands-image10271382>

Haiti map Page 2: Wagner, David. [haiti.jpg](#). . Pics4Learning. 20 Mar 2010

<http://pics.tech4learning.com>

Illustration page6:

<http://www.dreamstime.com/Stock%20Image-image12825651>

Definitions page 5:

from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>, accessed 15 march,2010

Story pages 3 and 4: from BBC NEWS

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/8510900.stm>

Published: 2010/02/14 13:07:55 GMT

Graphics pages 11 - 13:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/americas/8510900.stm>

Published: 2010/02/14 13:07:55 GMT).

