



# How is educational resilience understood in countries in Latin America and the Caribbean?

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# Presentation

Educational resilience is no longer solely seen as a characteristic associated with individuals, but now encompasses the response, adaptation, and recovery capacities of systems in the face of challenges and threats that jeopardize the continuity of educational services. Although not an emerging concept, current contexts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, highlight the need to research, raise awareness, and promote initiatives that strengthen the resilience of education systems. In this regard, the Observatory for Educational Resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean, named AdaptED<sup>1</sup>, was created at the end of 2024. This initiative is part of the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Fund. The implementation of the initiative is led by the Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE), in partnership with SUMMA, the Research and Innovation Laboratory for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, and UNICEF's regional education office, in collaboration with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

This document is the first in a series of thematic studies focusing on GPE member countries. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the partner countries are Belize, Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines<sup>2</sup>. These countries face structural challenges related to educational coverage, the quality of learning outcomes, completion of secondary education, digital divides, centralization, and initial teacher education and professional development, among others, with significant variation in the relative importance of these challenges across countries. In this context, SUMMA, in collaboration with GPE KIX, has published ten national studies<sup>3</sup> that examine in greater depth the challenges<sup>4</sup> and opportunities faced by KIX LAC<sup>5</sup> countries.

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- 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 recently joined the group of GPE partner countries; however, it has not been included in this analysis.
  - 3 The national studies are available in the Library section, specifically under National Studies and Policies. The link is as follows: <https://summaedu.org/en/resource-library/all-resources/>
  - 4 To provide further insight into the challenges faced by each country, Annex 1 presents a selection of key educational indicators for each of the focal countries, which serve as contextual background for the discussion that follows.
  - 5 KIX LAC does not have a direct collaboration with Belize; therefore, no country-specific study is available for this country.



This is the first document in the series. The analysis that follows explores the presence of the concept of educational resilience, its meanings, and its practices in GPE countries, taking into account the characteristics, challenges, and threats affecting education systems at the systemic level. This analysis seeks to contribute to the identification and mobilization of evidence, as well as to decision-making processes that promote and strengthen the formulation of public policies and strategies related to resilience.

# 1. Strengthening the Capacities of Education Systems in the Face of Crises and Challenges

## 1.1 The Evolution of the Concept of Resilience Over Time

Resilience is a concept derived from Latin<sup>6</sup> that has been used since the seventeenth century in physics and engineering to describe materials that, despite being affected, are able to recover their original shape or position. Later, in the twentieth century, research on resilience emerged within psychology around the 1970s. Scholars such as Garmezy, Achenbach, Bowlby, Egeland, Gottesman, Rutter, Sameroff, and Sroufe began to study resilience in relation to phenomena associated with resistance to certain psychological pathologies at the individual or family level (Masten et al., 2021). Initially, resilience research developed through four waves. The first focused on identifying individuals who were able to adapt positively in contexts of risk compared to those who were not, while the second examined the processes that explained the reasons for better adaptation. Building on this, the third wave sought to intervene in these processes to promote more effective responses among young people in vulnerable conditions, and finally, the fourth wave incorporated more dynamic and system-oriented approaches (Masten et al., 2021). Since then, the concept has expanded to additional fields of study, while consistently emphasizing individuals' ability to adapt, overcome, or recover from the challenges they often encounter <sup>7</sup>(Granados et al., 2017).

Within the field of education, individual resilience has been studied as the capacity of a person to face adversity and recover from it (Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013, in Cameron et al., 2024). While from a psychological perspective, resilience was initially proposed as an intrinsic trait for both students and educators, enabling them to cope with and overcome educational disruptions, recent studies—such as Masten's (2021)—argue that it can, or should, also be promoted through educational practices, as it serves as a support mechanism for students, particularly those in vulnerable contexts. For example, some of these practices include the development of executive skills and parenting interventions, such as school meetings between parents and students to practice these skills, teacher training,

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6 From the English resilience, derived in turn from the Latin *resiliens*, -entis, the present active participle of *resilire* ("to leap back," "to rebound," "to recoil"). Consulted in the Royal Spanish Academy: <https://dle.rae.es/resiliencia>

7 In March 2025, we conducted a search for the term resilience in Google Scholar, which yielded 5,370,000 references.

and individual coaching for children. Several studies (Masten et al., 2015; Herbers, Cutuli, Supkoff, Narayan, and Masten, 2014, cited in Masten, 2021) suggest that these practices protect students and foster resilience (Masten, 2021).

Over time, the concept of resilience has evolved to encompass not only individuals but also the environments in which they operate, taking into account their relationships with family, community, and other social groups (Kelcey et al., 2024). Following this approach, this document analyzes Education System Resilience, which refers to “the capacity of an education system to absorb, withstand, and adapt to disruptions while ensuring the continuity of its vital functions” (Dulks et al., 2023, p. 3). This perspective has generated growing international interest. King and Surdayarma (2025) recently published an edited volume that brings together studies on how various countries have responded to the pandemic, natural hazards that result in disasters<sup>8</sup>, and armed conflicts, as well as on the impact of technology in educational contexts. Hereafter, we use the term Education System Resilience (ESR).

Although there is no absolute consensus on the term, several studies converge in identifying the dimensions that characterize Education System Resilience (ESR). According to Seng Tan and Jia (as cited in King and Surdayarma, 2025), a resilient system is one that can reorganize itself effectively to ensure the continuity of learning. This requires the presence of *resilient structures*, understood as the elements that sustain and enable an education system to adapt to change and crises, such as new rules, policies, and/or infrastructure. These structures should also be characterized by adaptability, agility, and efficient data management. In addition, *resilient processes* refer to actions grounded in an ecological approach that foster synergy among the different actors within the education system, such as the implementation of sector-wide change. The third element is *resilient people*, whose training should be grounded in values that guide their actions in the face of crises and challenges. This aligns with the social-ecological model, which underpins the ESR approach according to Cameron et al. (2024). This model promotes interaction and interconnectedness among actors within education systems and identifies the individual as the core of the model (Kelcey et al., 2024).

Other authors, such as Dulks et al. (2023), also emphasize the importance of recognizing certain elements in the definition, including the resilience of supports—which encompasses authorities and emergency services—psychological or mental health resilience, and the resilience of institutional or structural systems that are part of ESR. Taken together, educational resilience involves the

8 According to the report titled “Disaster Outlook in Latin America and the Caribbean 2000 – 2022”, disasters are not natural, as the role of societies in transforming phenomena or threats is recognized (UNDRR and OCHA, 2022).

interaction of multiple actors and dimensions, in which not only are the system's structures and processes strengthened, but the importance of fostering resilience in individuals is also recognized as a fundamental axis. In this regard, the present report draws on the aforementioned literature to develop an understanding of educational resilience as the capacity of systems to respond, adapt, and recover in the face of changes and threats, through the interconnection and strengthening of structures, processes, and people, with particular attention to the most vulnerable groups (Kelcey et al., 2024; Cameron et al., 2024; King and Surdayarma, 2025; Dulks et al., 2023).

## **1.2 Educational Resilience in Action: Models, Strategic Frameworks, and Regional Experiences**

One of the first attempts to systematize educational resilience was developed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2020, which created an initial model based on three levels that countries can achieve in the face of crises and threats: (1) Absorptive capacity, which refers to the ways of coping with shocks or adverse changes and the strategies developed to mitigate their impact; (2) Adaptive capacity, which enables medium- and long-term recovery, adjustment to new realities, and targeted support for vulnerable populations; and (3) Transformative capacity, which focuses on deeper changes and seeks to modify them through new processes, structures, and/or policies that strengthen system resilience. These three capacities operate across students, schools, communities, and institutions (USAID, 2020).

This report emphasizes the term capacities as a central axis for discussing educational resilience, particularly from the perspective proposed by UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). According to this approach, capacity refers to the resources of individuals, households, communities, institutions, and systems that enable them to cope with or withstand the impact of a threat (UNESCO, 2015). UNESCO (2015) notes that if an education system has the capacity—comprising knowledge, procedures, and resources—to ensure that each newly constructed school is disaster-resilient, the associated risk will be reduced. This aligns with the literature reviewed by Seng Tan and Jia (2025) and the USAID (2020) framework, as it envisions educational resilience that integrates capacities, structures, and actors across multiple levels.

On the other hand, within the agenda of efforts to put educational resilience into practice, the Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022–2030 stands out. Developed by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) in

collaboration with IIEP–UNESCO and UNICEF (2015), this framework seeks to ensure safe school environments by placing resilience at its core. To achieve this, it prioritizes the safety of students and educational staff, the protection and improvement of infrastructure, and the management of educational continuity. It also promotes disaster risk reduction education, the strengthening of teacher capacities, the removal of barriers affecting the most vulnerable groups, and intersectoral collaboration (GADRRRES, 2022).

Educational resilience, in addition to contributing to the promotion of capacities, also requires the coordination of responses among multiple actors and at various levels. According to UNESCO (2020), “it is necessary to ensure coordinated planning across sectors, governments, and humanitarian and development partners to respond effectively to the crisis (...). Any measure adopted in the education sector must be aligned with national priorities at both central and decentralized levels, in order to enhance the sustainability of efforts. In particular, any remote learning solution implemented should build on existing capacities and be applied in close coordination with national and subnational education authorities, including school principals and teachers” (p. 3). In this way, coordination represents not only a key axis within planning but also an important dimension for ensuring the continuity of educational services in the face of crises.

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a turning point that reinforced the importance of focusing on educational resilience, as it led many governments to close schools for extended periods. Under these conditions, the right of millions of students to access formal education was compromised. Digital resources and the internet became the primary means of communication to maintain the connection between teachers and students, alongside other media such as television and radio, which did not allow for the same level of interaction as digital tools. In this way, the pandemic exposed unequal access to learning resources, further exacerbating preexisting inequalities. Children in vulnerable situations were the most affected, particularly in LAC, including those living in rural areas, experiencing poverty, belonging to Indigenous communities, and/or living with disabilities (García Jaramillo, 2020).

