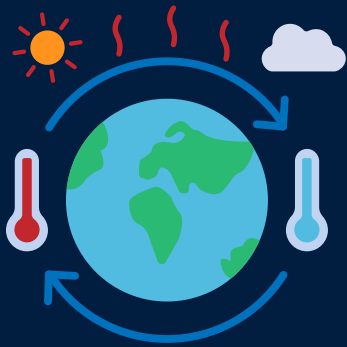


2025

WORLD FIRST AID DAY

FIRST AID & CLIMATE CHANGE

CONCEPT NOTE



Saturday 13 september



Global **First Aid**
Reference Centre

globalfirstaidcentre.org

World First Aid Day - on Saturday 13 September 2025

First Aid and Climate Change

IFRC Global First Aid Reference Centre / WFAD Concept note /Paris / March 2025

Introduction:

With its 191 National Societies and a mobilization of nearly 16 million men and women, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the world's largest humanitarian network. Since its inception, first aid has held a central place, serving as an essential lever for saving lives. As a result, the acquisition of first aid skills is regarded by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) as a fundamental right for all, as a means of enhancing communities' ability to respond independently to health and human crises, and more broadly as a way of building a more resilient world in the face of contemporary challenges.

It is in that sense that [the IFRC's Vision 2030](#) places particular emphasis on improving the accessibility and effectiveness of first aid training worldwide. By striving to ensure that every household, every school and every workplaces has at least one person trained in life-saving skills, Vision 2030 reaffirms the IFRC's commitment to making first aid accessible to everyone, everywhere. The [Global First Aid Reference Centre](#), one of the IFRC's centres of excellence, plays an important role in the effective implementation of this vision by providing educational resources and support tools to National Societies. As a result, millions of people are trained every year, thereby not only strengthening community resilience but also fostering solidarity and cooperation within society.

The annual celebration of World First Aid Day, on the second Saturday in September, presents a valuable opportunity to raise public awareness of the importance of these vital skills. It encourages everyone to get actively involved through concrete actions, contributing to the emergence of a proactive and supportive citizenry, serving as the first link in the [Chain of Survival Behaviors](#).



(WFAD Celebration 2024 - Sudanese Red Crescent)

Theme overview:

The upcoming World First Aid Day 2025 will focus on the theme of:

First Aid and climate change

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. Its effects are manifested in the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as heat waves, storms, floods, droughts and forest fires. These events, which threaten the safety and well-being of populations, have a direct impact on human health and require rapid and effective adaptation of emergency response systems.

In this context, first aid plays a crucial role in preventing and managing emergency situations. In fact, *first aid training is not only about learning technical skills; it also raises awareness of environmental risks and promotes preventive behaviours*. A well-trained community is a more resilient one, able to minimize the impact of crises and act quickly to save lives. Through this theme, World First Aid Day 2025 aims to highlight the connection between first aid and climate change's challenges.

The 2025 WFAD theme includes all age groups; children, adults and older adults.

Children: Learning first aid from an early age is essential to protecting children from the growing challenges and risks posed by climate change. According to UNICEF, approximately one billion children live in areas of extreme climate risk¹. Due to their vulnerability and active nature, children are particularly exposed to accidents, injuries, and medical emergencies, whether in their daily activities, at school, or during natural disasters. In this context, knowing how to respond quickly in an emergency becomes a matter of survival. Training children not only empowers them to protect themselves but also enables them to become key players in the rescue chain, capable of assisting their peers and those around them in critical situations. Furthermore, first aid training fosters a sense of responsibility and solidarity, encouraging younger generations to develop a culture of care and prevention.

Adults: Adult first aid training is an absolute necessity as the rising number of natural disasters places people in emergencies where an appropriate response can save lives. Adults are often the first witnesses and responders in such crises and carrying a special responsibility to protect not only themselves but also children, the elderly, and the most vulnerable. As a result, they must be trained in first aid techniques to ensure that victims

¹ UNICEF, (2021), "One billion children at 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of the climate crisis", <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/one-billion-children-extremely-high-risk-impacts-climate-crisis-unicef>

receive effective care until medical assistance arrives. Whether as parents, teachers, caregivers, or ordinary citizens, everyone has the duty to foster a safer and more responsive environment.

