

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attacks (GCPEA)

Towards standardizing data tools and practices to better protect education from attack

A toolkit to guide collection, analysis, and use of data on attacks on education



PRACTICE PROFILE

The [Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education](#) builds on the efforts of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) to **better measure the scale and impact of attacks on education and aims to fill gaps in monitoring and reporting**. It includes a set of technical tools for all education sector stakeholders to standardize data collection, analysis, and reporting.

These tools include a guide for data collection, analysis and reporting, indicators on attacks on education, a codebook, and a data template. In addition to providing the tools in open access to all stakeholders, including institutional actors, involved in the collection and use of data on attacks on education, GCPEA is itself using the tools to improve thematic indicator 4.a.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 4¹ by strengthening the quality of the data received and its ability to analyze and report on the data.

¹ **SDG Indicator 4.a.3:** Number of violent attacks, threats or deliberate use of force directed against students, teachers, and other personnel or against education buildings, materials and facilities, including transport. The indicator is calculated based on reports released by UN agencies and partners; media reports; and information shared with GCPEA. *More information* [HERE](#)

Lack of information and data on attacks on education hinders prevention and monitoring

In its latest report on [Education Under Attack](#) (2022), GCPEA collected over 5,000 reported attacks on education and incidents of military use of schools and universities, harming more than 9,000 students and educators in at least 85 countries. In 2020 and 2021, on average, six attacks on education or incidents of military use occurred each day. Attacks on education are any threat or actual use of force against students, teachers, academics, education personnel, education buildings, resources, or facilities. In addition, GCPEA tracks the use of schools and universities by armed forces and non-state armed groups for military purposes. These violations have devastating effects on entire education systems, their actors and beneficiaries, particularly on women's and girls' education specifically targeted in a number of contexts.

Information and data on the scale and impact of attacks on education remain limited - or variable - across countries and over time. For many reasons, existing data are generally highly fragmented and only report on the total number of attacks, which limits the ability to measure impacts and compare across contexts. In addition, they are sometimes not disaggregated, leaving a critical gap in information on the types of attacks and the number of learners and educators impacted. The need for comprehensive guidelines on the collection and analysis of data related to attacks on education is an essential step not only in monitoring, and reporting of these violations but for preventing and responding to them. Indeed, **better understanding of the nature (type, extent, frequency, and severity) of attacks through better data can improve evidence-based decision making for governments and their partners.**

The approach:

Building on existing efforts to collect data on attacks on education and the military use of schools and universities, including through the UN, Global Education Cluster, and human rights bodies, the *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education* **provides guidance to governments, civil society organizations, UN agencies, and humanitarian and development organizations on collecting and analyzing data to better understand and address the scope and impact of attacks on education.**

The objectives of the *Toolkit* are to:

- (1) contribute to **improved harmonization of definitions of attacks on education** and military use of schools and universities within and across countries
- (2) **enhance institutional capacity to collect and report data on attacks on education** and military use of schools and universities through suggested indicators and data systems
- (3) suggest how data on attacks on education and military use of schools and universities can be **analyzed to illustrate the short- and long-term impacts of attacks** and utilized to support prevention, mitigation, response, and accountability.

A first step to better understanding the scope and impact of attacks on education is to **strengthen the quality of data and enhance data analysis and reporting from the ground up.** In emerging situations of concern, as well as in contexts where structured data collection systems already exist, targeted efforts can contribute to a better national and global understanding of the scope and impact of attacks on education. With **strengthened data systems, ministries of education, humanitarian actors, as well as militaries, can all improve their practices to protect education.** Systematic data on the frequency and

impact of attacks on education, disaggregated by gender, can help all involved stakeholders improve implementation of the [Safe Schools Declaration \(SSD\)](#).

The tools have been conceptualized to enable partners to:

- **build or strengthen monitoring systems and enhance coordination across sectors** so that fewer attacks go unnoticed²
- **collect robust data and analyze and report on the impacts** of attacks on and military use of schools and universities
- **harmonize definitions** of attacks on education and military use across contexts
- develop **more effective gender-responsive attack prevention and mitigation** plans.

The use of tools by partner is not monitored and measured as the tools are available online in open access and can be downloaded.