In response to the gaps revealed by the health crisis, the UN Secretary-General for Education highlighted in a policy report the need to strengthen the resilience of education systems to achieve equitable and sustainable development (United Nations, 2020). Emphasis was placed on equity and inclusion, with measures designed to address the needs of the most vulnerable students. In addition, capacities at the individual, institutional, and organizational levels were promoted and reinforced



to respond to emergencies, which required ensuring coordination and leadership among various actors and fostering consultation and communication mechanisms (United Nations, 2020).

Although the pandemic is a recent example of the global impact on education systems, the need to strengthen educational resilience had already been identified and addressed previously. Following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which affected the region in 2017, UNICEF, for example, promoted resilience through the implementation of the Caribbean Safe Schools Program in countries such as Dominica, along with other social protection and prevention strategies in Haiti and support for educational infrastructure in Cuba (UNICEF, 2018).

In the Caribbean, this has been a central issue due to the region's historical exposure to constant climate change-induced hazards (UNESCO, 2023). The UNESCO report (2023) identifies particularly vulnerable populations as those who are economically disadvantaged, irregular migrants, girls and women, rural communities, Indigenous communities, and people living with disabilities.

In line with this effort, considered one of the most representative in terms of resilience, it is necessary to continue generating emergency actions that include an immediate response to mitigate the effects on the system, along with a recovery process that restores what was lost and ensures the continuity of education. As will be discussed later, there are 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.

The way education systems face various threats is closely linked to the notion of risk, understood as the interaction between exposure, vulnerabilities, and capacities. According to UNESCO (2015), "risk is a function of a society's or school system's exposure to different types of hazards and its overall level of resilience" (p. 11). Strengthening educational resilience involves recognizing that systems are affected by preexisting inequalities and vulnerabilities, as well as by the likelihood that certain hazards may manifest more intensely in some countries or regions. Nevertheless, capacities constitute a key axis for guiding these responses, as detailed in the glossary in the following section.

Therefore, given the threats and crises faced by education systems and the growing need to strengthen their capacity for anticipation and response, this document aims 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 research question is posed: How is educational resilience understood in countries in Latin America and the Caribbean? (specifically GPE countries).

It is important to emphasize that the meanings and practices of educational resilience are not limited to strategic and normative documents or expert testimonies; however, these sources provide valuable input for building an initial understanding of the Latin America and Caribbean region. The following sections present the terms used in the analysis and the main findings, including a specific section focused on results concerning 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 of the predominant perspectives in resilience research, ranging from individual-centered approaches to those addressing educational resilience at the system level, as well as the advances identified. By delving deeper into this new approach, associated terms are identified that enrich the conceptual debate and propose 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 section presents two lists of terms associated with educational resilience, aimed at providing an initial analysis of how prevalent these terms are within the education systems of GPE countries and identifying the main threats and challenges they face. These terms were identified based on the 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, challenges, and/or disruptions affecting them. Both sets are interconnected and allow for an analysis of resilience by recognizing the challenges and capacities of each system and the ways in which 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 key elements of educational resilience. In this way, we can observe the various ways systems adapt and effectively respond to adverse situations. This involves not only understanding the increasingly complex and diverse risks in education, but also developing mitigation and prevention strategies, identifying the participation of key actors at different levels of the educational environment, and recognizing approaches that create conditions for immediate responses and sustainable recoveries over time (Kelcey et al., 2024).



In this regard, the first selection of terms was based on the emergent analytical framework developed by the GPE KIX alliance in collaboration with IDRC<sup>9</sup>. This framework outlines strategic components for the resilience of education systems: strengthen, anticipate, plan, respond and recover, and prevent and mitigate. Its objective is to identify vulnerabilities within the education system through interventions at three levels: school, intermediate, and systemic. The framework also promotes the design of plans, procedures, and implementation policies for emergency situations, enabling systems to anticipate and manage disruptions that may arise in the future. For this purpose, the engagement and preparedness of diverse actors is fundamental. This approach includes strategies to ensure short-, medium-, and long-term responses to crises and 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, mitigate, and prevent. Additionally, two other terms proposed in the USAID model—coping capacity and adaptive capacity—were included (USAID, 2020). The work of UNESCO’s IIEP on resilience and capacities was also considered in identifying these terms (UNESCO, 2015). It is necessary to define these terms in order to assess their presence in the key documents of each country (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
*Definition of Terms Associated with Educational Resilience Identified*

List of Terms	Definition (**)
Resilience	Capacity of children, families, communities, and systems to adapt, strengthen, and maintain their functioning in the face of challenges, changes, and/or threats (such as disasters, political crises, epidemics, armed conflicts, or general violence).
Strengthen	To enhance a system’s response capacity through sustainable strategies, ensuring its adaptation and continuity in the face of challenges or crises.
Anticipate	To foresee future challenges through strategic planning, analysis of past experiences, and identification of potential scenarios.
Recover	To restore a system through short-, medium-, and long-term actions, ensuring its continuity, adaptation, and improvement in the face of future emergencies.

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9 See the following document: <https://www.gpekix.org/knowledge-repository/education-system-resilience-gpe-kix-scoping-study-working-paper>



Prevent	To implement strategies and actions that reduce the likelihood of crises and mitigate their impacts.
Mitigate	To take measures to reduce the impacts of crises or disasters.
Adaptive Capacity	To make informed decisions and adjust support strategies and other approaches in response to long-term social, economic, and environmental changes.
Response Capacity	To create 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	To reduce exposure and sensitivity to crises and stressors through preventive measures and appropriate coping strategies, in order to avoid lasting negative impacts.

\*\* Definitions adapted from USAID (2020), Cameron et al. (2024), and Bethke, L., Bird, L., & Sigsgaard, M. (2015) – UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (2015).

## 2.2 Threats to Education Systems and Related Terms

The threats or shocks impacting the world become challenges for education. Disasters<sup>10</sup>, climate change, conflicts, epidemics, and violence are well-known and growing challenges, and new threats continue to emerge. The literature highlights the need for the education sector to enhance its response capacities to both known and unforeseen threats (Rodriguez-Segura & Whitcomb, as cited in King & Suryadarma, 2025).

Moreover, education as a human right entails equity in access and quality of service for all individuals. In this context, equity is understood not only as equality of educational opportunities but also as the provision of greater resources to the most vulnerable. It also requires ensuring school retention while guaranteeing that educational pathways are accompanied by quality learning and expected educational outcomes (IPEBA, 2011). In addition to the structural challenges associated with quality, access, and equity, countries are also negatively affected by these threats and challenges, which, in an interconnected world, occur in a chain and become increasingly complex, generating social, economic, and environmental consequences (UNDRR & OCHA, 2023).

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10 Based on the literature review and consultations with key informants, it is important to highlight the tensions surrounding the term disasters. According to UNDRR and OCHA (2023) in their report Disaster Outlook in Latin America and the Caribbean 2000–2022, “general knowledge of disaster risk has evolved in recent years thanks to the efforts and support of the academic world and professionals involved in recognizing the unequivocal human complicity and responsibility in the creation, maintenance, and materialization 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 phenomena or hazards into disasters” (p. 11).

A first example is the 2010 Haiti earthquake, which measured 7.0 on the Richter scale and resulted in the deaths of more than 200,000 people, in addition to devastating effects on infrastructure (Duran, 2010). This catastrophe revealed the preexisting conditions in which the Haitian population lived and significantly worsened the country's political and economic crisis, as well as increasing violence and displacement. Moreover, 80% of schools were damaged or destroyed, disrupting the continuity of education for children and adolescents (UNDP, 2011). Another recent case was the volcanic eruption in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2020. "La Soufrière" volcano became active on December 29 and remained so until April 22, 2021, with the explosive phase occurring during the last 13 days of that year. More than 20,000 people lived in the affected area; 4,500 evacuated, and another 2,950 took refuge in shelters. Additionally, 40% of hospitals were located in high-risk zones, with two needing to be evacuated and rendered inoperative, all while the COVID-19 pandemic was ongoing (Pan American Health Organization, 2021).

In recent years, GPE countries have faced other types of disasters, including Tornado Sara (2024), Hurricane Beryl (2024), Hurricane Maria (2017), and Tropical Storm Erika (2015). Climate-related events 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 exacerbate cycles of poverty and inequalities among the most vulnerable families (Nusche et al., 2024). In addition, Latin America and the Caribbean are recognized as regions with high levels of violence, organized crime, political instability, and social inequalities, which annually affect the educational trajectories of children and adolescents (UNESCO, 2024).

At the 2021 UNESCO Regional High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Addressing of Violence in the Education Sector, it was noted that "the lack of a comprehensive understanding of violence and its 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" (p. 1). For this reason, threats to education systems should not be considered in isolation, as they often occur simultaneously or are interconnected, requiring coordinated actions.

It is important to highlight that, among the various disruptions affecting education systems, some may result in service interruptions due to school closures, significantly impacting students' educational trajectories. Nonetheless, such threats can also lead to changes in the modalities through which students access education, necessitating the strengthening of adaptive capacities in teaching and

learning processes, as well as in coordination and management, particularly in vulnerable contexts (King & Surdayarma, 2025).