Older adults: Training older adults in first aid is vital as climate change exacerbates their vulnerability. With the increasing frequency of heatwaves, natural disasters, and environmental diseases, their capacity to respond effectively to crises is emerging as a public health priority. Indeed, acquiring first aid skills allows seniors to better recognize the early warning signs of medical emergencies, such as heat stroke, dehydration, or respiratory distress, which may be aggravated by pollution. In addition, their training is not limited to their own safety, but also contributes to a broader dynamic of intergenerational mutual aid. Finally, tailoring training to the specific needs of older adults enhances their self-confidence, reduces anxiety in critical situations and helps them to maintain an active social life. Promoting first aid education among the elderly, alongside adapted prevention strategies, is capital to ensuring they live safely in an evolving environment.

Key messages:

The intersection of “first aid and climate change” underscores the urgent need to adapt our practices to growing environmental threats. The increasing frequency and severity of extreme environmental events expose populations to a broad spectrum of injuries and illnesses, making the widespread dissemination of first aid skills imperative.

→ **First aid training adapted to environmental upheavals is a key tool for strengthening community resilience.**

The intensification of extreme phenomena requires rigorous preparation. Disaster-specific training covers not only first aid techniques but also risk assessment and stress management in high-pressure situations. In the event of a hurricane or flooding, the ability to recognize signs of hypothermia or provide emergency care to a drowning victim can be lifesaving. The unexpected nature and scale of climate-related disasters can affect large numbers of people and all aspects of a community. People in disaster situations often sustain injuries and require lifesaving first aid. Communities with the confidence and willingness to act and the skills to provide care will be better prepared to respond to a disaster.

The disaster context is more complex than urban or remote contexts in that the infrastructure that may have existed prior to the disaster is either temporarily or permanently disabled. This means that access to medical resources or care is often delayed for an extended period of time. Additionally, the instability of the environment may pose significant safety risks. Training should incorporate locally adapted protocols, raising awareness of region-specific risks and available resources for effective preparedness. In remote areas, where access to healthcare is often scarce and emergency services may take

hours or even days to reach, as well as in regions with weakened or overloaded emergency infrastructures, citizens' ability to act as first responders is an imperative. Investing in targeted training and developing community action plans means building a community capable of safeguarding its members and mitigating the human and material impact of environmental damage.

→ Integrating first aid training and medical equipment to reinforce climate adaptation strategies.

Governments, international organizations and civil society organizations are implementing adaptation strategies, often focused on infrastructure, to address the urgent need to protect individuals from the effects of global warming. While first aid is essential in any emergency, it takes on special importance in this context, as training individuals to respond quickly, particularly to injuries and illnesses caused by extreme weather, helps to ensure public safety. In addition to first aid training, universal access to medical supplies is also vital. Adaptation strategies could, for instance, incorporate the provision of specialized first aid kits designed for each specific context. These kits might include basic medical supplies, along with water purification tablets, burn dressings for extreme heat, and tools for signalling distress in isolated regions. Incorporating these components not only mitigates the immediate health impacts of climate-related disasters but also enhances communities' resources to confront long-term challenges.

→ Technological innovations and digital resources are essential tools for boosting the spread of first aid.

It is essential to promote simplified and universal access to online tools, first aid training and content, particularly for isolated populations, which are often the hardest hit by these crises. By harnessing digital technologies, it is possible to overcome the geographical and logistical barriers that hinder access to traditional training. The IFRC's [Universal First Aid Application](#) with its new feature on push notification is a concrete example of this progress, enabling users to learn basic first aid techniques and receive appropriate instructions during emergencies, even in the absence of immediate help. E-learning platforms and games also offer training that is accessible to all and allows teaching to be adapted to local realities and the specific risks of each region. By democratising these tools, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are working to ensure that everyone, wherever they are, has the knowledge they need to save lives.

→ Advocate for the systematic integration of first aid into humanitarian and migrant reception programmes, especially for displaced populations.

