

STUDENT'S HANDOUT

NICARAGUA Response to a crisis situation



Background Information

To respond to the growing demand for humanitarian aid during natural disasters and to better channel its efforts in assisting during times of crisis, the Canadian International Development Agency finances projects for organizations such as Médecins sans frontières (MSF). MSF Canada's mission is to step in and provide assistance to populations in developing countries, during war-time or in dangerous situations in order to maintain health care and to prevent disease. This organization involves itself by providing food and drinking water, vaccinations, as well as raising awareness for these populations and providing all kinds of medical assistance (childbirth, surgery, family health, etc).



Instructions

Read the following letter and the accompanying information on Nicaragua. Then answer the questions.

Managua, April 1st, 1999

Hello dearest cousin,

I hope that you are well. Here, in Nicaragua, it is still a little difficult since Hurricane Mitch past through last autumn. As you know, my family was lucky since nobody was hurt. However, that was not the case for everyone in the village. Several people were injured or fell sick in the last few months. Almost everything was destroyed. All the farming areas were devastated and industries were decimated. All Nicaraguans had a lot of trouble finding food and drinking water was scarce. On the other hand, currently, there are many people here to help us out. Planes filled with people coming from several humanitarian organizations arrived in all four corners of the country.

In our area, *Doctors Without Borders Canada (MSF Canada)* set up a camp. Our small village is now getting drinking water thanks to the pumps that the engineers of MSF Canada installed. As for the rest, things are already getting better. Mom and Dad have started to sow seeds in our fields again and hope to have the first harvest in a few months. Until then, an MSF Canada food distribution center was built in our area that regularly provides us with food for the family. At the same time, nurses and doctors examined us (my brothers, sisters and me) to make sure that we were in good health and that we were getting enough to eat. I heard that some children had been sick in another area of the country while they were building the vaccination centre here. It was very impressive to see hundreds, maybe even thousands, of children assembled in front of the nurses' tent. We all received a series of vaccinations yesterday, and Marco, my little brother, cried! You know how he is...

Since the schools will not reopen until next autumn, I offered to volunteer to help doctors in the hospital here in the capital city. I assist the sick while they are waiting to see a doctor. It is very gratifying and satisfying to be able to help others. I have learned so much by watching the people from MSF that I'm even thinking of joining their ranks later in life. Who knows what the future holds for us...

Talk to you soon,

Your cousin Maria

**Informations on
Nicaragua**
Capital: Managua
Population: 4,8 million of
inhabitants (in 1998)
Official language : Spanish
Superficie : 139 682 km²



Student's name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

**Reading Comprehension Evaluation
Nicaragua: Response to a Crisis Situation**

1- Which historical disaster is written about in the text which you just read?

2- Find three consequences related to this catastrophe.

3- What is the name of the organization which came to help in the region where Maria's family resides?

4- In the text, find two positive things which prove that the situation is improving for people of Maria's village.

5- What is the capital of Nicaragua? _____

6- To prevent something is to avoid an undesirable situation by taking precautions. Find an example in the text of PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.

7- How is Maria helping out?

8- Maria mentions in her letter that "Several people were injured or fell sick into the last few months ". In your opinion, why would a natural disaster cause disease? _____

9- Maria would like to join the ranks of MSF one day. She finds it gratifying and satisfying to be able to help others. Have you already helped somebody out in a situation? How did you feel?

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