Based on this information and the interviews conducted, a series of terms associated with the threats or challenges to which education systems should demonstrate resilience was selected. This second list of terms—related to threats to education systems—includes the following concepts: climate change, disasters, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, droughts, storms, emergencies, epidemics, crises, as well as other factors related to migration, crime, and violence. Definitions of these terms are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Definition of Terms Associated with Threats to the Continuity of Education Services*

List of Terms	Definitions (**)
Climate Change	Long-term changes in temperatures and weather patterns caused by natural factors and/or human activities (United Nations, n.d.).
Disasters	A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability, and capacity, resulting in one or more of the following: human, material, economic, and environmental losses and impacts (United Nations, 2016).
Hurricane	A type of rapidly rotating storm that forms over warm tropical oceans and is characterized as the most destructive climate-related phenomenon (WHO, 2020).
Earthquakes	Violent and sudden ground movements generated 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 normally dry (WHO, 2020).
Droughts	Prolonged dry periods caused by a lack of rainfall, affecting agriculture, health, the economy, energy, and the environment (WHO, 2020).
Storms	Phenomena caused by the presence of air masses and electrical discharges originating 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 generate a series of consequences, requiring urgent and coordinated actions (WHO, 2020).
Epidemics	Occurrence of diseases, behaviors, or health-related events within a community or region over an indeterminate period of time (WHO, 2020).
Crises	Situations or states of instability involving profound changes that impact systems, including people's lives, assets, property, and the environment (WHO, 2020).
Violence	Physical intent, power, or threat against oneself, an individual, groups, or communities that can cause various types of harm (PAHO, n.d.).
Crime	An act that constitutes a legal offense and is considered punishable (United Nations, n.d.).

\*\* 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 Present Is It in GPE Countries?

The previous section presented the list of terms associated with educational resilience (Table 1) and the threats to education systems (Table 2). The following section analyzes the presence of these terms in three types of key documents from each country. Before presenting the results, the methodology used is briefly described.

#### 3.1 Method: Content Analysis

The content analysis method was employed to identify the presence of terms in key country documents. According to Neuendorf (2002), this research technique allows for the characterization of a phenomenon based on interpretations of messages contained in documents, relying on the intersubjectivity of those who read and analyze them (Cueto et al., 2016).

As part of the analysis, three types of documents were selected for each of the eleven focal countries: the education law, the curriculum, and the sector's strategic plan. First, education laws were examined, as they constitute the normative and regulatory framework of education systems and typically include the rights and rules that guide students, teachers, and other stakeholders (Imber & van Geel, 2009). Second, the curriculum encompasses the set of study plans, programs, and activities, but it also reflects the reference framework for student well-being and development, depending on the approach adopted and the actions being implemented (Njeng'ere, 2014). Finally, the education strategic plan establishes the guidelines, objectives, and actions that ensure the country's educational development, based on a contextual assessment and a prioritized list of actions.

The selected documents for each country were published within the following year ranges: education laws from 1982 to 2022, curricula from 2004 to 2022, and strategic plans from 2014 to 2023. It is important to note that GPE countries may have their own action frameworks and complementary plans in the education sector, which are not included in this analysis. Therefore, this document serves as an initial comparative approach to the concept of educational resilience, without claiming to be exhaustive. Rather, it is intended as an opportunity to further explore progress on resilience in

each country following its publication. Additionally, normative and strategic documents can serve as tools to identify how processes are structured within education systems (Tan & Chua, 2025).

Annex 2 presents a table listing the countries and the availability of these documents. If a document was accessible, it was coded as “available,” and if it could not be found through online searches or consultations with key informants, it was coded as “not available.” However, for documents that were found but whose format did not allow for a word search, the code “available, but not used” was applied. For a more detailed reference, Annex 3 provides the full title of each document identified by country.

### 3.2 Results of the Document Review

Table 3 shows the frequency of terms by document type and, in parentheses, the number of countries in which these terms appear. For example, the word “resilience” is found 120 times in strategic plans and appears in 7 of the 11 GPE countries. The table also includes a total count for each term.

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

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 (7)	122
Response Capacity	0	1 (1)	2 (2)	3
Adaptive 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

<b>Recover</b>	1 (1)	0	0	1
<b>Prevent</b>	13 (5)	7 (4)	5(4)	25
<b>Mitigate</b>	0	0	3 (2)	3
<i>Threats to Educational Systems and Related Terms</i>				
<b>Climate Change</b>	0	2 (2)	22 (9)	24
<b>Disasters</b>	4 (4)	22 (5)	117(10)	143
<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)	19 (8)	23
<b>Epidemics</b>	1 (1)	0	1 (1)	2
<b>Emergencies</b>	9 (4)	1 (1)	25 (5)	35
<b>Crises</b>	3 (1)	0	36 (6)	39

\*\* Note: The table shows 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, both occurring in a single document. Prepared by the authors based on key documents included in Annex 3.

### 3.3 Analysis of Emerging Themes

The previous section showed the frequency of terms associated with educational resilience and the threats or challenges faced by educational systems (Table 3). The following section analyzes the presence of these terms in key documents from each country.

## **A. Educational Resilience: How Is It Understood in GPE Countries?**

The term “resilience” is not present in the education laws and appears scarcely in the reviewed curricula. The exception is Belize’s National Curriculum, where the term appears twice, recognizing the changes occurring in the world and, therefore, emphasizing the importance of structural adaptability, innovation, and resilience. While the documents identify the presence of threats affecting educational continuity, the resilience approach seems more aligned with an individual perspective, as it emphasizes the need to promote students’ skills to face these challenges, such as conflict analysis and problem-solving (Ministry of Education of Belize, 2022).

In the case of the reviewed strategic plans, the term appears 120 times and is distributed across seven countries: Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, and Saint Lucia (see Annex 4, detailed by country). However, Dominica has the highest frequency of mentions (102) in its 2023–2030 Strategic Plan. This document notes that resilience is a national priority, with efforts made to improve student well-being, institutional strengthening, school infrastructure, climate resilience, and the use of technology. A school-level information system called OpenSis, together with the annual school survey, allows the collection of data on the country’s education system, such as identifying students with access to the internet and technological devices (Ministry of Education of Dominica, 2024). The country also seeks to strengthen students’ competencies, including knowledge on risk reduction and resilience, linked to mental health, psychosocial well-being, and climate resilience. Although the term “educational resilience” is not explicitly included, several dimensions from the literature are incorporated into the national agenda, which is notable in the context of this study (Ministry of Education of Dominica, 2024).

Following Hurricane Maria in 2018, Dominica established the National Resilience Development Strategy (NRDS), aimed at strengthening infrastructure and creating social protection systems capable of adequately responding to threats. Although the strategy is not specific to the education sector, the strategic plan notes that “The NRDS 2030 urges the Ministry of Education to ‘build and manage an education system that is socially and environmentally sensitive and responsive, nationally relevant, and globally competitive’” (Ministry of Education of Dominica, 2024, p.36). Additionally, the reviewed document includes a table aligning the Strategic Plan with national, regional, and international education commitments, with the NRDS (2024) identified as one of the responsible entities. The document also references the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to ensure adequate measures for safe schools and that all are resilient to climate events and threats (NRDS, 2024). CDEMA is an intergovernmental agency focused on disaster



management, not only for Dominica but for the wider Caribbean community (CARICOM). GPE countries participating include Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

For the other six countries where the term appears, references are mostly linked to strengthening resilience in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Grenada and Honduras, this is reflected in pedagogical approaches (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023; Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2019); in Guyana, it is associated with digital transformation and support for vulnerable populations in the Strategic Plan (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021). In Saint Lucia, the focus is on school climate resilience and the strengthening of psychosocial support (Ministry of Education of Saint Lucia, 2023), while in Belize it emphasizes building students' capacities, which is also mentioned in the curriculum (Ministry of Education of Belize, 2021). Lastly, in Guatemala, the need to ensure resilience capacity is highlighted as part of the K'atun National Development Plan: Our Guatemala 2032 (PND), which outlines the country's development trajectory through that year (Government of Guatemala, 2020).

In seven countries (Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, and Saint Lucia), the term “resilience” was found in the strategic plans analyzed, with areas linked to this concept including institutional infrastructure, technology and innovation, and student capacities and well-being. In Saint Lucia, as in Dominica, the concept was applied in relation to school climate resilience, which is supported by the literature (Bazin & Saintis, 2021; Nusche et al., 2024).

The low presence of the term “resilience” in education laws and curricula may reflect that it has not yet been consolidated as a widely used concept in official documents. This could be because the main advances have mainly come from international organizations, or because within governments it is addressed using other related terms, also considering that many of the documents were published several years ago.

Considering this, in addition to the term “resilience,” Table 1 also presents the list of terms linked to educational resilience, according to the literature review. These terms were included because, even if countries do not explicitly use the term “resilience,” they may still demonstrate practices or actions associated with it. The terms from the USAID model—response capacity, adaptive capacity, and coping capacity—were mentioned very few times. In contrast, the terms from the emerging IDRC framework—strengthen, mitigate, prevent, anticipate, and recover—were recorded more

frequently in the documents<sup>11</sup>. The presence of this group of terms allows us to approximate the strategies and actions that predominate in GPE countries when facing challenges. The following subsections provide a deeper analysis of these terms.

## **B. Commitment to Strengthening Educational Systems**

According to Table 3, which shows the frequency of terms by document type, the concept strengthen (458 occurrences) stands out above the others, particularly in strategic plans (348), making it relevant to assess in which specific contexts it is most frequently used and what types of actions predominantly accompany this term. The word strengthen is associated with actions or strategies across different educational aspects in the countries, which could be aimed at ensuring the continuity of educational services and/or the quality of learning in emergency situations. The emphasis is on five dimensions: attention to vulnerable populations, strengthening infrastructure, teacher training, educational management, and curriculum design.

Similarly, in 3 of the 11 countries of interest, the term strengthen was mentioned in connection with the identification and support of vulnerable populations<sup>12</sup>. This is the case in El Salvador, where—due to the impact of COVID-19—a strategic rethinking was carried out regarding emergencies and disasters to support the most vulnerable families (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2019). In Belize, it is proposed 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 focuses on strengthening the internal efficiency of the education system by mitigating school dropout and addressing the needs of displaced children and returning migrants (Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2019, p.71).

