



# How is educational resilience understood **in Latin American and Caribbean countries?**

[Draft for discussion]

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# Presentation

In recent years, the concept of educational resilience has evolved from a focus on individuals to encompass the capacity of education systems to respond, adapt, and recover in the face of various challenges and threats to the provision of this essential service. To advance research, raise awareness, and promote initiatives on this topic, the Educational Resilience Observatory—named **AdaptED**<sup>1</sup>—was recently established. This initiative is part of the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) fund. Its implementation is led by the Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE, *by its acronym in Spanish*), in partnership with SUMMA, the Laboratory for Education Research and Innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean, and UNICEF’s Regional Office for Education, in collaboration with Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

This publication is the first in a series of studies focusing on the member countries of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the partner countries include Belize, Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines<sup>2</sup>. These eleven GPE partner countries in the region face structural challenges related to educational coverage, learning quality, secondary school completion, digital divides, centralization, and teacher initial training and professional development, among others—with considerable variation in the relevance and magnitude of each issue across countries. In this context, SUMMA, in collaboration with GPE KIX, has published ten national studies<sup>3</sup> that explore in greater depth the challenges<sup>4</sup> and opportunities of the KIX LAC countries<sup>5</sup>.

As an initial contribution to the series, the following sections examine the presence of the concept of educational resilience—its meanings and practices—across GPE countries, considering the

- .....
- 1 AdaptED is one of six regional observatories on educational resilience, located in Latin America and the Caribbean; Eastern, Western, Central, and Southern Africa; the Middle East and North Africa; Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia; the Pacific; and South and Southeast Asia.
  - 2 Bolivia was recently incorporated as a GPE partner country but was not included in this analysis
  - 3 The national studies can be found in the Library section, specifically under National Studies and Policies. The link is as follows: [https://www.summaedu.org/categoria\\_recursos/estudios-y-politicas-nacionales/](https://www.summaedu.org/categoria_recursos/estudios-y-politicas-nacionales/)
  - 4 To provide a better understanding of each country’s context, Appendix 1 presents selected key education indicators from the countries included in this study, serving as a backdrop for the discussion that follows.
  - 5 KIX LAC does not have a direct collaboration with Belize, and therefore, no specific study is available for this country.

systemic characteristics, challenges, and threats they face. This analysis aims to contribute to the identification and mobilization of evidence, as well as to informed decision-making that supports and strengthens the development of public policies and strategies related to resilience.

# 1. Educational Resilience: A new approach to addressing crises and challenges in education systems

Resilience is a concept derived from Latin<sup>6</sup> and has been used since the 17th century in physics and engineering to describe materials that, despite being affected, are able to return to their original shape or position. In the 20th century, Norman Garmezy and others began studying resilience in relation to resistance to certain psychological pathologies at the individual or family level. Since then, the concept has expanded across various fields, consistently identifying the capacity of individuals to adapt, overcome, or recover from the challenges they frequently encounter<sup>7</sup> (Granados et al., 2017).

Within the field of education, individual resilience has been examined as the capacity of a person to face adversity and recover from it (Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013, in Cameron et al., 2024, p. 6). From a psychological perspective, resilience is recognized as an intrinsic trait in both students and educators, enabling them to confront and overcome educational disruptions. However, recent studies such as Masten (2021) argue that resilience can and should also be promoted through educational practices, as it functions as a support mechanism for students, particularly those in vulnerable contexts. Examples include the development of executive function skills and parenting interventions, specifically through school-based meetings between parents and students where these skills are practiced, teacher training, and individualized support for children. Several studies (e.g., Masten et al., 2015; Herbers, Cutuli, Supkoff, Narayan, and Masten, 2014, in Masten, 2021) highlight that such practices protect students and foster resilience (2021, pp. 126–127).

In recent years, the concept of resilience has evolved to encompass not only individuals but also the environments in which they live, considering their relationships with family, community, and other social groups (Kelcey et al., 2024). Following this expanded approach, this document analyzes system

6 From English resilience, which derives from Latin *resiliens*, -entis, present active participle of *resilire* meaning “to leap back, rebound,” “to withdraw.” Consulted at the Royal Spanish Academy: <https://dle.rae.es/resiliencia>

7 In March 2025, we conducted a search for the term resilience on Google Scholar, yielding 5,370,000 results.

resilience, defined as “the capacity of an education system to absorb, resist, and adapt to disruptions while ensuring the continuity of its vital functions” (Dulks et al., 2023, p. 3). This perspective has garnered increasing international interest. For example, King and Surdayama (2025) recently published an edited volume compiling studies on how different countries responded to pandemics, natural disasters, and armed conflicts, as well as the impact of technology in educational contexts. Hereafter, we use the abbreviation ESR (*Educational Resilience Systems*) to refer to this concept.

Although there is no absolute consensus on the term, several studies agree on the key dimensions characterizing ESR. For Seng Tan and Jia (in Chua, 2025), a resilient system effectively reorganizes itself to ensure learning continuity. This requires **resilient structures**—elements that sustain and enable an education system to adapt to change and crises—such as policies, new regulations, and infrastructure. These structures should be characterized by adaptability, agility, and efficient data management. **Resilient processes** refer to actions grounded in an ecological approach that fosters synergy among education system actors, for example, during the implementation of sectoral reforms. The third component involves **resilient people**, whose training must be based on values that guide their actions during crises and challenges. This aligns with the social ecological model, the foundation of the ESR approach according to Cameron et al. (2024), which promotes interaction and interconnection among education system actors and places the individual at the core (Kelcey et al., 2024, p. 5).

Other authors, such as Dulks et al. (2023), emphasize additional elements in the definition, including support for resilience, which encompasses authorities and emergency services, psychological or mental health resilience, and the resilience of the institutional systems that are part of the ESR. Taken together, educational resilience implies the interaction of multiple actors and dimensions, where both the system’s structures and processes are strengthened, and the development of individual resilience is recognized as a key component.

One of the first attempts to systematize educational resilience was developed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2020, creating a preliminary model based on three capacities countries may develop when facing crises and threats: 1) *Absorptive and coping capacity*: how shocks or adverse changes are addressed and strategies created to mitigate damage; 2) *Adaptive capacity*: enabling recovery in the medium and long term by adjusting to new realities and addressing vulnerable populations specifically; and 3) *Transformative capacity*: focusing on deeper changes through new processes, structures, and/or policies that strengthen system resilience. These capacities operate across students, schools, communities, and institutions (USAID, 2020).

The importance of the educational resilience approach became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which in many cases forced governments to close schools for extended periods. Under these circumstances, millions of students' right to access formal education was compromised. The impacts were disproportionately felt by vulnerable groups, such as students from rural areas, those living in poverty, migrants, displaced persons, Afro-descendants, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities (Cameron et al., 2024, p. 34). Also, access to digital resources and the internet became the primary means to maintain communication between teachers and students. Other media, such as television and radio, were also used but lacked the interactivity offered by digital platforms.

Beyond epidemics or pandemics, other situations can lead to school closures. Natural disasters are particularly notable; their frequency has increased in recent decades, and they are closely linked to climate change (Nusche et al., 2024). Such events require emergency actions, including immediate responses to mitigate their impact on education systems, followed by recovery processes to restore what was lost and ensure educational continuity. There are also other complex and long-lasting circumstances that may require resilient responses from various education actors, such as providing education in areas of extreme poverty and neighborhoods with high levels of violence or delivering services to migrant children. These are explored further below, with an emphasis on how the challenges faced by GPE countries disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.

Given the threats and crises affecting education systems, and the growing need to strengthen their responsiveness, this report seeks to contribute to the understanding of the meanings and practices of educational resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through content analysis—supported by a theoretical review, data, and interviews with key stakeholders—the following question is posed: How is educational resilience understood in Latin American and Caribbean countries (specifically GPE countries)? The following sections present the terms used in the analysis and the main findings, including a specific section dedicated to results related to vulnerable populations.

## 2. What terms are associated with educational resilience at the system level?

The literature review in the previous section provided a brief overview of some predominant perspectives in resilience research, ranging from individual-centered approaches to those addressing educational resilience at the system level. By delving deeper into this new approach, associated terms emerge that enrich the conceptual debate and introduce new elements, characteristics, and/or dimensions for analysis. This allows us to identify the threats and crises that have recently impacted education systems.