Forced displacement, whether due to climate-related disasters, armed conflicts, or economic crises, places millions of people in precarious conditions where health risks are ever-present. Migration routes are often marked by arduous journeys, where injuries, exhaustion, and

dehydration are frequent. In the absence of immediate medical attention, minor wounds can rapidly deteriorate, posing a serious threat to health. Training in first aid facilitates prompt intervention, reducing long-term complications and hospital admissions. Such autonomy in emergency response is all the more vital, as healthcare infrastructure is frequently damaged or inaccessible in crisis-stricken regions. In such circumstances, the capacity to act swiftly through simple yet lifesaving measures, like controlling haemorrhages, treating acute dehydration, administering first aid for burns, proves crucial in reducing mortality and preventing severe complications.

Moreover, insufficient hygiene and overcrowding in shelters accelerate the spread of infectious diseases like cholera and respiratory infections. Faced with these threats, proper training empowers displaced individuals to curb disease transmission by adopting essential hygiene practices, such as disinfecting wounds and recognizing early signs of infection. Beyond its direct health benefits, first aid training plays a pivotal role in fostering psychological resilience among populations facing challenges related to climate change. In uncertain contexts, mastering these skills instils a sense of control and purpose, helping individuals navigate adversity more effectively. The ability to assist a loved one in distress or save a life offers invaluable moral strength, essential for overcoming hardship.

Objectives:

Through World First Aid Day 2025, the Global First Aid Reference Centre and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies encourage National Societies to:

- Raise awareness and empower local populations to cope with climate risks through first aid education.
- Adopt an inclusive approach, adapting to all specificities, in order to reach as many individuals as possible.
- Promote the integration of first aid into management strategies and climate change education programs to improve risk prevention.
- Encourage younger generations, who are frequently more attuned to climate issues, to volunteer with the Red Cross/Red Crescent.
- Explore and develop innovative learning methods to disseminate first aid knowledge in response to climate-related disasters.
- Promote refreshing courses and update citizens' first aid knowledge.
- Encourage National Societies to partner with authorities to promote first aid education and adaptation to climate change.

Facts and figures:

1. Impact of global warming on human health:

- Climate change has significant direct and indirect impacts on human health worldwide. According to *the Lancet Planetary Health*, between 2000 and 2019, around 489,000 deaths per year have been attributed to heat², with a 167% increase among those aged over 65 compared to the 1990s³. Flooding also represents a major health risk, with 1.47 billion people, or 19% of the global population, directly exposed to water levels exceeding 0.15 metres, leading to severe health consequences⁴.
- The spread of vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue, is another significant threat. Rising global temperatures have expanded the habitat of mosquitoes, facilitating the transmission of these illnesses. In 2023, over 6.5 million dengue cases were reported worldwide⁵. Moreover, extreme weather events like droughts and floods disrupt agricultural production, exacerbating food insecurity. By 2023, an additional 151 million people were affected by food insecurity, bringing the total to 770 million in the world⁶. Climate change also has severe psychological repercussions, as demonstrated by the 2019 floods in Quebec, where 44% of those affected showed moderate to severe symptoms of post-traumatic stress⁷.
- According to the *World Health Organization* (WHO), the projections indicate that between 2030 and 2050, climate change could cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths annually, primarily due to malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress⁸.

² Zhao, Q., Armstrong, B., Chalabi, Z., & al. (2021). "The impact of climate change on mortality: a multi-country analysis." *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(7), e415-e425.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00081-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00081-4/fulltext).

³ Van Daalen, K., Romanello, M., Rocklöv, J., & al. (2024). "The 2024 Europe Report of the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change: un réchauffement sans précédent exige une action sans précédent." *Lancet Public Health*.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(24\)00055-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(24)00055-0).

⁴ Maruyama Rentschler, J., & Salhab, M. (2020). "People in Harm's Way: Flood Exposure and Poverty in 189 Countries." Policy Research Working Paper, WPS 9447. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/669141603288540994>.

