
Questioning as we learn: An introduction to critical thinking

Material for Higher Education students in Sierra Leone by INASP, UK



Provided by the Critical Thinking Taskforce (CTTF)
within the project AQHEd-SL

Unit 2 - Snippet 38



Practical activity – Identify the text purpose? (3)

Here is the next text. What does it focus on and what frame is the best fit?

Disasters have visible impacts on poverty

Poverty increases in the direct aftermath of a disaster. Examining the ex post impacts of Hurricane Mitch, which struck Nicaragua in 1998, Jakobsen (2012) found that poorer households faced a larger absolute decline in productive assets immediately after Mitch. Furthermore, among those households affected by Mitch, the share of asset-poor households (those who own less than a given asset-poverty line) increased from 75 percent in 1998 to 80 percent in 2001.

Among households hit by Tropical Storm Agatha in 2010 in Guatemala, consumption per capita fell 5.5 percent, increasing poverty by 14 percent (Baez et al. 2016). Whereas previous studies typically focused on the impacts of Agatha in rural areas, Baez et al. (2016) document the sharp impacts of Agatha in urban areas of Guatemala, where poverty increased by 18 percent, mainly because of higher food prices.

Households affected by the El Niño floods of 1997–98 in Ecuador suffered a decline in total income, total consumption, and food consumption (Rosales-Rueda 2014). On average, total income fell by 8 percent in 1998 and 11 percent in 1999, total consumption by 6 percent in 1998 and 10 percent in 1999, and food expenditures by 10 percent in 1999.

In the Philippines, the El Niño season that began in September 1997 increased the poverty headcount by 4–5 percent (Datt and Hoogeveen 2003).

This body of empirical evidence suggests that household wellbeing and poverty status are largely susceptible to natural disasters, at least in the short term.