The following sections present two lists of terms associated with educational resilience, aiming to conduct an initial analysis of how widely included these terms are within the education systems of GPE countries and the main threats they face. These terms were identified through literature review and interviews with key stakeholders. The first group of terms refers to the response capacity of education systems, while the second focuses on the threats and/or disruptions affecting them. Both sets are interconnected and facilitate an analysis of resilience, recognizing each system's challenges and capacities as well as the ways they develop their strategies.

### 2.1 Terms associated with educational resilience

The capacities and strategies of an education system in the face of crises and threats are important elements of educational resilience. In this way, we can observe the various ways systems adapt and effectively respond to adverse situations. This not only involves understanding the increasingly demanding and diverse risks to education but also developing containment and prevention strategies, identifying the participation of key actors at different levels of the educational environment, and recognizing approaches that allow for effective conditions for immediate responses and sustainable recovery over time (Kelcey et al., 2024).

In this regard, the first selection of terms was based on the emerging analytical framework developed by the GPE KIX alliance in collaboration with IDRC. This framework presents five strategic components for the resilience of education systems: strengthen, anticipate, plan, respond and recover, and prevent and mitigate. Its objective is to identify the vulnerabilities of the education

system through interventions at three levels: school, intermediate, and systemic. Likewise, it promotes the design of plans, procedures, and implementation policies in emergency situations, allowing the anticipation and management of disruptions that may arise in the future. The involvement and preparation of various actors are essential. This approach includes strategies to ensure short-, medium-, and long-term responses to crises, as well as measures aimed at addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

Based on this analytical framework, the terms selected for analysis were: *resilience, response capacity, strengthen, anticipate, recover, and prevent*. Additionally, two other terms proposed in the USAID model were included: coping capacity and adaptive capacity (USAID, 2020). These terms need to be defined to evaluate the presence of the approach in the key documents of each country analyzed in the next section (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
*Definition of terms associated with educational resilience identified*

List of terms	Definition
Resilience	The capacity of systems to adapt, strengthen, and maintain their functioning in the face of challenges, changes, and/or threats.
Strengthen	Improve the response capacity of a system through sustainable strategies, ensuring its adaptation and continuity in the face of challenges or crises.
Anticipate	Foresee future challenges through strategic planning, analysis of past experiences, and identification of possible scenarios.
Recover	Restore a system through short-, medium-, and long-term actions, ensuring continuity, adaptation, and improvement in the face of future emergencies.
Prevent	Implement strategies and actions that reduce the likelihood of crises and mitigate their impacts.
Adaptive capacity	Make informed decisions and modify livelihood strategies and other approaches in response to long-term social, economic, and environmental changes.
Response capacity	Generate an enabling environment for systemic change through governance mechanisms, policies and regulations, cultural and gender norms, community networks, and formal and informal social protection mechanisms.
Coping capacity	Reduce exposure and sensitivity to crises and stressors through preventive measures and appropriate coping strategies to avoid lasting negative impacts.

Definitions adapted from USAID (2020) and Cameron et al., (2024).



## 2.2 Threats to education systems and related terms

Global threats and shocks translate into significant challenges for education. Natural disasters<sup>8</sup>, climate change, conflicts, epidemics, and violence are well-known and increasing phenomena, and new threats are also emerging. The literature highlights the need for the education sector to strengthen its capacity to respond to both known and emerging threats (Rodriguez-Segura and Whitcomb, in King and Suryadarma, 2025, pp. 123–124).

In addition to the structural challenges related to quality, access, and equity, GPE countries are adversely affected by the threats mentioned above. In an interconnected world, these threats often occur in chain reactions, becoming more complex and generating significant social, economic, and environmental consequences (UNDRR and OCHA, 2023, p.10).

An example of this is the 2010 Haiti earthquake, which registered a magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale and resulted in the deaths of over 200,000 people, in addition to devastating infrastructure damage (Duran, 2010, p.13). This catastrophe exposed the pre-existing conditions faced by the Haitian population and significantly worsened the country’s political and economic crisis, as well as increased violence and displacement. Furthermore, 80% of schools were damaged or destroyed, disrupting the continuity of education for children and adolescents (UNDP, 2011, p.4).

In recent years, GPE countries have also faced disasters such as Tornado Sara, Hurricane Maria, and Tropical Storm Erika. Events related to climate change have increased significantly and have a direct impact on the physical and mental health of students and teachers, educational infrastructure, and the quality of learning. The effects of climate change intensify cycles of poverty and inequalities among the most vulnerable families (Nusche et al., 2024). Additionally, Latin America and the Caribbean are recognized as regions with high levels of violence, organized crime, political instability, and social inequalities, all of which affect the educational trajectories of children and adolescents each year (UNESCO, 2024, p.1).

At UNESCO’s High-Level Regional Meeting for the Prevention and Addressing of Violence in the Education Sector, it was stated that “the lack of a comprehensive understanding of violence and its

8 Based on the literature review and consultations with experts, it is important to highlight the tensions surrounding the term natural disasters. According to UNDRR and OCHA (2023) in their report Panorama of Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean 2000–2022, “general knowledge about disaster risk has evolved in recent years thanks to the efforts and support of academics and engaged professionals in recognizing the undeniable complicity and human responsibility in the creation, maintenance, and realization of disaster risk. As a clear result, we no longer use the term ‘natural disasters,’ as a recognition of the role of societies in transforming natural events or hazards into disasters” (p. 11).



interrelation with other factors such as climate change, armed conflicts, and forced displacement, as well as the persistence of structural inequalities that limit access to decent living conditions, exacerbate the prevalence and impact of violence in education” (2024, p.1). Therefore, threats to education systems should not be considered in isolation, as they often occur simultaneously or have interrelated effects that require coordinated responses.

Based on this information and the interviews conducted, a series of terms were selected associated with the threats or shocks to which education systems should demonstrate resilience. This second list of terms related to threats to education systems includes *climate change, natural disasters, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, droughts, storms, migration, emergencies, epidemics, crises, crime, and violence*. The definitions of these terms are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Definition of terms associated with threats to the continuity of educational services*

List of terms	Definition
Climate change	Long-term changes in temperatures and weather patterns due to natural factors and/or human activities (United Nations, n.d.)
Natural disasters	Processes or phenomena of natural, anthropogenic, or socio-natural origin that can cause human losses, mental health impacts, infrastructure damage, or social, economic, and environmental disruptions (United Nations, n.d.)
Hurricane	A type of storm that moves in a rapid circular motion, originating in warm tropical oceans and characterized as the most destructive weather-related phenomenon (WHO, 2020)
Earthquakes	Sudden and violent ground movements caused by the shifting of tectonic plates along the Earth's crust (WHO, n.d.)
Floods	Occur when water exceeds the usual limits of a stream, river, or other body of water, or accumulates in areas that are usually dry (WHO, 2020)
Droughts	Prolonged dry periods caused by a lack of rainfall, with consequences for agriculture, health, economy, energy, and the environment (WHO, 2020)
Storms	Phenomena caused by the presence of air masses and electrical discharges that originate over tropical or subtropical waters (PAHO, n.d.)
Migration	The movement of people from their usual place of residence to other destinations, either within or outside the country (IOM, n.d.)
Emergencies	Events that produce or have the potential to produce a series of consequences, requiring urgent coordinated action (WHO, 2020, p.16)
Epidemics	The occurrence of diseases, behaviors, or health-related events within a community or region over an unspecified period (WHO, 2020, p.18)
Crisis	A situation or state of instability that involves profound changes affecting systems, including people's lives, property, and the environment (WHO, 2020, p.12)
Violence	The intentional use of physical force, power, or threats against oneself, another person, groups, or communities that can cause various types of harm (PAHO, n.d.)
Crime	An act that constitutes a violation of the law and is considered punishable (United Nations, n.d.)

**Note:** Definitions adapted from the United Nations (2023), International Organization for Migration (n.d.), World Health Organization (2020), and Pan American Health Organization (n.d.).