⁵ Haider, N., Hasan, M. N., Onyango, J., Asaduzzaman, M., & al. (2024). "Global landmark: 2023 marks the worst year for dengue cases with millions infected and thousands of deaths reported." *IJID Regions*, 13, 100459.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijregi.2024.100459>.

⁶ Withers, A. (2024, October 30). "Climate change is making temperatures deadlier, food less reliable, experts warn." Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/climate-change-is-making-temperatures-deadlier-food-less-reliable-experts-warn-2024-10-30/>.

⁷ Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ). (2024). "Changements climatiques et inondations." INSPQ.
<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/changements-climatiques/menaces/inondations>.

⁸ World Health Organization (WHO). "Climate change." WHO. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/climate-change>.

2. Economic and social burdens:

- Climate change imposes significant economic burdens, particularly through direct health-related damages. The *World Health Organization* (WHO) estimates that these impacts could reach between 2 and 4 billion dollars annually by 2030. At the same time, the vulnerability of populations to such risks continues to grow. In 2022, approximately 3.6 billion people resided in areas especially susceptible to the effects of global warming, thus heightening their exposure to severe health hazards⁹.
- Forced displacement is also rising at an alarming rate as its direct consequence. According to the *International Organization for Migration*, in 2023, an estimated 75.9 million individuals were displaced within their own countries due to climate-related impacts¹⁰.

3. The Life-Saving Impact of First Aid in Climate-Related Emergencies

- Studies conducted in Southeast Asia demonstrated that first aid training within communities could lower mortality rates by 30%¹¹. Likewise, research revealed that in several West African nations, timely first aid interventions reduced preventable deaths by 40%¹².
- Beyond injuries resulting from climate-related disasters, cardiac arrest remains a leading cause of death, where immediate response is critical to survival. Early defibrillation, performed within the first few minutes of cardiac arrest, can elevate survival rates to 80%. Despite technological and medical advances, the survival rate after out-of-hospital cardiac arrest remains below 10% in most parts of the world.¹³

4. First aid training as a pillar of community resilience

- Studies highlight that first aid education not only reduces morbidity and mortality but also enhances community resilience. These training programmes are particularly effective when tailored to the specific needs of local populations. Their impact is evident through various results: in Ethiopia, educating mothers in first aid led to a significant decline in infant mortality from malaria, lowering the rate by 20.4 per

⁹ World Health Organization (WHO). (2023). "Climate change, main facts." WHO. <https://www.who.int/fr/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health>.

¹⁰ International Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2024). "2023 Global Report on Internal Displacement." IDMC. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2023>.

¹¹ Joob, B., & Wiwanitkit, V. (2019). "Disaster Risk Reduction in Myanmar." *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 13(2), 103-103. <https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2018.34>.

¹² Hess, J. J., Ranadive, N., Boyer, C., & al. (2020). "Guidelines for modeling and reporting health effects of climate change mitigation actions." *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 128(11), 115001. <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP6745>.

¹³ Marijon, E., & al. (2023). "The Lancet Commission to reduce the global burden of sudden cardiac death: a call for multidisciplinary action." *The Lancet*, 402(10405), 883-936.

1,000. Similarly, in Iraq, a trauma first aid initiative reduced the mortality rate among 2,788 patients from 17% to just 4%¹⁴.

- Despite these benefits, access to first aid education remains highly unequal worldwide, especially in regions most vulnerable to natural disasters. In 2022, in Norway, 90% of students receive first aid instruction, whereas this figure drops to just 5.8% in Burkina Faso and a mere 3% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo¹⁵. These disparities underscore the heightened vulnerability of populations in areas where emergency medical services are scarce, further emphasizing the urgent need for equitable training programmes.

The data presented emphasize the undeniable link between climate change and its devastating effects on human health, economic stability, and forced displacement. In this context, first aid education is indispensable in lessening these impacts. Studies demonstrate that timely and effective intervention can significantly lower preventable fatalities, whether from injuries linked to climate-related disasters or medical emergencies. However, disparities in access to this training persist, especially in areas most vulnerable to climate threats. Strengthening and adapting these programmes to local realities is, therefore, an urgent priority if we are to meet these growing challenges.

Communication package:

To help National Societies organize this vital day, the Global First Aid Reference Centre develops a comprehensive communication kit. The GFARC communication package included various resources tailored to raise awareness on first aid and climate change in an innovative way. Materials are free and provided in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Arabic).

For WFAD day 2025, the toolkit includes:

- ✓ Concept Note
- ✓ Official Poster "First aid and Climate Change"
- ✓ A Social Media kit, with ready-made visuals, hashtags, and key messages to localize
- ✓ Climate change -themed First Aid coloring page
- ✓ First Aid & Climate Change scenario cards with step-by-step response actions
- ✓ Heatwaves First Aid Posters
- ✓ Heatwaves Game
- ✓ Climate emergencies link and Match game

¹⁴ Orkin, A. M., Venugopal, J., Curran, J. D., & al. (2021). "Emergency care with lay responders in underserved populations: a systematic review." *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 99(7), 514-528H. <https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.20.270249>.

¹⁵ Katsioto, A. K., Sikakulya, F. K., Mustafa, S. M., Sivulyamwenge, A. K., & al. (2022). "Évaluation des connaissances théoriques des étudiants en médecine sur les gestes de premiers secours en République Démocratique du Congo." *African Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 12(4), 445-449. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.afjem.2022.10.002>.

- ✓ Climate emergencies (Word Search)
- ✓ The IFRC Universal First Aid App - heat notification

All the WFAD 2025 communication tools will be sent in a newsletter and added in a dedicated section on the [GFARC platform](#), allowing National Societies to adapt them to their local languages and contexts.

Tips and suggested activities:

- Conduct public demonstrations of first aid training adapted to emergencies caused by climate-related disasters in your region (heatstroke, hypothermia, dehydration, smoke inhalation, etc.).
- Create educational games on the climate and first aid. For example, the IFRC Climate Centre offers [a library of 45 games](#) on this topic.
- Collaborative workshops where participants work together to identify local climate risks and develop community action plans.
- A community walkthrough where participants locate emergency resources (shelters, water sources). Please note that you will need a map of the area/neighbourhood to give to participants, allowing them to mark key first aid and safety locations.
- Organize a crafting session where kids color pages featuring climate challenges scenes and first aid that GFARC will provide in the toolkit.
- Awareness campaigns on social networks. Ask if possible to engage national public figures and influencers in the celebration.
- Collaborate with schools to integrate modules on first aid and climate resilience into educational programmes.
- Host webinars focusing on the theme and importance of first aid.
- Create digital tools offering interactive tutorials on first aid and information on local climate risks.
- Distribute resources such as brochures, posters, and infographics to raise awareness.
- Demonstration of the contents of an evacuation bag.

CALENDAR

Pre-launch:

- Tools availability: June 2025

Launch:

- World First Aid Day (WFAD): Saturday 13th September 2025
- Activities can continue up until the end of October to combine celebration between WFAD and World Restart A Heart Day (WRAH)

Report:

- Report survey to be sent to National Societies: November 2025
- Final report published by the GFARC: January 2026



(Forest Fire - American Red Cross)

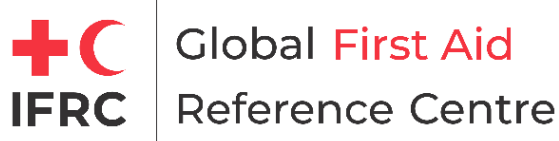
ABOUT THE GLOBAL FIRST AID REFERENCE CENTRE (GFARC)

The [Global First Aid Reference Centre](#) (GFARC) is one of the centres of excellence of the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) (IFRC). Hosted by the French Red Cross, the Centre aims to harmonize first aid practices worldwide through the development of first aid tools, the dissemination of evidence-based guidelines and the provision of training of trainers worldwide.

In addition, the GFARC advises and supports the National Societies of the Movement to develop or adapt their training offer to local needs. Based on the premise that every citizen can save lives, the Centre also advocates for the dissemination of a first aid culture throughout the world.

If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact us on:

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