One way to understand resilience is through the strengthening of the system, particularly in relation to educational infrastructure and safe spaces. Again, three countries include information linked to this term. The Government of El Salvador is aware that various threats disrupt the continuity of schooling and deteriorate school facilities (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2021). 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,

11 In Annex 6, a chart can be observed showing the number of documents in which each term associated with resilience was recorded.

12 See further information on vulnerable populations in Section 3 of the document.



2020). Saint Lucia recognizes that one of its main priorities is the promotion and maintenance of safe workplaces, and, in addition, the National Infrastructure Assessment proposes to “strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of schools to climate risks and disasters, which also serve as emergency shelters” (Ministry of Education, 2023, p.19). At this stage, it cannot be confirmed that these objectives are fully implemented, but it is evident that the mentioned countries prioritize strategies that strengthen infrastructure and appropriate spaces.

Thirdly, emphasis on teacher training occupies an important space in the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). For example, in Grenada’s strategic plan, a program is proposed to prioritize the improvement of quality and learning through the strengthening of teachers’ professional competencies (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023). Along with Guyana, they focus on improving learning competencies and reforming the curriculum (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023; Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021). 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, 2023, p. 21). This aligns with what Seng Tan and Jia En Chua (2025) mention, where agility and adaptability are key elements for responding to and managing changes in the context of educational resilience. Agility relates to the speed of response, while adaptability refers to the way disruptions are faced and managed. Finally, regarding the link between strengthening and curriculum design, Guyana cites the European Union as an example and emphasizes the need to strengthen competencies such as language, literacy, mathematics, science and engineering, digital skills, personal and social skills, civic competence, entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021).

The term “strengthen” refers to improving a system’s capacity to respond through sustainable strategies, ensuring its adaptation and continuity in the face of challenges or crises (see Table 1). Regarding the results obtained, strengthening is aimed at addressing the five dimensions mentioned, once again considering school infrastructure and safe spaces as a priority within the GPE countries. This does not necessarily imply that programs are already being implemented, as many strategic plans have been published recently or are in the process of being released, as is the case in Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Lucia. It should be noted that information from Haiti and Nicaragua has not been included in this section because no results were recorded for this term, which does not necessarily mean that strengthening is not being considered.

### **C. Prevention, Recovery, and Mitigation: What Is Recognized and What Is Missing?**

The presence of the terms prevent (25), mitigate (3), recover (1), and anticipate (1) is considerably lower than that of the terms mentioned in the previous section. This does not necessarily mean that such strategies are not being addressed in the educational systems of GPE countries, but rather that fewer instances were found in the documents reviewed. As shown in Table 1, each term serves a specific function, including anticipating challenges, implementing strategies to reduce the likelihood of crises, restoring the system through short-, medium-, and long-term actions, and improving response capacity. All these functions work interdependently to create more resilient educational systems in crisis contexts.

Regarding the findings on the term prevent, education laws emphasize the prevention of diseases within schools, with Belize, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines using mechanisms to close schools in case of disease outbreaks. Nicaragua focuses on teachers' working conditions to prevent illness (La Gaceta: Diario Oficial de Nicaragua, 2022), while Guatemala links it to the care of students with special needs (Congress of the Republic of Guatemala, 1991). Although the term appears in these five countries, there is no evidence of a broader approach aimed at ensuring educational continuity in crises beyond those related to diseases or epidemics, nor incorporating other types of threats. Furthermore, only one country associates it with the needs of vulnerable populations. The other six countries do not include this term.

In the curricula, four countries contain the term prevention. It is promoted through learning in four areas: disease prevention such as HIV through health and family life education (Ministry of Education of Dominica, 2004), disaster prevention (Government of the Republic of Guatemala, 2016), accident prevention and safety promotion (Secretaría de Educación de la República de Honduras, 2003), and conflict prevention (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2020). In strategic plans, the countries that mention the term are Belize, focusing on the prevention of hunger, obesity, and other forms of malnutrition in vulnerable children (Government of Belize); El Salvador, through the prevention and protection of children's human rights (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2021); Grenada, aiming to prevent barriers to educational access (Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023); and Haiti, focusing on disaster prevention due to its effects on the education system (MENFP, 2020).

Regarding the term anticipate, understood as forecasting future disruptions through analysis of past and potential experiences, the only document that addresses it is Haiti's Strategic Plan. It recognizes the need for a systemic approach, where strategic actions are planned in an interconnected manner. This implies that challenges cannot be addressed in isolation, but rather by analyzing the



interrelation of different components, highlighting this approach: “The systemic approach: plan strategic actions in an interconnected way” (MENFP, 2020, p.14).

Finally, the term mitigate is mentioned in only two countries. In Belize, it is one of the main objectives of the Strategic Plan: “It is designed to protect the future: Mitigate threats likely to affect the education system now and in the future” (Government of Belize, 2021). In Dominica, lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, Hurricane Maria, and Tropical Storm Erika have driven the Ministry of Education to make significant investments to mitigate school disruptions, including the installation of internet, distribution of digital devices to students, and provision of adequate school services (Ministry of Education, 2023). The term recover does not appear in the reviewed documents, except in Dominica, where its context is not directly related to the present study.

The analysis shows that these terms appear less frequently in the reviewed documents, and when present, they focus on infrastructure, school safety, health, and disasters. However, there is still no evidence of interconnected responses demonstrating how educational continuity is ensured in the face of threats. Therefore, further analysis is needed to explore the relationship between strengthening and strategies for prevention, recovery, mitigation, and anticipation of crises in educational systems.

## **D. Challenges and Threats Faced by Education Systems**

Returning to Table 3, which also presents the results of terms associated with threats and challenges to the education system, it is observed that the most frequent and recorded terms are: disasters, hurricane, crisis, and emergencies. When analyzed by the number of countries using them, two other terms appear: climate change and migration. Both, along with disasters, appear in 10 of the 11 GPE countries, primarily in their education strategic plans (see Annex 5 specified by country). In contrast, for laws and curricula, each term was recorded in at least three countries.

First, the literature review on resilience identified numerous authors linking it to climate change. For example, Nusche et al. (2024) describe in depth the relationship between this term and its impact on education systems. Currently, it is recognized that extreme weather events disrupt the education of 40 million students worldwide each year (Nusche et al., 2024). If countries lack adaptation measures, the consequences are greater in terms of school infrastructure, health, and learning. For this reason, it is necessary to prioritize an Education for Sustainable Resilience (ESR) approach that contributes to facing and recovering from challenges related to climate change. Ten of

the eleven GPE countries have at least one mention of this term in their documents: Belize, Guyana, Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Saint Lucia. In nine of them, the mention occurs in the strategic plans, and in Belize, it is recorded in its education law. The only country that does not include it in its documents is Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and this information is based on the most recent document published online for the 2014–2019 period. However, it should be clarified that in this exercise it was not possible to access the curriculum or the latest strategic plan.

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

Regarding the content analysis of the term disaster, the search revealed that it is the second most mentioned concept (see Table 3) and is present in at least one document from each country. In the case of education laws, the highest number of mentions corresponds to Nicaragua (2), and Guatemala is the country with the highest frequency in the curriculum (14 mentions). It should be noted that for this country, no document covering all levels of primary and secondary education was found, so the sixth-grade primary curriculum was selected as a reference. In the GPE countries' strategic plans, 117 mentions were recorded, with Dominica having the highest number of references.

The UNICEF report *Learning Interrupted* (2024) provides a global overview of school disruptions related to climate and describes how education systems are being widely affected by disasters associated with such phenomena. School disruption can result from damage to school infrastructure or because schools are used as shelters for affected families (UNICEF, 2024). Some education laws in GPE countries seem to acknowledge this issue. Additionally, the type of response in Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is associated with the temporary or permanent closure of schools, at least at the regulatory level. Although Belize does not contain the

term “disasters,” two mentions of the term “natural hazards” were observed, related to meeting standards and requirements when constructing schools.

In five countries (Honduras, Guyana, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua), the emphasis in curricula is on training and prevention. This involves recognizing what disasters are and their types. It also disseminates ways to mitigate them and the impacts they may have on the country. Finally, a law focused on disasters was identified in Guatemala: the National Coordination Law for Disaster Reduction (Decree 109-96; Government of Guatemala, 2020).

Lastly, the 2023–2030 Education Sector Plan of Dominica stands out, registering 55 mentions of the term disaster. Although the document has not been officially published, it is recognized nationally and by international organizations such as UNICEF, the World Bank, and the OECS. Regarding content, the term highlights “disaster-resilient infrastructure” as an important pillar of the Caribbean School Safety Initiative (CSSI), which is mentioned throughout the text. At the school level, the need to include emergency plans and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies as part of school development plans is recognized. The DRR term is frequently mentioned in the document.

Furthermore, the plan references the Regional Strategy for Comprehensive Disaster Management and the 2014–2024 Results Framework, a regional strategic framework developed by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, which also works with Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Finally, the term disaster is linked to Hurricane Maria in 2017, after which remote learning strategies and disaster risk reduction measures were implemented to support educational continuity. In this regard, it is noted that “through institutional strengthening and capacity development in disaster risk reduction, further reinforcement will be achieved via the plan to strengthen the resilience of the sector” (Ministry of Education, 2023, p.81).

Another term mentioned is migration. Before presenting the findings, it is necessary to note that migration is not addressed as a threat, but it is included in this section because it is a challenge intertwined with various factors, for which the right to education must be guaranteed. Many children and adolescents in vulnerable contexts experience interruptions in their educational trajectories due to mobility, in terms of migration and displacement. According to the IOM (2014), human mobility frames the various ways in which people move, which will be specified in Section 4. It is also important to emphasize migration, as “the current situation represents an alert for ensuring the right to inclusive, equitable, quality education with lifelong learning opportunities. Even more so when people around the world are moving in search of better and greater opportunities to achieve

a dignified life, and their rights are not guaranteed in transit and destination countries, including their right to education” (UNESCO, 2024, p.5).