### 3. Analysis of educational resilience: how widely is it incorporated in GPE countries?

The previous section outlined the list of terms associated with educational resilience (Table 1) and the threats impacting education systems (Table 2). The following analysis examines the occurrence of these terms across three types of key documents for each country. Before presenting the findings, a brief overview of the methodology employed is provided

#### 3.1 Method: Content analysis

The content analysis method was employed to identify the presence of terms in key documents from selected countries. Neuendorf (2002) explains that this research method characterizes a phenomenon based on the interpretation of messages contained in documents, relying on the intersubjectivity of those who read and analyze them (Cueto et al., 2016, p. 89).

As part of the analysis, three types of documents<sup>9</sup> were selected for each of the eleven focus countries: the education law, the curriculum, and the strategic sector plan. First, the education law was examined as it serves as the regulatory and normative framework of the education system, typically encompassing the rights and rules that support students, teachers, and other stakeholders (Imber & van Geel, 2009). The curriculum, on the other hand, comprises the set of study plans, programs, and activities, while also reflecting the reference framework for student well-being and development, depending on its orientation and the actions being implemented (Njeng'ere, 2014, p. 2). Lastly, the education strategic plan outlines the guidelines, objectives, and actions aimed at ensuring educational development within the country, based on a contextual assessment and a prioritized agenda. According to the literature review, these documents constitute the structures that sustain and enable adaptive change in resilient systems (Seng Tan and Jia En Chua, 2025).

Annex 2 presents a table listing the countries and the availability of these documents; documents accessed were coded as “Available,” while those not found through internet searches or **consultations**

9 The documents from the countries of Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are published in English. In the case of Haiti, they are in French, and for Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, they are in Spanish. For this reason, the terms were translated into the appropriate language for each case, which allowed us to carry out the content search and analysis.



with key informants were coded as “Not available.” For documents located but whose format did not permit word searches, the code “Available, but not used” was applied. For more detailed information, Annex 3 provides the full titles of each document identified by country.

### 3.2 Results of the document review

Table 3 shows the frequencies of the terms for each type of document, with the number of countries containing these terms indicated in parentheses. For example, the term “resilience” appears a total of 120 times in strategic plans and is present in 6 of the 11 GPE countries. Additionally, a list of the total counts for each term is included.

**Table 3**  
*Term Frequency by Type of Document*

List of terms	Number of times mentioned in the documents			Total
	Education Law (10/11)	Curriculum (7/11)	Strategic plans (11/11)	
<i>Terms associated with resilience</i>				
Resilience	0	2 (1)	120 (6)	122
Response capacity	0	1 (1)	2 (2)	3
Adaptation capacity	0	0	1 (1)	1
Coping capacity	0	3 (2)	0	3
Strengthen	35 (5)	75 (5)	348 (11)	458
Anticipate	0	0	1 (1)	1
Recover	1 (1)	0	0	1
Prevent	13 (5)	7 (4)	5 (4)	25
Mitigate	0	0	3 (2)	3

<i>Threats to education systems and related terms</i>				
<b>Climate change</b>	0	2 (2)	22 (9)	24
<b>Natural disasters</b>	5 (4)	26 (5)	23 (9)	54
<b>Hurricane</b>	3 (3)	22 (2)	20 (5)	45
<b>Earthquakes</b>	3 (3)	4 (3)	1 (1)	8
<b>Floods</b>	3 (3)	14 (1)	5 (5)	22
<b>Droughts</b>	0	1 (1)	5 (5)	6
<b>Storms</b>	0	2 (2)	5 (2)	7
<b>Migration</b>	0	4 (1)	18 (7)	22
<b>Epidemics</b>	1 (1)	0	1 (1)	2
<b>Emergencies</b>	9 (4)	1 (1)	25 (5)	35
<b>Crisis</b>	3 (1)	0	36 (6)	39

**Note:** The table presents the frequency of terms in each document, and in parentheses, the number of countries in which they appear. For example, in the curriculum column, the term “resilience” is mentioned twice, and both are part of a single document.

The selection of terms associated with educational resilience is based on the USAID model and the emerging IDRC framework. Prepared by the authors based on key documents included in Annex 3.

### 3.3 Analysis of emerging themes

The previous section presented the list of terms associated with educational resilience (Table 1) and threats to education systems (Table 2). Below, we analyze the inclusion of these terms in key documents from each country.

#### *a) Educational Resilience: How is it understood in GPE Countries?*

The term **resilience** is absent from education laws and scarcely appears in the reviewed curricula. The notable exception is Belize’s National Curriculum, where the term appears twice. This curriculum acknowledges the ongoing changes in the world and emphasizes the importance of structural adaptability, innovation, and resilience. While threats to educational continuity are recognized, the resilience approach primarily aligns with an individual perspective, highlighting the need to foster skills in students to face such challenges, including conflict analysis and problem-solving (Ministry of Education of Belize, 2022, p. 2).

In the case of the reviewed strategic plans, the term appears 120 times across six countries: Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, and Saint Lucia. However, Dominica accounts for most of these mentions (102) in its 2023–2030 Strategic Plan. This document states that resilience is a national priority, with efforts focused on improving student well-being, institutional strengthening, school infrastructure, climate resilience, and the use of technology. For example, a school-level information system called OpenSis, along with the annual school questionnaire, allows for the collection of data about the national education system, including students' access to the internet and digital devices (Ministry of Education of Dominica, 2024, p. 24). The country also seeks to strengthen students' competencies, including knowledge about risk reduction and resilience (2024, p. 33), linked to mental health, psychosocial well-being, and climate resilience (2024, p. 47). Although the term “educational resilience” is not explicitly used, several dimensions identified in the literature are incorporated into the country's agenda, which stands out within the context of this study (Ministry of Education of Dominica, 2024, p. 1).

Following Hurricane Maria in 2018, Dominica developed the National Resilience Development Strategy (NRDS), which aims to strengthen infrastructure and establish social protection systems capable of adequately responding to threats. Although the strategy is not specific to education, the strategic plan notes that “The NRDS 2030 urges the Ministry of Education to ‘build and manage a socially and environmentally responsive, nationally relevant, and globally competitive education system’” (Ministry of Education of Dominica, 2024, p. 36). Additionally, the reviewed document includes a table illustrating the alignment of the strategic plan with national, regional, and international educational commitments, listing NRDS as one of the responsible entities (2024, pp. 40–41). The country also relies on the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to ensure that schools meet the necessary requirements to be safe and resilient against climate-related events and threats (2024, p. 30).

In the other five countries where the term appears, references mainly relate to strengthening resilience in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes pedagogical approaches in Grenada and Honduras (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023, p. 2; Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2019, p. 47); digital transformation and support for vulnerable populations in Guyana's Strategic Plan (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021, p. 9). In Saint Lucia, the focus is on school climate resilience and enhancing psychosocial support (Ministry of Education of Saint Lucia, 2023, p. 7), while in Belize, emphasis is placed on strengthening students' capacities, as also referenced in their curriculum (Ministry of Education of Belize, 2021).

In all six strategic plans, areas related to resilience include institutional infrastructure, technology and innovation, and student capacities and well-being. In the case of Saint Lucia, as in Dominica, the concept of climate resilience in schools is highlighted, a theme that has been strongly emphasized in the literature on educational resilience (Bazin & Saintis, 2021; Nusche et al., 2024).

In addition to the term resilience, Table 1 also presents a list of terms linked to educational resilience based on the literature review. These terms were included because, even if countries do not explicitly use the word “resilience,” they may still implement related practices or actions. Terms associated with the USAID model—response, adaptation, and coping capacity—were mentioned infrequently. In contrast, the terms from the emerging IDRC framework—strengthen, mitigate, prevent, anticipate, and recover—were recorded more frequently in the documents<sup>10</sup>. The presence of this set of terms provides insight into the strategies and actions prioritized by GPE countries when facing challenges. The following subsections will explore these terms in greater depth.

### ***b) Commitment to strengthening educational systems***

In the range of totals shown in Table 3, the term ***strengthen*** (458) stands out significantly compared to the others, especially in strategic plans (348). Therefore, it was considered relevant to assess in which specific contexts it is most frequently used and what types of actions typically accompany this term. The word ***strengthen*** is associated with actions or strategies across various educational aspects in the countries analyzed, potentially grounded in maintaining uninterrupted educational services and/or ensuring quality learning during emergency situations. The emphasis is placed on five dimensions: attention to vulnerable populations, infrastructure strengthening, teacher training, educational management, and curriculum design.

