

Children and Youth in Crisis: Protecting and Promoting Human Development in Times of Economic Shocks (Directions in Development)

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The successful development of children and young people requires that we protect and nurture a set of interrelated physiological, cognitive, and socio-emotional systems. What happens to these systems in early life can have long-term consequences and can even carry over to the next generation.

The impact of economic crises on human development is similarly complex and heterogeneous. Some families and some young people display astonishing resilience – either by being comparatively unscathed by crises or by their ability to recover quickly and healthily. Other families and individuals may be unable to prevent exposure, unable to protect themselves, or may not have the same capacity to adapt positively when exposed to a crisis, with potentially serious long-term consequences for healthy development.

Human development lies at the intersections of neurology and sociology, genetics and psychology, biology and economics; and this volume approaches the study of shocks and human development from a variety of disciplinary perspectives: economics, sociology, anthropology, and social and developmental psychology.

This volume describes the impact of aggregate shocks on human development, and the subtle and intricate settings and pathways through which individuals can be affected. Depending on the timing, duration, transmission mechanisms, and context, the consequences for children's physical, cognitive, and socioemotional development may be costly and irreversible.

Fortunately, although children suffer in adversity, they can also benefit positively when exposed to enriching environments. We need to develop and implement effective interventions to prevent the worst consequences of exposure to shocks, and to assist families and young people to recover. This volume explores what we know about protecting young people from lasting harm and promoting healthy development through a crisis.

This volume is intended for policymakers, civil society, and others engaged in promoting and protecting human development and in designing and implementing safety nets during crisis. This is a novel approach as it incorporates the experiences from such diverse disciplines to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interactions that define human development.



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