A UNESCO report mentions the link between migration and education as “a complex phenomenon that affects those who stay, those who migrate, and those who receive them” (2022, p.12). According to the World Bank, migration<sup>13</sup> rates show that El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua had a high number of people leaving the country in 2023. Meanwhile, in Belize, 600 more people arrived than left, creating a need in the education system to accommodate them, especially if they do not speak the local language. Regarding the frequency of the term, it is mentioned in eight countries: Belize (1), El Salvador (3), Guatemala (1), Guyana (1), Haiti (1), Honduras (1), Saint Lucia (1), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (10). The mentions are specifically in the strategic plans, except for Guatemala (1), which also includes it in its curriculum.

Content analysis shows that migration is linked to other economic, social, and educational factors, supporting the idea that there are interconnected conditions of vulnerability. For example, El Salvador’s strategic plan describes the country as lacking opportunities, having socioeconomic inequalities, and limited social mobility. This is associated with high levels of violence that “afflict its inhabitants daily, which is why migration has become the option for thousands of compatriots who do not find opportunities to develop or even to dream of a valuable life project” (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2021, p.12). For Honduras and Haiti, the term migration is related to school dropout. In 2014, the humanitarian crisis in Honduras caused 18,244 students to leave the country. Therefore, the strategic plan emphasizes the need for a comprehensive human rights policy that enables the integration of deported migrant children (Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2020).

The results for the term also include internal migration in Guatemala and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where there is evidence of movement from rural to urban areas and overcrowding in these schools (Government of Guatemala, 2020). Additionally, in Guatemala, the indigenous population has had to migrate due to various factors, which implies considering their linguistic diversity in other contexts, but without an adequate strategy to include them (Government of Guatemala, 2020). In the case of Saint Lucia, migration is considered an important factor when examining primary school enrollment rates (Ministry of Education, 2023). In most countries, the

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13 The World Bank’s net migration indicator measures the difference between the number of people entering a country and the number of people leaving it over a given period of time. For example, a negative value such as -600 indicates that 600 more people have left the country or region than have arrived.

content of the documents relates to a diagnosis of the country's situation and the importance of comprehensive policies to address it. Moreover, rather than a causal or effect-based relationship, migration is part of interconnected factors, where disasters, violence, poverty, school dropout, and lack of attention to rural areas and indigenous populations, among others, stand out. In these contexts of vulnerability, many people and communities are forced to move.

Likewise, the terms crisis and emergencies are closely related to what was mentioned above. In the reviewed documents, the term crisis is used in institutional, political, and socio-economic contexts of the countries and in the effects on educational systems. In relation to GPE countries, this involves educational management and teacher training (Haiti and El Salvador), as well as class interruptions due to school closures (Honduras and Grenada).

Finally, we would like to highlight the work of the National Disaster Management Agency of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique (NaDMA), which is responsible for budget allocation for disasters and emergencies. The National Emergency Management Organization in Saint Lucia, the Office of Disaster Management in Dominica, and the Civil Defense Commission in Guyana, among others, are also recognized. In all these cases, these entities manage the national response to disasters in close collaboration with the Ministries of Education (MoEs).

## 4. An intersectional perspective: addressing vulnerable populations

Since the educational resilience approach adopted here assumes that disruptions in schooling affect the most vulnerable groups more severely, this section focuses on students living in poverty, in some cases Indigenous or Afro-descendant populations, students with disabilities, migrants, or displaced persons. Additionally, the gender dimension is incorporated as a central axis of the analysis, addressing both the historical marginalization of women in most countries in LAC and the specific challenges faced by male students (Cameron, et al., 2024; Government of Guatemala, 2020; MINED, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2023). According to the World Health Organization (2022), vulnerable populations are “people who share one or more characteristics that are grounds for discrimination or adverse social, economic, cultural, political, or health circumstances that prevent them from exercising their rights or enjoying equal opportunities” (p. 51). Table 4 presents indicators associated with these groups. However, 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)	Gini Index	New Internal Displacements (2023)		
					Under 18 Years	Proportion Due to Conflict and Violence (%)	Proportion Due to Disasters (%)
Belize	0.428	29,2% (2022)	53%	39.9 (2018)	-	-	-
Dominica	-	-	28%	-	-	-	-
El Salvador	0.362	-	25%	39.8 (2023)	21,400	93	7
Grenada	0.226	-	63%	43.8 (2018)	-	-	-

Guatemala	0.480	0,2% (2018)	47%	45.2 (2023)	18,200	1	99
Guyana	0.427	20,8 % (2012)	73%	45.1 (1998)	13	0	100
Haiti	0.618	-	40%	41.1 (2012)	95 800	96	4
Honduras	0.437	1.0% (2001)	40%	46.8 (2023)	3 800	47	53
Nicaragua	0.408	-	40%	46.2 (2014)	330	30	70
Saint Lucía	0.327	-	81%	43.7 (2015)	-	-	-
Saint Vincent	-	-	46%	-	-	-	-

**Note:** The GGI reflects gender-based disadvantages across three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. 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 outcomes, to 1, where one gender performs worse across all the dimensions mentioned (UNDP, 2023).

The percentage of the rural population, identified by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), measures the proportion of people living in rural areas within a country's or region's total population.

The Gini Index measures the extent to which income distribution among individuals or households in an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies maximum inequality.

The World Bank presents the percentage of people living in rural areas within a country's or region's total population.

New internal displacements refer to the number of people forced to leave their homes within their country's borders due to conflict, violence, disasters, or human-induced causes, recorded over a specific period (UNICEF, 2023).

(-) indicates the absence of data for the countries.

Taken from the United Nations Development Programme (2023), Inter-American Development Bank (n.d.), and United Nations Children's Fund (2024).

The educational attention given to vulnerable groups has had some relevance in the literature review conducted. In this regard, Cameron et al. (2024) emphasize that ESR should incorporate a Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) approach, so that educational systems are equitable and inclusive, ensuring that not only the privileged population has access to education or completes it on time while acquiring the corresponding knowledge and skills. Additionally, the literature shows that the aforementioned vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by threats and crisis contexts, indicating that governments should direct their efforts toward the comprehensive creation of policies and programs that guarantee access to and retention in education (UNDRR, 2015, as cited in Cameron et al., 2024).

An essential aspect for analyzing vulnerable populations in GPE countries is intersectionality. Although the literature reviewed on educational resilience does not explicitly mention this 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 in terms of socioeconomic status. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) proposes that this approach functions as a “lens” to understand how various forms of inequality operate together and reinforce one another. When applied to the educational field, the intersectional approach allows for the analysis of how different dimensions of student vulnerability interact (Varsik & Gorochovskij, 2023). In other words, a student may be exposed to greater educational crises or challenges if, at the same time, they face factors such as being a migrant, belonging to an indigenous or Afro-descendant group, having a disability, or living in poverty (Cueto, Miranda & Vásquez, 2016). Cueto et al. (2016) suggest that gender, ethnicity, disability, and poverty are elements that can interfere with achievements in basic education.

Based on the document review, five dimensions of exclusion are presented, which represent barriers to the educational development of students in GPE countries. Although the division is organized into sections, the presentation of this intersectional approach serves as a recognition that multiple factors simultaneously affect children and adolescents. In general terms, GPE countries show that when vulnerable populations are mentioned in curricula, laws, and, to a greater extent, in strategic plans, the focus is on the need to guarantee access to education, mitigate inequalities, and protect vulnerable groups from increasing threats

## **4.1 Gender: Inequalities in the Educational Field**

In crisis situations, pre-existing gender inequalities in the educational field tend to be exacerbated. Girls and women are more likely to suffer harm compared to men. According to UN Women (2023), they face unequal access to economic, political, and social resources, and incidents of sexual and gender-based violence increase (Cameron, et al., 2024).

Regarding the findings from GPE countries, the results focus on two main priorities: equitable access to education and curriculum adaptation. While it is evident that gender equity remains a challenge for most countries, they acknowledge the need to implement strategies to address it. Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua highlight how structural barriers affect the educational trajectories of students, specifically girls. In El Salvador, the MINEDUCYT Gender Equity and Equality Policy

seeks to eradicate gender-based violence. In Guatemala and Nicaragua, girls face greater obstacles to accessing and remaining in school. Adolescent pregnancy and early marriage, as well as gender stereotypes, are factors that limit their educational opportunities (Government of Guatemala, 2020; MINED, 2017). Therefore, the need for promoting intersectoral policies is recognized:

“All girls and boys, women and men should have equal opportunities to receive a quality education, achieve equivalent educational levels, and equally enjoy the benefits of education. Special attention should be given to adolescent girls and young women who may be affected by issues such as gender-based violence, child marriage, early pregnancy, and the burden of domestic chores, as well as those living in areas with high poverty rates or remote rural regions. In contexts where young people are disadvantaged, specific objectives should also be adopted for them. Policies aimed at overcoming gender inequalities are more effective when they are part of a 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 boys demonstrate lower academic performance and lower enrollment rates, with a 6% gap in favor of girls (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021). In Saint Lucia, low performance is associated with a lack of curricular adaptation, inadequate infrastructure in secondary schools, and, particularly, “the disproportionate support given to boys due to social constructions 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 illustrates how gender roles can impact the educational trajectories of male students, as well as females, as mentioned previously.

All GPE countries mentioned the term “gender” at least once in their documents. It is noteworthy that none of them considered the diversity of gender identities, as the focus was solely on men and women. Progress shows certain differences between countries, such as Belize and Grenada, where universal access to education is prioritized, which involves addressing structural inequalities, while others have focused on curricular adaptations and policy development. Many of the reviewed documents link the gender approach with other factors such as poverty, migration, ethnicity, and disability, reinforcing the goal of adopting a more intersectional perspective in educational resilience.