***Attention to vulnerable populations*** is linked with the term ***strengthen*** in three of the eleven countries. For example, in El Salvador, due to the impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable families, a strategic reconsideration was made regarding emergencies and disasters (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2019, p.9). Belize aims to “strengthen the legislative, regulatory, and policy framework to ensure that children with diverse needs have equitable access to quality and relevant education in the most conducive environment” (Government of Belize, 2021, p.68). Meanwhile, Honduras proposes addressing the strengthening of internal efficiency of the education system

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10 Annex 4 details the number of documents in which each resilience-related term appeared.

by mitigating school dropout rates and providing attention to displaced children and returning migrants (Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2019, p.71).

Regarding **educational infrastructure and safe spaces**, again three countries include information related to the term. The Government of El Salvador recognizes that various threats disrupt the continuity of studies and deteriorate school facilities (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2021, p.25). In Guatemala, the focus is on the School Feeding Program, which aims to expand educational coverage and promote student retention through comprehensive support (Government of Guatemala, 2020, p.38). Saint Lucia identifies one of its main priorities as promoting and maintaining safe workplaces. Additionally, the National Infrastructure Assessment seeks to “strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of schools to climate risks and natural disasters, which also serve as emergency shelters” (Ministry of Education, 2023, p.19). While it cannot yet be affirmed that these objectives are implemented in all cases, it is evident that the countries mentioned prioritize strategies to strengthen infrastructure and adequate spaces.

Thirdly, emphasis on **teacher training** appears in Grenada, which proposes prioritizing a program to improve quality and learning through the strengthening of teachers’ professional competencies (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023, p.20). Along with Guyana, they share the goal of improving learning competencies and reforming the curriculum (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023, p.20; Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021, p.69). Regarding **management** and governance, Saint Lucia aims to create an agile and responsive education system, which involves “strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of the education system: Promotion and maintenance of safe workspaces” (Ministry of Education, p.21). This aligns with Seng Tan and Jia En Chua’s (2025) discussion, where agility and adaptability are key elements to respond to and manage changes in the context of educational resilience; agility relates to the speed of response, and adaptability to the way disruptions are faced and managed (p.20). Finally, regarding the link between strengthening and **curriculum design**, Guyana refers to the European Union as an example and highlights the need to strengthen competencies such as language, literacy, mathematics, science and engineering, digital competence, personal and social skills, civic competence, entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021, p.69).

Returning to Table 1, the term **strengthen** refers to enhancing a system’s capacity to respond through sustainable strategies, ensuring its adaptation and continuity in the face of challenges or crises. Regarding the results obtained, strengthening is directed toward the five aforementioned dimensions, with school infrastructure and safe spaces once again highlighted as priorities within

GPE countries. This does not necessarily imply that programs are already being implemented, as many strategic plans have been published recently or are still in the process of publication, as is the case with Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Lucia. It is worth noting that this section does not include information from Haiti and Nicaragua because no results related to this term were found there; however, this does not necessarily mean that strengthening is not considered in those contexts.

### ***c) Prevention, recovery, and mitigation: What is recognized and what is missing?***

The presence of the terms *prevent* (26), *mitigate* (3), *recover* (1), and *anticipate* (1) is considerably lower than that of the terms mentioned in the previous section. Although this does not imply that such strategies are not being addressed within the education systems of GPE countries, the reviewed documents show fewer results associated with these terms. As seen in Table 1, each term serves a specific function, including anticipating future challenges, implementing strategies to reduce the likelihood of crises, restoring the system through short-, medium-, and long-term actions, and enhancing response capacity. All of these functions work interdependently to create more resilient education systems in crisis contexts.

Regarding findings related to the term ***prevent***, education laws emphasize the prevention of illnesses within school environments. Belize, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are the GPE countries that have mechanisms to close schools in case of disease outbreaks. Nicaragua focuses on improving teachers' working conditions to prevent illness (La Gaceta: Official Gazette of Nicaragua, 2022, p.58), while Guatemala links prevention to addressing the needs of students with special requirements (Congress of the Republic of Guatemala, 1991, p.15). Although the term is mentioned in these five countries, there is no clear approach to guarantee educational continuity in the face of crises that go beyond diseases and epidemics to include other types of threats. Furthermore, only one country associates prevention with the needs of vulnerable populations. The other six countries do not include this term.

In curricula, four countries include the term. Prevention is promoted through learning across four competencies: prevention of diseases such as HIV through health and family life education (Ministry of Education of Dominica, 2004, p.18); natural disaster prevention (Government of the Republic of Guatemala, 2016, p.121); accident prevention and safety promotion (Secretariat of Education of the Republic of Honduras, 2003, p.19); and conflict prevention (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2020, pp.61–62). Meanwhile, in the strategic plans, the countries that mention the term in their documents

are: Belize, focusing on the prevention of famine, obesity, and other forms of malnutrition among vulnerable children (Government of Belize, 2021, p.59); El Salvador, emphasizing the prevention and protection of the human rights of children (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2021, p.62); Grenada, which aims to prevent barriers to access in education (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023, p.28); and Haiti, which focuses on disaster prevention due to its impact on the education system (MENFP, 2020, p.44).

Regarding the term *anticipate*, which involves foreseeing future disruptions through identifying and analyzing past and potential experiences, the only document that addresses this is Haiti's Strategic Plan. It recognizes the need for a systemic approach where strategic actions are planned in an interconnected manner, implying that addressing challenges cannot be approached in isolation but must consider interrelations among different parts. This definition is highlighted: "the systemic approach: planning strategic actions in an interconnected manner" (MENFP, 2020, p.14).

Finally, the term *mitigate* is mentioned in only two countries. Belize lists it as one of the main objectives in its Strategic Plan, as it "is designed to protect the Future: Mitigate threats likely to affect the education system now and in the future" (Government of Belize, 2021, p.16). Similarly, Dominica reports that, based on lessons learned from the pandemic, Hurricane Maria, and Tropical Storm Erika, the Ministry of Education has made significant investments to mitigate school disruptions, including internet installation, distribution of digital devices to students, and adequate service conditions in schools (Ministry of Education, 2023, p.19). The term *recover* does not appear in the reviewed documents, except in Dominica, where its context is unrelated to the present study.

The analysis reveals the low presence of these terms in the reviewed documents from GPE countries. When mentioned, the discussion centers on infrastructure, school safety, health, and natural disasters. However, there is no evidence of an interconnected response that ensures educational continuity in the face of threats, nor an emphasis on vulnerable populations. The heterogeneity in the frequency of these terms suggests that strengthening strategies are not clearly linked to prevention, recovery, mitigation, and anticipation of crises within education systems.

#### **d) Challenges and threats facing educational systems**

Returning to Table 3, which also presents the results for terms associated with threats to the education system, the most frequently mentioned and recorded terms are: *natural disasters, hurricane, crises, and emergencies*. When analyzed by the number of countries that include them, two additional terms emerge: *climate change and migration*. These two, along with natural disasters, appear in 9 out of the 11 countries, mainly in their strategic education plans. In contrast, in the case of laws and curricula, each term was recorded in at least three countries.

The literature review revealed greater prevalence in texts on educational resilience and climate change. Nusche et al. (2024) thoroughly describe the relationship between this term and its impact on education systems. It is currently recognized that extreme weather events disrupt the education of 40 million students each year. Without adaptation measures, the consequences on school infrastructure, health, and learning are exacerbated. For this reason, prioritizing an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) approach is necessary to address challenges related to climate change. The GPE countries that mention this term at least once in their documents are Belize, Guyana, Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Saint Lucia. Nine of these mentions are found in strategic plans, and Belize is the only country that includes it in its education law. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is the only country without this term in its documents; however, it should be noted that access was not possible to their curriculum or their most recent strategic plan, only to the 2014–2019 plan.

The findings frame climate change from various approaches: awareness-raising, risk management, and adaptation linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some countries mention existing strategies such as El Salvador's National Emergency and Contingency Plan and its Education Plan for Climate Change and Comprehensive Risk Management (2012–2022) (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2019, p.30). Guatemala has a Climate Change Framework Law to plan actions addressing associated risks, and Honduras has developed a national strategy against climate change aligned with the SDGs. In other countries, the term is not accompanied by plans or laws but mentions threats and a lack of response. For example, Grenada acknowledges the absence of prevention and preparedness strategies against disasters and their impact on schools (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023). Likewise, Haiti identifies droughts, floods, and deforestation as its most recurrent threats (MENFP, 2020).

Another threat within the education system is **migration**. A UNESCO report refers to the link between migration and education as “a complex phenomenon affecting those who stay behind,



those who migrate, and those who receive them” (2022, p.12). According to the World Bank, migration rates<sup>11</sup> show that El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua had high numbers of people leaving the country in 2023. Meanwhile, Belize registered 600 more arrivals than departures, placing pressure on the system, especially if newcomers do not speak the local language. Regarding the term’s frequency, migration is mentioned in 7 countries: Belize (1), El Salvador (3), Guatemala (1), Haiti (1), Honduras (1), Saint Lucia (1), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (10). These mentions are mostly found in strategic plans, except for Guatemala, which also includes it in its curriculum.

Content analysis shows migration is linked to other economic, social, and educational factors, supporting the idea that threats are interconnected. For example, El Salvador’s strategic plan describes the country as lacking opportunities, facing socioeconomic inequalities, and having low social mobility. This is associated with high **violence** levels that “daily afflict its inhabitants, making migration the option for thousands of compatriots who find no opportunities to develop or even to dream of a meaningful life project” (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2021, p.12). For Honduras and Haiti, migration relates to school dropout. In 2014, the humanitarian crisis in Honduras caused 18,244 students to leave the country. The strategic plan emphasizes the need for a comprehensive human rights policy to facilitate the reintegration of deported migrant children (Secretariat of Education of Honduras, 2020, p.27).

The findings also include internal migration in Guatemala and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where there is evident movement from rural to urban areas, leading to student overcrowding in urban schools (Government of Guatemala, 2020). Additionally, Guatemala’s indigenous population has had to migrate due to various factors, implying the need to consider their linguistic diversity in other contexts, though without adequate inclusion strategies (2020, p.21). In Saint Lucia, migration is cited as one cause of low primary school enrollment rates (Ministry of Education, 2023, p.49). In most countries, references to migration relate to national diagnostics and the importance of comprehensive policies addressing the issue. It is strongly evident that migration is linked to violence, lack of resources, school dropout, and insufficient attention to rural areas and indigenous populations, among other factors.

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11 Net migration, as defined by the World Bank, refers to the difference between the number of people entering a country and the number of people leaving it over a specific period of time. For example, a negative value such as -600 indicates that 600 more people have left the country or region than have entered it.



Thirdly, the analysis focuses on **disasters** and associated terms. Records are grouped into three areas: educational infrastructure, strategic plans, and prevention and awareness. The term appears in all countries in at least one of the reviewed documents. When looking closer at disaster types, hurricanes are most frequently mentioned, while droughts and storms are less cited.

UNICEF's 2024 *Learning Interrupted* report outlines the global panorama of climate-related school disruptions, describing how education systems are significantly affected by such phenomena. School interruptions may result from damage to infrastructure or because schools serve as shelters for affected families (2024, p.2). Some GPE countries' education laws seem to recognize this issue. Belize promotes compliance with standards and requirements for school construction, while Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines base their responses on temporary or permanent school closures.

Conversely, five countries (Honduras, Guyana, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua) emphasize training and prevention in their curricula, which entails recognizing disaster types, dissemination of mitigation methods, and awareness of their impacts. No laws or plans on disasters were identified in the document search, except Guatemala's National Coordination Law for Disaster Reduction (Decree 109-96; Government of Guatemala, 2020). Generally, most countries consider natural disasters a priority in their strategic plans, though this topic did not appear in the document searches nor is it explored in other contexts. We will further investigate this in subsequent documents.

Finally, **crises and emergencies** are closely related to the afore-mentioned terms. In the reviewed documents, crisis is used in institutional, political, and socioeconomic contexts and in relation to their effects on education systems. In GPE countries, this involves educational management and teacher training (Haiti and El Salvador), and class interruptions due to school closures (Honduras and Grenada). Lastly, the search revealed the National Disaster Management Agency of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique (NaDMA), responsible for disaster and emergency budget allocation. This agency is not specifically linked to the education sector but has a general focus across these three countries.

## 4. An intersectional perspective: Attention to vulnerable populations

Since the educational resilience approach adopted here assumes that educational disruption affects the most vulnerable groups with greater severity, this section delves into students living in poverty, Indigenous students from minority groups, students with disabilities, migrants, and displaced persons. Additionally, the concept of gender is considered, as it is a key focus of this analysis, given the historical marginalization women have faced in most LAC countries. Table 4 presents indicators related to these groups; unfortunately, updated statistics are not available for some of them.

**Table 4**  
*Indicators related to vulnerable groups in GPE countries*

	Gender Inequality Index - GGI (2023)	% of Afro-descendant population	% of rural population (2023)	New internal displacements (2023)		
				Under 18 years old	Proportion due to conflict and violence (%)	Proportion due to disasters (%)
Belize	0.428	29,2% (2022)	53%	-	-	-
Dominica	-	-	28%	-	-	-
El Salvador	0.362	-	25%	21,400	93	7
Grenada	0.226	-	63%	-	-	-
Guatemala	0.480	0,2% (2018)	47%	18,200	1	99
Guyana	0.427	20,8% (2012)	73%	13	0	100
Haití	0.618	-	40%	95 800	96	4
Honduras	0.437	1.0% (2001)	40%	3 800	47	53
Nicaragua	0.408	-	40%	330	30	70
Saint Lucía	0.327	-	81%	-	-	-
Saint Vincent	-	-	46%	-	-	-

**Note:** The Gender Inequality Index (GGI) reflects gender-based disadvantages in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market participation. This indicator shows the loss of human development potential due to

inequality between female and male achievements in these dimensions. It ranges from 0, where women and men achieve equal results, to 1, where one gender fares worse across all dimensions (UNDP, 2023).

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) indicator measures the percentage of people living in rural areas relative to a country or region's total population.

Likewise, the World Bank presents the percentage of people living in rural areas relative to a country or region's total population.

Lastly, new internal displacements refer to the number of people forced to leave their homes but remaining within their country's borders due to conflict, violence, or natural or human-made disasters, as recorded during a specific period (UNICEF, 2023).

Dashes (-) indicate absence of data for those countries. Source: United Nations Development Programme (2023), Inter-American Development Bank (n.d.), and United Nations Children's Fund (2024).

The educational attention to vulnerable groups has had some relevance in the literature review conducted. In this regard, Cameron et al. (2024) emphasize that Education System Resilience (ESR) must incorporate a Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) approach, so that education systems are equitable and inclusive, and not only the privileged population has access to education. Moreover, the literature highlights that the aforementioned vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by threats and crisis contexts, which indicates that governments must direct their efforts toward the comprehensive creation of policies and programs that ensure access to and retention in education (UNDRR, 2015, in Cameron et al., 2024, p.12).

An essential aspect for the analysis of vulnerable populations in GPE countries is intersectionality. Although the literature reviewed on educational resilience does not explicitly mention the approach, GESI and dimensions of the emerging framework are related. Initially, intersectionality has been mostly used in the field of gender to jointly address elements such as gender, race, and class, the latter generally understood as socioeconomic status. When applied to the educational field, the intersectional approach allows for the analysis of how dimensions of student vulnerability interact (Varsik & Gorochovskij, 2023). In other words, a student may be exposed to greater crises or educational challenges if they simultaneously face factors such as being a migrant, belonging to an Indigenous or Afro-descendant group, having a disability, or living in poverty. Cueto, Miranda, and Vásquez (2016) suggest that gender, ethnicity, disability, and poverty are elements that can interfere with achievement in basic education (in Cueto et al., 2019, p.15).

Based on the document review, five of these factors will be presented as barriers to the educational development of students in GPE countries. Although the division is organized into separate sections, the adoption of this intersectional approach acknowledges that multiple factors can simultaneously impact students. In general terms, GPE countries show that when vulnerable populations are mentioned in curricula, laws, and more frequently in strategic plans, the findings focus on the need to ensure access to education, reduce inequalities, and protect vulnerable groups from increasing threats.

#### **4.1 Gender: Inequalities in the education sector**

In crisis situations, existing gender inequalities in the education sector tend to worsen. Girls and women are more likely to suffer harm compared to men. According to UN Women (2023), they already face unequal access to economic, political, and social resources, and cases of sexual and gender-based violence tend to increase (Cameron et al., 2024, p. 12).

Regarding the information provided by GPE countries, the findings focus on two main priorities: equitable access to education and curriculum adaptation. While gender equity remains a challenge for most countries, they recognize the need to implement strategies to address it. Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua describe how structural barriers affect students' educational trajectories, particularly for girls. In El Salvador, there is a Gender Equity and Equality Policy established by MINEDUCYT, aiming to eliminate gender-based violence. In Guatemala and Nicaragua, girls face greater obstacles in accessing and remaining in school. Teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and gender stereotypes are factors that limit their educational opportunities (Government of Guatemala, 2020, p. 47; MINED, 2017, p. 107). As a response, the need to promote intersectoral policies is acknowledged.

*All boys and girls, men and women should have equal opportunities to receive a quality education, achieve equivalent levels of educational attainment, and benefit equally from the outcomes of education. Special attention should be given to adolescent girls and young women who may be affected by gender-based violence, child marriage, early pregnancy, and the burden of domestic responsibilities, as well as those living in high-poverty areas or remote rural regions. In contexts where boys and young men are at a disadvantage, specific objectives should also be developed for them. Policies aimed at addressing gender inequalities are more effective when they are part of a broader set of measures that also promote health, justice, good governance, and the elimination of child labor (MINED, 2017, p. 107).*

In Saint Lucia and Guyana, the focus is different, as it is boys who demonstrate lower levels of academic performance and lower enrollment rates, with a 6% gap favoring girls (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021, p. 47). In Saint Lucia, underperformance is linked to the lack of curriculum adaptation, poor infrastructure in secondary schools, and, in particular, “the disproportionate support for boys due to social constructs and socialization, and (ii) the absence of positive male role models and mentors for boys” (Ministry of Education, 2023, p. 16). In both cases, it becomes evident how gender roles can impact the educational trajectories of male students, as well as those of female students, as previously discussed.

All GPE countries mentioned the term “gender” at least once in their documents. It is important to note that none of them addressed diversity in gender identities, as the approach remained dichotomous—focused solely on men and women. Progress varies across countries. For instance, Belize and Grenada prioritize universal access to education, which implies tackling structural inequalities, while others have focused more on curriculum adaptation and policy development. Many of the documents reviewed link the gender approach to other factors such as poverty, migration, ethnicity, and disability, reinforcing the importance of adopting a more intersectional lens in the pursuit of educational resilience.

## 4.2 Disability: Towards a more inclusive approach

According to the Pan American Health Organization, persons with disabilities are “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (PAHO, n.d.). In the education sector, UNESCO notes that many countries face shortcomings in policy design and the allocation of resources specifically aimed at disability inclusion. Moreover, access to data on children with disabilities remains limited<sup>12</sup>. During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to education was a challenge for many countries, but it was especially critical for students with disabilities (World Bank 2020, in Cameron et al., 2024, p. 13).

The reviewed documents highlight the access barriers that students with disabilities face. Although Haiti has sectoral strategies in place to improve access, quality, and governance in education, implementation remains a major challenge. Fewer than 5% of children with disabilities are enrolled in either specialized or regular schools (MENFP, 2020, p. 26). Similarly, in Honduras, special education coverage reaches only 0.1%, despite estimates indicating that 10% of the population reports some form of disability (Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2019, p. 10). In contrast, education laws in Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent state that families and schools are responsible for notifying authorities when special educational needs are identified—although the specific authorities in charge are not defined. In both Saint Vincent and Grenada, students with severe disabilities may be excluded from mainstream education (Ministry of Education, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 2014, p. 23; Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023, p. 50).

Given the barriers identified by GPE countries to the inclusion of students with disabilities, some have acknowledged the need to implement new strategies. While some countries are more focused on strengthening methods within special education systems, others propose providing adapted, specialized support within regular schools. The latter suggests a more inclusive approach; however, this was not evident across all reviewed country documents.

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12 Regarding data on disability, the percentage of children with disabilities and the percentage of children aged 2 to 17 with one or more functional difficulties (2017 to 2023) were reviewed; both are part of UNICEF’s “Education Overview.” However, data were only identified for three countries: Guyana, Honduras, and El Salvador. See the following link: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/>

### 4.3 Ethnicity: Addressing indigenous and afro-descendant populations

Over the years, Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples have experienced various forms of exclusion and inequality, with disparities in access to education being among the most prominent. One of the major advances in the region is that Latin American and Caribbean countries have begun to recognize themselves as multiethnic and pluricultural societies—an important foundation for the development of future policies (Bello & Rangel, 2000, p. 14). Nevertheless, many ethnic groups reside in rural or remote areas where social services and infrastructure are limited and where providing them is significantly more costly than in urban settings, which tend to have higher population densities. As a result, in the event of disasters or crises, the consequences are often more severe in rural areas. Furthermore, as highlighted during the pandemic, there remains a significant gap in many countries in terms of access to technological resources and connectivity for Indigenous and Afro-descendant students and/or those living in rural areas (Cameron et al., 2024, p. 13).

GPE countries that incorporate approaches or strategies related to ethnic diversity—specifically Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations—include Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Belize, Guyana, and Dominica. These approaches vary, but they primarily focus on the recognition of diversity and the implementation of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE). Nicaragua identifies itself as a multiethnic and pluricultural country and refers to the implementation of IBE in Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities (MINED, 2017, p. 6). Similarly, Honduras acknowledges the country’s cultural and ethnic identities (Secretaría de Honduras, 2019, p. 43).

The landscape regarding Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations is also shaped by each country’s data collection efforts. On this point, Honduras highlights the vulnerability of Indigenous populations, stating that “data show that illiteracy rates among this ethnic group are significantly higher than the national average, particularly among the Lenca group, which accounts for more than 50% of the country’s ethnic minority population and has an illiteracy rate seven percentage points higher than the national average” (El Diálogo–FEREMA, 2017, p. 20; Secretaría de Honduras, 2019, p. 25). Data from Guyana also reveal differences in school dropout rates by ethnic group; for instance, Afro-Guyanese boys have the second-highest rates of school exclusion (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021, p. 48).

## 4.4 Migrant and displaced populations

Migration is one of the greatest challenges currently faced by education systems. UNESCO notes that migration flows in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) include children and adolescents who require educational attention. Many of the factors pushing families to leave their countries include extreme poverty, violence, political crises, or socio-economic and environmental hardships (Elías et al., 2022, p. 8). However, once they arrive in other countries, they face a new set of challenges such as “language barriers, social norms, xenophobia, legal and administrative procedures, lack of identification documents (and, in some countries, the fear of being detected, detained, or deported), and the recognition of educational levels attained in their country of origin” (2022, p. 14).

The content analysis in Section 3 showed that the countries in this study recognize migration as both a consequence of the inequalities and problems affecting their contexts, and as a challenge for the capacity of their education systems—particularly in the case of returned or migrant children. Some countries are promoting comprehensive measures, such as Guyana, where a policy is being proposed to teach in the mother tongue of the Venezuelan population (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021, p. 82). In Honduras, there is a call for a comprehensive Human Rights policy that allows “the reintegration of these deported migrant children into schools and communities. Positive experiences show that the creation of spaces for healthy social interaction supports this reintegration. The role of institutions is also fundamental, not only those related to childhood” (Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2019, p. 27). In contrast, Dominica is limited by the lack of data on this population group, which hinders the development of strategies aimed at promoting equality and equity in education.