Development and implementation processes:

In 2018, GCPEA began efforts to strengthen and systematize data analysis and quality, particularly after its *Education under Attack* dataset became the primary source for tracking progress on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) thematic indicator 4.a.3. The initial concept was to develop an **Indicator Framework to help GCPEA better measure the scope and impact of different types of attacks on education across contexts**.

To guide this work, GCPEA formed an **expert reference group** to provide technical guidance. After consultations and identifying gaps in the field, **GCPEA expanded the indicator framework to incorporate guidance on data collection, analysis, and reporting** – what is now the *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education*. GCPEA published a working draft of the *Toolkit* in January 2021.

GCPEA then tested the *Toolkit* from May 2021 through September 2022 by:

- **Testing indicators and analyses through the *Toolkit* and developing three case studies on Afghanistan, Palestine, and Myanmar.** These studies used different indicators and disaggregation and enabled GCPEA to adjust several aspects of the tools. For example, GCPEA significantly adjusted its categorization of explosive weapons to align with existing standards. In the case of Palestine, GCPEA was able to work with data collected by the Education Cluster to explore impacts such as the hours of instructional time lost and gender disparities in attacks.
- **Disseminating the *Toolkit* and identifying interested groups** that wished to receive targeted orientation sessions
- **Conducting of virtual and hybrid orientations sessions on how to use the *Toolkit* with governments, international organizations, and civil society** in 12 countries, including through the West and Central Africa Regional Education in Emergencies Working Group.

² GCPEA has included suggestions for how the indicators in the *Toolkit* can support education sector planning (see *key learnings below*). GCPEA's data template also has three levels of complexity - one version is aimed at Education Management Information Systems and more complex data bases.

The practice supports organizations that are already collecting data on attacks on education, even if only in one specific area such as higher education, attacks on schools, or sexual violence by armed forces or armed groups at school. For instance, the *Toolkit* can assist in analyzing gaps in data collection and disaggregation and offer possible methods of reporting and analysis to enhance the understanding of trends and impact. It can also be used to refine existing monitoring and reporting tools, log frames, needs assessments, or database systems.

The [Toolkit](#) provides stakeholders:

- **Guidance on Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Data** introducing the problematics of attacks on education, the importance of improving data collection, analysis, and reporting, describing existing data sources and efforts to collect data, and providing guidance on how to collect data on attacks on education.
- **Indicators on Attacks on Education** - designed to guide, strengthen, and systematically capture data on the eight key domains corresponding to the five GCPEA categories of attacks on education and on cross-cutting attacks. These details can be analyzed to discern trends and patterns in attacks. Each indicator presents a calculation for the indicator, suggested data disaggregation, data sources, and covers their feasibility and potential limitations. They can be selected based on an organization's needs and capacities, as well as on the realities on the ground. Depending on the existing data collection and analysis mechanisms in the country, this framework can be used to refine or expand existing information collection structures. It can also be used as a tool when setting up a bottom-up monitoring system or integrated into programmatic tools ("log frames", needs assessments or HRPs and HNOs). The *Toolkit* can also help strengthen impact analyses of attacks by identifying other types of education data that can be used in parallel to inform evaluations.
- **A codebook** providing further definitions relevant to attacks on education and military use and instructions for how to enter data into the suggested database template. It includes all the data disaggregation laid out in the indicators section, such as gender and level and type of schooling.
- **A data template** (MS Excel tool) aligned with the codebook and indicators that can be used directly by organizations or governments or to inform the structure of their own existing databases. It includes a sheet for event data (i.e., entries corresponding to a particular attack) only and a sheet for the combination of event data and other education data.

In addition, a webinar on SSD implementation, hosted by the Norwegian State Implementation Network, provided an opportunity to connect with ministries of education and expand outreach. As part of the process of updating the tools, GCPEA is working to increase its reach and dissemination.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS OF THE PRACTICE

Overall, the *Toolkit* is instrumental to **the implementation of the SSD**. When better data and analysis exist, governments and stakeholders can more easily meet the other commitments of the Declaration. They are better equipped to prevent and respond to attacks, to raise funds to support programs for learners and

educators affected by conflict, and to provide targeted support to different levels of education and genders of students and educators.