## 4.2 Disability: in search of a more inclusive approach

According to the Pan American Health Organization, people with disabilities “are those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, 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 countries have deficiencies in policy design and resource allocation focused on people with disabilities. Furthermore, access to data on children with disabilities is limited<sup>14</sup>. During the pandemic, access to education was a challenge for many countries, but it was even more critical for students with some type of disability (World Bank, 2020, as cited in Cameron et al., 2024).

The reviewed documents highlight the access barriers faced by students with disabilities. Although Haiti has sectoral strategies for access, quality, and governance, implementation remains a challenge, as less than 5% of children with disabilities attend schools, whether specialized or regular (MENFP, 2020). Similarly, the coverage of Special Education in Honduras is only 0.1%, despite 10% of the population having some type of disability (Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2019). On the other hand, the education laws of Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent consider that families and schools must notify the authorities of the need for special attention, though these authorities are not specified. Saint Vincent and Grenada note that students with severe disabilities may be excluded from regular education (Ministry of Education, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 2014; Ministry of Education of Grenada, 2023).

GPE countries identify obstacles to the inclusion of students with disabilities, and several even acknowledge the need to implement new strategies. Some countries focus more on strengthening methodologies within special education, while others suggest providing specialized and adapted support within regular schools. This latter approach reflects a more inclusive perspective and has achieved positive results, according to internationally recognized practices.

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



### **4.3 Ethnicity: attention to Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations**

Over the years, Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples have experienced situations of exclusion and inequality, notably in terms of access to education. One of the major advances is that Latin American and Caribbean countries began to recognize themselves as multiethnic and multicultural, which provides a foundation for future policies (Bello & Rangel, 2000). However, many ethnic groups are located in rural or remote areas, where social services and infrastructure are limited, and establishing them is much more costly than in urban areas, which have higher population density. This implies that, in the event of disasters or crises, the consequences are more severe in rural areas. Additionally, as evidenced during the pandemic, there is a gap in many countries regarding access to technological resources and connectivity for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and/or rural students (Cameron et al., 2024).

It is important to note that there are differences between Caribbean and Central American countries. In countries such as Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the Afro-descendant population represents a smaller proportion and, in many cases, is considered a minority group. In contrast, in the insular Caribbean, Afro-descendant populations constitute the majority and, in some countries, form part of the political and economic elite. In this regard, their political agenda is mainly oriented toward seeking historical reparations for the impacts of colonialism and slavery, demanding mechanisms of justice and reparation, since poverty and vulnerability continue to affect large sectors of the Afro-descendant population (Agudelo, 2019).

Regarding the document review, the GPE countries that incorporate approaches or strategies related to ethnic diversity, specifically Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations, are 6 out of 11: Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Belize, Guyana, and Dominica. There are various approaches, but they mainly focus on recognizing diversity and the existence of Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB). Nicaragua considers itself a multiethnic and multicultural country and mentions the implementation of EIB in Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities (MINED, 2017), as does Honduras, which recognizes the country's cultural and ethnic identities (Secretaría de Honduras, 2019).

The overview of Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations is based on data collection from each country. On this point, Honduras highlights the vulnerability of its Indigenous population, stating that "data show that the illiteracy rates of this ethnic group are significantly higher than the national average, particularly that of the Lenca group, which constitutes more than 50% of the country's

ethnic minority population and has an illiteracy rate that is 7 percentage points above the national average” (El Diálogo-FEREMA, 2017, p.20; Secretaría de Honduras, 2019, p.25). Data from Guyana also show differences in school dropout rates by ethnic group. For example, Afro-Guyanese children have the second-highest rates of school exclusion (Ministry of Guyana, 2021).

#### **4.4 Human Mobility: Migration, Displacement, and Educational Continuity**

Much of the media coverage has contributed to portraying issues related to migration and displacement in a negative and polarized manner (IOM, 2012). However, when discussing migration, it is essential to frame it within the concept of human mobility, which refers to the movement of people from one place to another as part of their right to free movement. The reasons for such movement can be voluntary or forced, and the intention may be to stay for short or long periods. This process often crosses geographical or political boundaries in both domestic and international contexts. As noted by the International Organization for Migration (2012), the usefulness of this concept “is to integrate all forms of human movement into a single idea, including refuge, international migration, forced mobility due to transnational crimes (human trafficking), mobility within integration systems, among others. At the same time, it is recognized that each of these forms of mobility is influenced by a range of factors—social, political, cultural, economic, etc.—which do not have similar characteristics in all cases” (p. 17).

Within this framework, defining and analyzing migrants can be complex, and the difficulties in reaching a consensus definition in the reviewed literature are acknowledged. According to the IOM report published in 2024, migration is not uniform worldwide but responds to multiple processes and dynamics. It is not merely driven by economic reasons; rather, it often constitutes a strategy to access basic goods, such as education and health, which open new opportunities for both the migrant and their children or family (IOM, 2024).

Regarding education, new mobility trends are placing the right to education under increasing pressure. UNESCO (2022) highlighted the rise of forced movements: in 2017, there were 250 million international migrants, 67 million of whom were forcibly displaced due to poverty, violence, and disasters. Additionally, the magnitude and frequency of climate change impacts are increasing, and there is a recognized interaction between poverty, fragile states, and vulnerable environments affecting migration processes. These dynamics not only coexist but also interact differently in each country, impacting both people on the move and host communities. For these reasons, the demand

for education is among the main priorities, putting pressure on states' capacity to guarantee this right (UNESCO, 2022).

For Central America and the Caribbean, migration dynamics are varied. In Central America, the subregion serves both as a transit territory and a zone of origin for migrants seeking to reach the United States. "Since early 2022, there has been a significant increase in the number of migrants passing through the Central American subregion, particularly Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala" (IOM, 2024, p. 34). For people moving from this subregion, criminal violence, political instability, and poverty are the main drivers of irregular migration, also exposing individuals to risks such as extortion, sexual violence, and family separation. Meanwhile, the Caribbean is traditionally characterized by emigration, as many people leave their countries for other regions. However, intraregional migration is also evident, mainly driven by labor and wage opportunity gaps between countries in the subregion. For example, Barbados, one of the higher-income countries, attracts migrants from Guyana and Saint Vincent. In both subregions, climate change, disasters, insecurity, and violence are factors influencing human mobility (IOM, 2024).

Many cases in the region show that migration flows include children and adolescents who require educational support (Elías et al., 2022). Upon arriving in new territories, they face challenges such as "language barriers, local norms, xenophobia, legal and administrative processes, lack of identification documents (and, in some countries, fear of being detected, detained, or deported), and the recognition of educational levels achieved in their country of origin" (Elías et al., 2022, p. 14). According to the IOM (2012), migrants' vulnerability can be observed throughout the migration cycle, manifesting at different stages: departure, transit, entry, stay, and return.

The content analysis in Section 3 showed that some GPE countries are promoting comprehensive measures. For example, in Guyana, a policy is proposed for teaching the mother tongue to the Venezuelan population (Ministry of Education of Guyana, 2021). In Honduras, it is noted that an integral human rights policy is needed to "reintegrate these deported migrant children into school and community. Positive experiences indicate that creating spaces for coexistence and healthy socialization facilitates this reintegration. It is also highlighted that the role of institutions is fundamental, not only those related to childhood" (Secretaría de Educación de Honduras, 2019, p.27). Based on these observations, future studies from the AdaptED Observatory will seek to further explore the meanings of human mobility, in terms of migration and displacement, characterizing the region and how countries are approaching these issues.

## 4.5 Educational inequalities shaped by poverty

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) argues 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 relevant form of impoverishment or because all forms of deprivation can be reduced to a common denominator. The latter refers to deprivation in multiple dimensions: the lack of a long and healthy life, knowledge, a decent standard of living, and participation” (in CEPAL and UNICEF, 2010, p.23). According to Amartya Sen’s perspective (as cited in CEPAL and UNICEF, 2010), poverty includes multiple dimensions, and there is a category called “functionings,” which requires that human beings have access to health, education, nutrition, participation, and integration into society.

Various studies have shown how poverty affects the right to education in multiple ways. These studies demonstrate that there is a clear link between the two, impacting both school attendance and learning outcomes. Additionally, many students are forced to join the labor market at an early age and, in some cases, experience forms of exploitation or face higher vulnerability risks due to economic precariousness and interruptions in their educational trajectories (UNESCO and CEPAL, 2010). Particularly, groups in poverty or extreme poverty are the ones most frequently excluded from the education system.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, poverty has been a persistent challenge for governments. On one hand, UNICEF stated over a decade ago that efforts to combat child poverty were increasing and being implemented from a multidimensional and rights-based approach (UNICEF, 2010). Additionally, the region has made progress in reducing both moderate and extreme poverty. Major advances were made between 2000 and 2012, as the poverty rate was reduced from 50% to 30%, but it remained constant until the pandemic, when the percentage increased (Rodríguez et al., 2023).

In light of this, it is necessary to emphasize that education systems face significant vulnerabilities in the context of poverty reduction. Rodríguez, Sánchez, and Ñopo (2023) note that in LAC, the weakness of social protection systems and the deficiency in the provision of educational and health services negatively affect the efforts made within countries. Thus, while a significant proportion of Latin Americans and Caribbean people are no longer poor, many remain exposed to the risk of falling back into poverty due to an economic shock, such as job loss, the death of a family member, disasters, or other types of crises.

In the reviewed documents from the 11 GPE countries, poverty was considered not only as an economic deprivation but was also linked 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). Additionally, place of residence and ethnicity are elements to consider. In the following excerpt, Haiti's strategic plan establishes this connection across multiple dimensions:

“Despite regular progress, the Haitian population remains predominantly 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 at the bottom of the United Nations Human Development Index (calculated based on GDP, life expectancy, and education), due, among other factors, to the loss of its productivity that previously depended on agriculture, which guaranteed the population near self-sufficiency in food” (MENFP, 2020, p.17).

Poverty cannot be understood as an isolated factor, as it encompasses deprivations beyond the economic and, from an intersectional perspective, inequalities are exacerbated when interacting with dimensions such as disability, gender, migration, and ethnicity. This creates structural dynamics that persist over time and impact enrollment rates, completion of the school cycle, and academic performance. This is also evident in Guatemala's strategic plan, which notes that “among the population living in poverty, women, children, primarily indigenous, continue to be the most vulnerable. The population living in poverty is concentrated in rural areas of the country, where the majority subsist on small-scale agriculture” (Government of Guatemala, 2020, p.23).

## 5. Conclusions and Perspectives on Educational Resilience

The educational resilience approach allows for new ways of analyzing the capacities of educational systems to continue providing services despite challenges and threats. A clear example of this is the COVID-19 pandemic, which not only disrupted educational functioning in the most vulnerable societies but also highlighted the weaknesses of more advanced systems (Cameron et al., 2024). In this sense, identifying future risks and challenges is key to enhancing adaptability and coping capacity within educational systems.

Through the literature review and content analysis, this study aimed to provide an initial understanding of how present the term “resilience” is in GPE countries and how educational systems confront challenges and threats. The method allowed for 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—made it possible to observe certain aspects of the educational situation in each country.

### ***(i) Incorporation of the educational resilience approach in laws, curricula, and strategic plans***

First, educational resilience should be understood as a multidimensional and interconnected approach. According to Seng Tan and Jia (as cited in Chua, 2025), it is important to consider how countries address structures, processes, and people in the education sector, and whether this aligns with what is proposed in relation to resilience. In general terms, the documentary analysis shows a limited use of the term resilience. With regard to structures, mentions are observed that are linked to the management of school infrastructure in the face of potential risks, together with technological adaptation and climate-related actions. At the level of resilient processes, there is a need to further explore how different actors and institutions interrelate in response to threats to the provision of education. By contrast, more information was found on resilience from an individual perspective, emphasizing the capacities of students and teachers.

On the other hand, although resilience at the personal level appears in the documents analyzed, it is important to highlight the need to strengthen mental health, as this has not been sufficiently prioritized in response to events such as those mentioned, which lead to the interruption of studies, but also, in some cases, to the death of a family member, major economic losses for households, or the isolation of students from their peers. All these aspects should also be considered in a resilient response from the education sector.

Among GPE countries, the case of Dominica is particularly relevant, as it shows promising advances in which resilience is more explicitly linked to structures, processes, and the training of people, at least based on these documents. Among the key findings is the presence of the term in expressions such as “disaster-resilient infrastructure” or “strategies for disaster risk reduction.” Likewise, the implementation of technological platforms such as OpenSIS is highlighted, aimed at improving diagnosis of the country’s educational situation and strengthening decision-making. Finally, the country has proposed a specific plan (NDRS) linked to resilience, reinforcing the idea of a more systemic and cross-cutting approach capable of confronting and recovering from disruptions or threats.

Once the search was expanded and terms associated with resilience were integrated, the most frequently found term in the documents reviewed—across the 11 GPE countries—was strengthening of the education system. The frequency of this term may be due to the fact that strengthening the system is an ongoing process that can be sustained regardless of whether a crisis or emergency exists (Comero et al., 2024). According to the content analysis, strategic plans prioritized strengthening infrastructure, but also governance, curriculum, teacher training to improve student capacities, and, in some cases, attention to vulnerable populations.

When delving into the other terms of the emerging ESR framework, the results regarding prevention, recovery, anticipation, and mitigation show limited incorporation in national regulations. Implementing strategies that include these elements is fundamental from an educational resilience perspective, as they are the components that reveal responses or planning in the face of potential threats to the system. As a next step, it would be possible to analyze additional documents that include operational plans, interviews with key actors, and the identification of agencies related to disaster prevention, threats, or other factors associated with the institutional framework. For this reason, the AdaptED Observatory has proposed to further explore and disseminate this type of evidence through future thematic reports focused on specific threats or challenges and their link to educational resilience.

### ***(ii) Strengthening capacities to address complex and simultaneous threats***

The challenges or processes most frequently identified in the education systems of these countries are migration, climate change, and disasters, which are intertwined with one another and linked to other dynamics within the school system. The 11 GPE countries appear to identify which disruptions affect them most frequently and how these may be impacting their education systems. This is supported by available information that documents and systematizes the occurrence of these events, such as data from the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, and other organizations. In some cases, there are also local platforms, such as OpenSIS mentioned earlier, which collect country-specific educational information. The document analysis shows that, in GPE countries, measures related primarily to climate change and disasters are promoted, associated with prevention and awareness-raising, as well as increased attention to damage caused to educational infrastructure.

With regard to migration, the data shows different dynamics across GPE countries. Central American countries function as territories of transit and origin for people seeking to migrate to the United States or other countries. Meanwhile, in the Caribbean, intraregional migration has gained greater prominence due to employment or wage opportunities. In general terms, migration decisions in the region are associated with factors such as criminal violence, political instability, climate change, and disasters. The documents reviewed provide an initial approximation of these interconnected challenges, which is why migration, disasters, and other related factors will be addressed in greater depth in upcoming thematic reports.

### ***(iii) Attention to Vulnerable Populations in the Face of Educational Inequalities***

Based on the connection between resilience and vulnerable populations grounded in the gender equity and inclusion approach, the study sought to identify whether the 11 GPE countries mentioned these terms in their documents and whether they established them as a priority. From this, the concept of intersectionality was incorporated into the discussion, aiming to understand how different vulnerability factors interact with one another and exacerbate educational inequalities.

More specifically, the literature, together with the document review, shows that gender inequality remains a cross-cutting challenge in the region. While some countries acknowledge the need to promote gender equality policies, there are roles and stereotypes deeply embedded in the system that may be limiting educational opportunities for women—particularly in El Salvador, Nicaragua,

and Guatemala—while at the same time affecting the performance and retention of male students, as seen in Saint Lucia and Guyana.

On the other hand, GPE countries are aware of the challenges involved in creating inclusive education systems for students with disabilities and recognize the need to strengthen and implement additional plans, measures, and/or strategies in this regard. Haiti's strategic plan notes that, despite sectoral strategies for access, quality, and governance, implementation remains an obstacle, and fewer than 5% of students with disabilities attend school. It is worth highlighting that the lack of data on this dimension also creates difficulties in deepening the analysis of country contexts. For example, for indicators such as the percentage of children with disabilities or the percentage of children aged 2 to 17 with one or more functional difficulties, information was only found for Honduras, Guyana, and El Salvador (UNICEF, 2022).

Regarding Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations, the documents show that many ethnic groups live in territories where the provision of services is significantly more limited and where they may also face greater risks, such as those associated with disasters, especially when these are combined with other forms of vulnerability. Situations vary across GPE countries; in some Central American cases, the proportion of Afro-descendant populations is smaller, while in the Caribbean they constitute a majority. Nevertheless, historical challenges persist that affect these populations, making it essential to consider their situation in relation to other variables that influence their level of exposure to different disruptions.

It is noteworthy that the term vulnerable populations was only found to be associated with strengthening the education system in three GPE countries, which is striking given that disruptions to education services disproportionately affect these populations, generating negative impacts, including in the long term. However, by exploring other sources of information, it will be possible to identify strategies that are being implemented to address this issue.

#### ***(iv) Promoting Resilience from the Local Level: A Proposal for Education Systems in the Region***

Building on what has been discussed so far, this document also seeks to contribute to a form of resilience that is more closely aligned with the particular characteristics of the region. Many of the approaches and conceptual frameworks mentioned in the first section do not necessarily respond in a specific way to the historical, political, social, economic, and/or cultural factors of each country. For Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), it is important to continue advancing and working toward

resilient education systems across the dimensions mentioned, but also toward a form of resilience with a strong emphasis on the community level. This implies incorporating communities and/or local groups into decision-making processes and into the strategies and key capacities of resilience (response, strengthening, prevention, mitigation, anticipation, and recovery), as a fundamental step to confront future changes, threats, and disruptions.

The disaster-related literature supports this proposal. Larsen, Calgaro, and Thomalla (2011) pointed out that “if resilience theory is increasingly proposed as the preferred approach for framing and implementing disaster risk reduction, it needs to recognize and incorporate much more explicitly the role of actor agency and the processes through which legitimate visions of resilience are generated” (p. 489). It is therefore necessary to identify, across different thematic areas (disasters, health crises, violence, migration, and/or political or economic crises), the current initiatives that seek to strengthen system capacities to face disruptions in the region, taking into account this dialogue between the local level and education policy. Along these lines, Wakjira, Fischer, and Pinard (2013) suggest that a key adaptation mechanism is to combine elements of formal and informal institutions, including components of traditional institutions along with forms of organization and traditional or community practices, so that resilience strategies are more legitimate for the population and relevant to specific contexts.

The comparative analysis also recognizes gender-based violence, the exclusion of students with disabilities, ethnic gaps, migration-related challenges, and the effects of poverty as markers of vulnerability, which further complicates government responses, as specialized actions are required. The reviewed literature provides more information from a normative and national policy perspective, which is characteristic of laws and is also reflected in curricula and plans. Nevertheless, emerging evidence points to practices that can be interpreted as forms of community strengthening, which will be addressed in future documents to be produced by the AdaptED Observatory.

Thus, the importance of incorporating community voices, practices, and knowledge is emphasized, so that capacities for prevention, mitigation, anticipation, response, recovery, and strengthening are built from and for local contexts. Among all the actors involved, the literature notes that communities are often sidelined or insufficiently considered in these processes; therefore, this document proposes strengthening their role and granting them greater prominence. This perspective is linked to the notion of equitable resilience which, as noted by Matin, Forrester, and Ensor (2018), is “that form of resilience which becomes more likely insofar as resilience practice takes account of issues of social vulnerability and differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources” (p. 202).



### ***(v) A commitment beyond the education sector***

Among the findings of this document, it was observed that many of the terms are presented in an isolated manner, without considering that system resilience effectively encompasses each of its elements: institutions, teachers, students, families, and communities. All of these are also organized around a common goal or objective to achieve the expected outcomes (Kelcey et al., 2024).

It should be clear that system-level responses to challenges do not depend solely on the State or specifically on the education sector. As will be shown in subsequent documents, coordinated action is required among different government sectors, such as education, transport and communications, health, economy, environment, and intergovernmental agencies that coordinate work among these sectors, as well as with civil society, the private sector, international cooperation, or actors directly focused on disaster management. Additionally, decentralized bodies within the education sector should act in a coordinated manner, under the leadership of the Ministry, but with effective engagement from decentralized sector entities, school principals, and classroom teachers, in coordination with parents and caregivers and with students themselves.

Likewise, all these coordinated actions require information management systems that effectively guide interventions toward the most affected populations, thereby optimizing resources and avoiding duplication. For this reason, as the AdaptED Observatory, we believe that the role of mass media and the internet is key to providing effective responses, especially for the most vulnerable students.

Finally, the first report of the AdaptED Observatory provides an overview of the use of the term educational resilience at the system level in 11 GPE countries. As for the next steps, we will analyze this concept in greater depth, in relation to the factors that most strongly affect the continuity of educational service in the area of interest. Specifically, we will focus on five areas of study: disasters, migration, crime and violence, epidemics or pandemics, and political or economic crises. Each thematic report will allow for a more in-depth analysis of past events and their effects, as well as the different levels of exposure and vulnerability of countries to risk. These reports will also help identify resilient practices that enable education systems to respond, adapt, and recover in the face of such situations. In this way, it will be necessary to recognize the dimensions of educational resilience present in the 11 GPE countries, considering both the specific context of each country and interventions from education policy and the community level, while above all analyzing what still needs to be addressed.



**Table 5**  
*Main findings on educational resilience in the region*

1. The document refers to **resilience** as the capacity of systems to respond, adapt, and recover in the face of changes, challenges, and/or threats. These capacities are based on the interconnection and strengthening of structures, processes, and people, with particular attention to the most vulnerable groups (Kelcey et al., 2024; Cameron et al., 2024; King & Surdayarma, 2025; Dulks et al., 2023).
2. From the content analysis across the 11 GPE countries, progress can be observed in the region, with a greater presence of the term in strategic plans compared to laws or curricula. Nevertheless, the notion of educational resilience is still in the process of being integrated into education system responses to crises, changes, or threats.
3. Regarding the **capacities** and strategies associated with the terms identified, the following dimensions stand out: school infrastructure, technology and innovation, student capacities and well-being, climate resilience, teacher training, education management, and curriculum design. In addition, further work is needed to strengthen the interconnection of strategies based on strengthening, anticipation, mitigation, prevention, and recovery.
4. Disasters, migration, epidemics or pandemics, violence, and political and economic crises represent growing and often simultaneous challenges for education in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the same time, education systems in the region are shaped by structural inequalities and vulnerabilities, which increase the differentiated impact of threats and challenges. Therefore, it is crucial to build capacities adapted to the realities of the region and to ensure relevant and sustainable responses to increasingly demanding and complex scenarios. This requires the articulation of **coordinated responses** among multiple actors and levels (international organizations, agencies, ministries, civil society, among others).
5. It is essential that education systems be equitable and inclusive, and that access to education and the timely completion of schooling with the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills are not limited to only some groups. The document emphasizes the importance of an **intersectional analysis**, as it makes it possible to understand the interaction among multiple dimensions of vulnerability affecting students, including gender, rurality, ethnicity, poverty, and disability.
6. Understanding the approaches and conceptual frameworks on resilience has enabled progress in the analysis; however, it is necessary to consider the historical, political, social, economic, and/or cultural factors of each country in order to contextualize the approach. Addressing this issue from a regional perspective requires promoting **community-based and equitable resilience** that incorporates communities and local groups into decision-making, planning, and response processes, while recognizing their own knowledge and capacities.

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## 8. Annexes

### Annex 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)
Haiti	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 Lucia	0,007 (2012)	93.38	81% (2018)	92 (2012)
Saint Vincent	-	98.61	89% (2018)	-

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

Dashes (-) indicate the absence of data for certain countries.

Source: United Nations Development Programme (2024), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2023), World Bank (2025), and United Nations Children's Fund (2022).



## Annex 2

### *List of documents consulted by country*

Country	Education Law	Curricula	Strategic Plans
<b>Belize</b>	Available	Available	Available
<b>Dominica</b>	Available	Available	Available
<b>El Salvador</b>	Available	Available	Available
<b>Granada</b>	Available	Not available	Available
<b>Guatemala</b>	Available	Available	Available
<b>Guyana</b>	Available	Available	Available
<b>Haiti</b>	Available	Not available	Available
<b>Honduras</b>	Available	Available	Available
<b>Nicaragua</b>	Available	Available	Available
<b>Saint Lucia</b>	Available	Available, but not used	Available
<b>Saint Vincent</b>	Available	Available, but not used	Available

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

### Annex 3

#### Names of documents consulted by country

Countries	Laws		Curricula		Strategic 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>Grenada</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>Haiti</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>Saint Lucia</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>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</b>	Chapter 202 Education Act	<i>Available</i>	Curriculum Guides	<i>Available but not used</i>	OECS Education Sector Strategy	<i>Available</i>

## Annex 4

### *Record of terms associated with resilience in strategic plans by country*

OECS and CARICOM countries						
	Resilience	Strengthen	Prevent	Anticipate	Recover	Mitigate
Belize	1	32	2	0	0	1
Dominica	102	86	1	0	0	2
Grenada	2	27	1	0	0	0
Guyana	2	20	0	0	0	0
Haiti	0	36	1	1	0	0
Saint Lucia	11	67	0	0	0	0
Saint Vincent	0	8	0	9	0	0
Spanish-speaking countries in Central America						
	Resilience	Strengthen	Prevent	Anticipate	Recover	Mitigate
El Salvador	0	21	1	0	0	0
Guatemala	1	2	0	0	0	0
Honduras	1	27	0	0	0	0
Nicaragua	0	22	0	0	0	0

Note: The number of mentions was specified for the term resilience and other associated terms.

## Annex 5

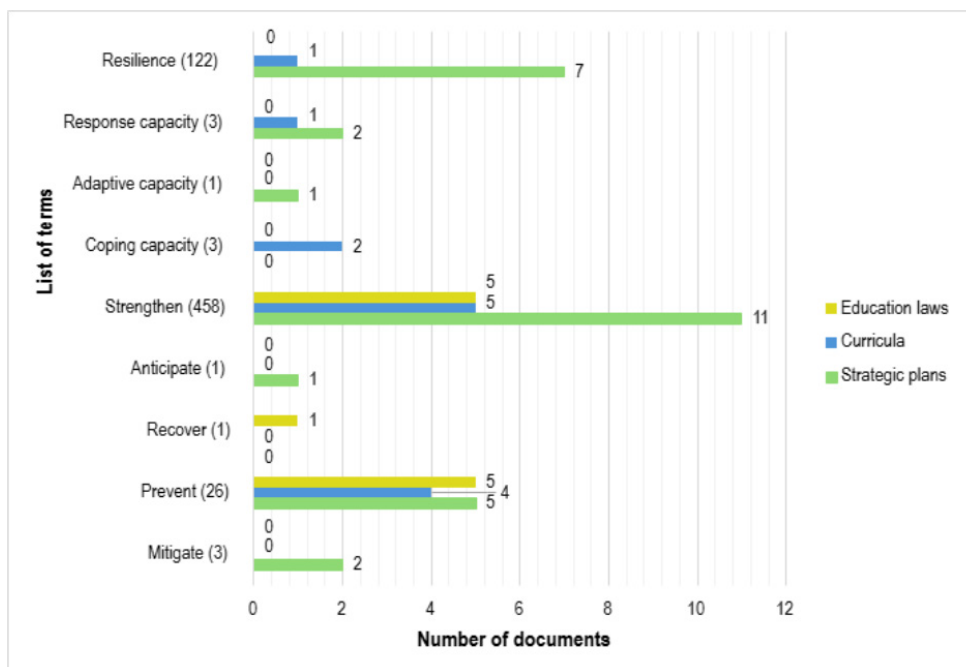
### *Record of terms associated with challenges and threats by country*

OECS and CARICOM countries						
	Climate change	Disasters	Hurricane	Migration	Emergencies	Crisis
Belize	0	0	3	1	0	0
Dominica	4	55	12	0	4	4
Grenada	2	14	0	0	0	0
Guyana	2	2	0	1	0	0
Haiti	1	3	1	1	2	5
Saint Lucia	9	26	1	1	7	1
Saint Vincent	0	2	3	10	6	36
Spanish-speaking countries in Central America						
	Climate change	Disasters	Hurricane	Migration	Emergencies	Crisis
El Salvador	1	7	0	3	6	9
Guatemala	1	2	0	1	0	0
Honduras	1	0	0	1	0	14
Nicaragua	1	3	0	0	0	0

**Note:** The number of mentions was specified for the terms associated with challenges and threats.

## Annex 6

### Number of documents that mention terms associated with resilience



**Note:** The numbers in parentheses next to each term indicate the total number of times it was mentioned across the three documents.

Own elaboration based on Table 3.



# AdaptED

Observatory for Educational Resilience  
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