## 4.5 Educational inequalities rooted in poverty

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that poverty is “the inability of people to live a tolerable life” and distinguishes between income poverty and human poverty. The former refers to deprivation in a single dimension—income—either because it is considered the only form of deprivation that matters or because all forms of deprivation can be reduced to a common denominator. In contrast, the latter refers to deprivation across multiple dimensions: a short and unhealthy life, lack of knowledge, an undignified standard of living, and lack of participation (in ECLAC and UNICEF, 2010, p. 23). From Amartya Sen’s perspective, poverty is multidimensional, and a key concept is that of functionings, which emphasizes the need for individuals to have access



to health, education, nutrition, participation, and social integration (in ECLAC and UNICEF, 2010, p. 25).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, poverty remains a major challenge for governments. However, UNICEF highlights that efforts to combat child poverty have increased and are now being implemented from a multidimensional and rights-based approach (2010, p. 23). In the reviewed documents of GPE countries, poverty is considered not only as economic deprivation, but also in relation to social inequalities (El Salvador and Honduras), malnutrition and food insecurity (Guatemala, Haiti, and El Salvador), gender inequalities (Guatemala and Honduras), and climate change (El Salvador). Place of residence and ethnicity are also important factors. For instance, Haiti's strategic plan highlights this intersection across multiple dimensions:

*Despite ongoing progress, the Haitian population remains largely poor (58.7%) and 23.9% suffer from extreme poverty, particularly in rural areas and in the northern departments. Haiti is the poorest country in Latin America and ranks among the lowest on the United Nations Human Development Index (calculated based on GDP, life expectancy, and education), due in part to the loss of its productivity, which once depended on agriculture and provided the population with near food self-sufficiency (MENFP, 2020, p. 17).*

Poverty cannot be understood in isolation, as it encompasses more than just economic deprivation. From an intersectional lens, inequalities deepen when poverty interacts with other factors such as disability, gender, migration, and ethnicity. These dynamics create structural patterns that persist over time and impact school enrollment, completion, and performance. As stated in Guatemala's strategic plan: "Among the population living in poverty, women and children—particularly indigenous children—remain the most vulnerable. Poverty is concentrated in the rural areas of the country, where most people rely on subsistence farming on small plots" (Government of Guatemala, 2020, p. 23).

## 5. Conclusions and perspectives on educational resilience

The educational resilience approach allows for establishing new ways to analyze the capacity of education systems to continue providing services despite challenges and threats. The concept gained even greater visibility following the COVID-19 pandemic, as it not only disrupted educational functioning in the most vulnerable societies but also revealed weaknesses in more advanced systems (Cameron et al., 2024). In this regard, identifying future risks and challenges is key to enhancing the adaptability and coping capacity of education systems.

Through a literature review and content analysis, this study aimed to understand how present the term is in GPE countries and the ways in which education systems face threats. The method enabled the creation of a list of terms associated with educational resilience to broaden the analysis and recognize its elements and dimensions. Additionally, the three types of documents selected for content analysis—education laws, curricula, and strategic plans—allowed identification of the educational situation in each country.

Educational resilience must be understood as a multidimensional and interconnected approach. Referring to Seng Tan and Jia En Chua (2025), this study sought to examine how countries consider structures, processes, and people within the education sector, and whether this aligns with current resilience frameworks. Overall, the document analysis shows a limited use of the term resilience, especially at the structural formation level, where only brief mentions of school infrastructure management appear to address potential threats. Furthermore, possibly because of the pandemic, a common aspect associated with **resilience** in GPE countries relates to the use of technology. However, no concrete policies or data management strategies enabling timely and effective decision-making were found. Instead, some countries reported difficulties identifying vulnerable groups due to lack of data. At the level of resilient processes, there is a notable absence regarding how different actors and institutions interrelate to confront threats to educational service; rather, emphasis is placed on the individual perspective and the formation of resilient individuals. It is worth highlighting, however, the case of Dominica, the only country where the term resilience was associated with structures, processes, and individual development.



Once the search was expanded and terms associated with resilience were integrated, it was found that the focus of the reviewed documents in GPE countries was on **strengthening** the education system's response. The frequency of this term may be due to the fact that system strengthening is a continuous process that can be maintained regardless of crises or emergencies (Comero et al., 2024). According to our analysis, strategic plans again prioritize infrastructure, but also management, curriculum, teacher training to improve student capacities, and in some cases, attention to vulnerable populations. When delving into other terms from the emerging ESR framework, results regarding **prevention, recovery, anticipation, and mitigation** show low incorporation in the policies and actions of the countries. Implementing strategies that include these elements is fundamental from the educational resilience approach, as these components effectively demonstrate response or planning for potential threats to the system. This gap highlights the need to deepen understanding of how countries recognize and/or incorporate measures beyond system strengthening. The next step would be to conduct a new literature review that includes operational plans, apply interviews with key actors, and identify agencies related to disaster prevention, threats, or other factors associated with the institutional framework.

The **threats** most identified in the education systems of these countries are migration, climate change, and natural disasters, which are interconnected and linked to other challenges faced by the school system. GPE countries seem to recognize the threats that most frequently impact them and how these could affect the education system. This is likely due to existing information that systematizes the occurrence of these events, such as data from the World Bank and other organizations. Document analysis shows that GPE countries mainly promote measures related to climate change and natural disasters, focusing on prevention and awareness, as well as greater attention to damage caused to educational infrastructure.

Regarding **migration**, data reveal that part of the population is emigrating to other countries, making it necessary to uncover the factors driving these dynamics. Although documents identify a close relationship between this phenomenon and violence, it is necessary to examine in greater depth the presence of violence and/or crime in the countries, how these disrupt the education of children and adolescents, and the ways these issues are addressed. This will also allow recognition of whether other types of threats are influencing internal and external migration.

Based on the connection between resilience and *vulnerable populations* grounded in the EGIS approach, the study aimed to identify if GPE countries mentioned these groups in their documents and if they were established as a priority. From this, the discussion incorporated the concept of intersectionality, which seeks to understand how various vulnerability factors interact and exacerbate educational inequalities.

Specifically, gender inequality remains a cross-cutting challenge in the region. While some countries acknowledge the need to promote gender equality policies, entrenched roles and stereotypes within the system may be limiting educational opportunities for women, while also affecting the performance and retention of male students. On the other hand, GPE countries are aware of the challenges involved in including students with disabilities, as they do not necessarily have plans, measures, or strategies in place. This suggests that many are in the process of creating and strengthening specialized strategies, although implementation may be slowed by data gaps. Regarding indigenous and Afro-descendant populations, documents provide data on their situation and highlight the need to prioritize them within education, albeit not uniformly across all countries. Finally, it is worth noting that the term “vulnerable populations” associated with system strengthening was found in only three GPE countries, which is a warning sign, given that disruptions in educational service disproportionately affect these populations, generating negative impacts even in the long term. Nonetheless, it remains necessary to explore other sources of information that allow identification of strategies put into practice to address this issue.

In many cases, terms linked to the concept of resilience appear in the analyzed documents; however, they do so in isolation, without considering that system resilience effectively includes all its elements: institutions, teachers, students, families, and communities—all organized around a shared goal or objective to achieve expected outcomes (Kelcey et al., 2024).

It must be clear that system-level responses to challenges do not depend solely on the State or specifically the education sector. As will be seen in the following documents, coordinated action is required among various state sectors such as education, transportation and communications, health, economy, and intergovernmental agencies that coordinate efforts between them, as well as with civil society sectors, the private sector, and international cooperation. Furthermore, decentralized education sector bodies should act in coordination under the Ministry’s leadership but with effective work by decentralized entities, school principals, and classroom teachers in cooperation with parents and students themselves. The role of mass media and the internet can also be key in providing effective responses, especially for the most vulnerable students. Likewise, all

these coordinated actions require information management that effectively guides efforts toward the most affected populations and optimizes resources without duplication.

Finally, although personal resilience appears in the analyzed documents, we want to highlight that mental health has not been sufficiently prioritized in response to events such as those mentioned, which lead to interruptions in studies but also sometimes involve the death of a family member, significant economic losses for the family, or isolation of the student from peers. All these aspects must also be considered in the resilient response from the education sector.

This first report provides a general overview of the use of term educational resilience at the system level in GPE countries. As for the next steps, we will analyze this concept in greater depth, linked to those threats that most affect the continuity of educational service in GPE countries. Specifically, we will focus on five types of threats: natural disasters, migration, crime and violence, epidemics or pandemics, and political or economic crises. This will allow identification of resilient practices that enable education systems to respond effectively to these threats, thus recognizing the types of elements or dimensions of educational resilience present in GPE countries and those yet to be developed.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

*Indicators associated with the education systems of GPE countries*

	Multidimensional Poverty Index (UNDP)	Total net enrollment rate in primary education (2023 - UNESCO)	School enrollment, secondary level (net %, World Bank)	Lower secondary completion rate (UNICEF - 2022)
Belize	0,017 (2015/2016)	87.61	71% (2018)	60 (2016)
Dominica	-	87.14	88% (2016)	-
El Salvador	0,032 (2014)	85.67	62% (2018)	73 (2014)
Grenada	-	81.63 (2021)	88% (2017)	-
Guatemala	0,134 (2014/2015)	92.54	44% (2018)	48 (2015)
Guyana	0,007	85.93	82% (2012)	83 (2020)
Haití	0,2 (2016/2017)	-	-	35 (2017)
Honduras	0,051 (2019)	79.34	44% (2017)	54 (2019)
Nicaragua	0,074 (2011/2012)	90.25	48% (2010)	-
Saint Lucía	0,007 (2012)	93.38	81% (2018)	92 (2012)
Saint Vincent	-	98.61	89% (2018)	-

**Note:** The Multidimensional Poverty Index measures poverty beyond economic income by identifying deprivations through 10 indicators classified into three dimensions of Human Development (education, health, and living standards). The health dimension includes two indicators: nutrition and child mortality. The education dimension considers years of schooling and school attendance. Finally, the living standards dimension is composed of indicators such as access to electricity, clean water, housing, sanitation, and material assets or resources. Regarding the data in the table, countries with indices closer to 0 show lower levels of multidimensional poverty, while Haiti and Guatemala show the highest levels among the GPE countries.

A dash (-) indicates the absence of data for those countries.

Taken from the United Nations Development Programme (2024), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2023), World Bank (2025), and United Nations Children’s Fund (2022).

## **Appendix 2**

### *List of documents consulted by country*

País	Education laws	Curricula	Strategic plans
Belize	Available	Available	Available
Dominica	Available	Available	Available
El Salvador	Available	Available	Available
Grenada	Available	Not available	Available
Guatemala	Available	Available	Available
Guyana	Available	Available	Available
Haití	Available	Not available	Available
Honduras	Available	Available	Available
Nicaragua	Available	Available	Available
Saint Lucía	Available	Available but not used	Available
Saint Vincent	Available	Available but not used	Available

**Note:** In the case of Guatemala and Guyana, curriculum guides were found by level and/or subject area, so one level was selected to represent the others.

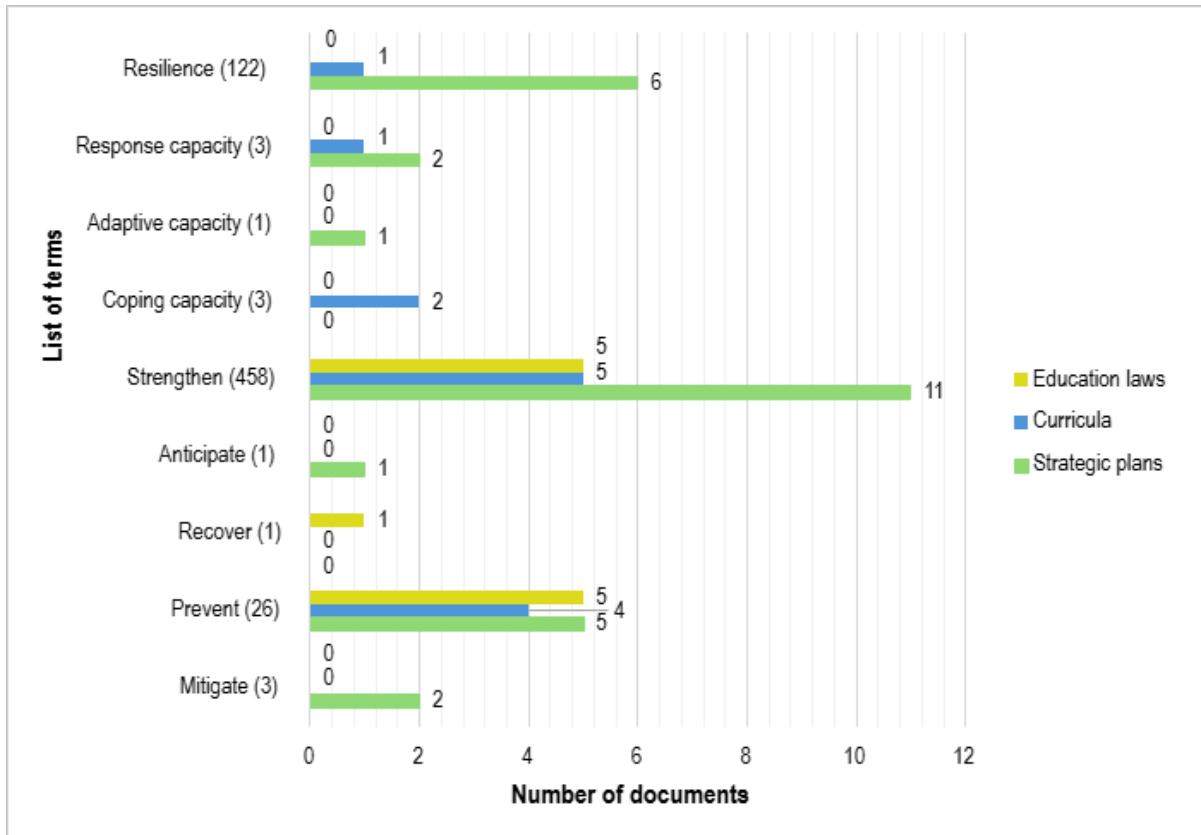
### Appendix 3

#### Names of documents consulted by country

Countries	Laws		Currícula		Plans	
<b>Belize</b>	Belize Education Act Chapter 36	<i>Available</i>	The Belize National Curriculum Framework	<i>Available</i>	Belize Education Sector Plan 2021-2025	<i>Available</i>
<b>Dominica</b>	Commonwealth of Dominica	<i>Available</i>	National Curriculum Framework	<i>Available</i>	Education Sector Plan 2023-30	<i>Available</i>
<b>El Salvador</b>	Ley General de Educación	<i>Available</i>	Currículo al servicio del aprendizaje	<i>Available</i>	Plan Sectorial de Educación 2022 - 2030	<i>Available</i>
<b>Granada</b>	Education Act – Subsidiary Legislation	<i>Available</i>		<i>Not available</i>	Education Sector Plan 2023-30 Grenada Carriacou and Petit Martinique	<i>Available</i>
<b>Guatemala</b>	Ley de Educación Nacional	<i>Available</i>	Currículo Nacional Base de Guatemala	<i>Available</i>	Plan Estratégico Institucional 2020-2024	<i>Available</i>
<b>Guyana</b>	Laws of Guyana Chapter 39:01 Education Act	<i>Available</i>	Students' Resources (MOE web)	<i>Available</i>	Education Sector Plan 2021-2025	<i>Available</i>
<b>Haití</b>	Décret organisant le système éducatif haïtien	<i>Available</i>		<i>Not available</i>	Plan décennal d'éducation et de formation (PDEF)	<i>Available</i>
<b>Honduras</b>	La Gaceta: Ley Fundamental de Educación	<i>Available</i>	CNB Currículo Nacional Básico	<i>Available</i>	Plan Estratégico del Sector Educación 2018-2030	<i>Available</i>
<b>Nicaragua</b>	Ley general de educación	<i>Available</i>	Currículo Nacional Básico	<i>Available</i>	Plan de Educación 2017-2021	<i>Available</i>
<b>Santa Lucía</b>	Chapter 18.01 Education Act	<i>Available</i>	Curriculum Guides CAMDU	<i>Available but not used</i>	Education Sector Plan 2023-2028 Saint Lucia	<i>Available</i>
<b>San Vicente y las Granadinas</b>	Chapter 202 Education Act	<i>Available</i>	Curriculum Guides	<i>Available but not used</i>	OECS Education Sector Strategy	<i>Available</i>

## Appendix 4

### Number of documents mentioning terms associated with resilience





# AdaptED

Observatorio para la Resiliencia Educativa  
en América Latina y el Caribe



[www.adapted-lac.org](http://www.adapted-lac.org)



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and Innovation for Latin America  
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