As the global repository of attacks on education, **the strengthening of GCPEA's data and analyses also has impacts on the entire sector.** GCPEA is the sole data source for SDG 4 Thematic Indicator 4.a.3 and the *Education under Attack (EuA)* series provides important information for advocacy on SSD implementation and preventing and responding to attacks. Through the *Toolkit*, GCPEA was able to refine its analyses of the use of explosive weapons in attacks on education for three of its case studies and a textbox in *EuA2022*. This enabled GCPEA to enhance its advocacy around the new declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in 2022 and highlight the protection of education in new fora.

Another key achievement was the start of improved **coordination in collecting and sharing data on attacks on education during orientation sessions with multi-sectoral stakeholders in several contexts.** Indeed, attacks on education are a cross-sectoral issue that involves a wide range of state and non-state actors from education, protection, women's affairs etc. To strengthen the evidence on attacks on education from a systemic perspective, it has been essential to include and reach out to the different actors involved to improve existing efforts.

- **In Nigeria:** a hybrid session brought together various ministries, international organizations, and national civil society, and provided a valuable opportunity to conduct a joint mapping of the stakeholders involved to build a shared understanding of which actors should be key players in data collection in relation to key end-users, and the importance of coordination between them
- **In West and Central Africa:** a session delivered to the Regional Working Group on EiE focused on improving collaboration between EiE and Child Protection in Emergencies (CPIE) supported the development of a joint work plan on the issue.
- **In Colombia :** GCPEA provided specific guidance on how to count incidents of landmines, explosives, or crossfire that occurred near or along school routes which may not have been previously counted and advocated for data collection tools to include information on child recruitment at school or along school routes.

In addition, **partners in Nigeria, Colombia, and Niger have reported incorporating changes to their data collection tools in line with the GCPEA Toolkit :**

- **In Nigeria :** in 2021, GCPEA worked with partners on a template and guidelines for data collection to ensure alignment with standards for definitions of attacks, perpetrators, and impact, in line with the *Toolkit*. Based on the coalition's reviews and recommendations, the template was updated by partners and then reviewed again for accuracy.
- **In Colombia :** partners reported being able to collect and better disaggregate data after using the *Toolkit* and shared reporting with GCPEA, which in turn strengthened GCPEA's own data on Colombia and its reporting to UNESCO Institute for Statistics for SDG 4.

KEY LEARNINGS AND EVIDENCE

➤ 1 learning to system strengthening aims within national education systems and across the humanitarian-development nexus through crisis and risk-related data :

Many of the specifications in the Toolkit were developed for and with education and child protection stakeholders, but indicators and tools can also play a role in broader education planning. MoEs and other partners can use data collected as part of risk assessments or other components of sectoral analysis as well as to inform their decision-making process and evaluate their programs or policies. The Toolkit includes **guidance for users specifically to build or strengthen systems for monitoring and reporting on attacks on education and military use of schools and universities.**³

To support improved coherence between humanitarian responses and development planning, and to ensure that safeguarding education is mainstreamed in national planning, **attacks on education should be considered in education sector planning.** This will also contribute to enhanced cooperation and better ensure access to safe education by:

- facilitating the distribution of resources to either prevent attacks or mitigate their impacts;
- enhancing communication between education providers effectively extend learning opportunities to areas affected by attacks or to communities hosting teacher and students displaced by attacks;
- aligning education sector goals and objectives with a government's commitments to protect education, such as through the Safe Schools Declaration.

➤ 5 key learnings from the *Toolkit* to support strengthening education systems' resilience to risks and impacts of attacks, by informing and measuring the effectiveness of prevention, mitigation measures and responses :

- **Indicators on attacks on education can easily be combined** with specific program and project indicators, as well as other school safety indicators.⁴
- Indicators can be adapted and used to **inform risk mitigation strategies by assessing trends in attacks** (e.g., the increasing prevalence of attacks in each region) and **to evaluate over time the effectiveness of mitigation strategies** implemented in an at-risk region.
- Indicators can be adapted and used to **monitor the impact of measures to prevent attacks on education** (e.g., measuring data on attacks on education with and without prevention) and be **integrated in other monitoring frameworks to evaluate a program or policy.** Indicators on the prevalence of attacks on education can be included in risk assessment surveys to help education officials determine whether to close schools to prevent attacks in a given area.

³ Based on case studies in Afghanistan, