

## Lesson 2 Assignment: The management of tectonic hazards

The following question has been designed for A2-level students studying tectonic hazards. An extract from a high-scoring answer has been provided as well as a list of possible themes to explore as part of your answer.

**“The management response to earthquake disasters usually falls far short of people’s expectations.” Discuss.**

Your answer could address the following points, or ideas of your own:

- What reasons are usually put forward that help explain why aid efforts sometimes fail to achieve their objectives?
- Are there successful case studies of management responses that allow you to argue against the statement?
- Are some aspects of the management response more effective than others?
- Has the tectonic hazards response improved over time, for instance due to new technology?
- What is the evidence of responses improving over time, for instance in terms of lives saved?
- Which group of people is the statement referring to? Victims, observers, relief workers, or everyone? Perspectives may differ.

It is not always true to say that the management response is poor and falls short of expectations. Most people understand that it is difficult to coordinate efforts amongst all of the different NGOs and groups of local people who want to help out in an area where infrastructure may be devastated (in Haiti in 2010, the main port was destroyed by the quake and it was very difficult to get supplies shipped in at first). Responses have in general actually improved over time – recent events do not produce the kinds of casualties seen in past decades when 100,000s of people died due to lack of post-event help. Famine and disease – secondary hazards – used to claim far more lives (e.g. Tangshan China in 1976).

Many people – including NGO workers – may take a different view and would say they have learned from past mistakes how to really produce more positive results. For instance, NGOs increasingly work with local businesses and suppliers to build new housing rather than shipping in parts and workers from overseas because they understand the importance of getting the local economy up and running again. In Haiti, this approach has been taken by the NGO Architecture for humanity...

**Examiner’s comment** “This extract is taken from a high-scoring answer. It shows that the student is prepared to argue against the statement as well as in favour of it and can give a balanced assessment. The student has plenty of up-to-date evidence and is also able to look at different geographical perspectives – for instance, viewing things through the eyes of an NGO. There is also good understanding shown that the response needs to have long term goals like economic development in mind.”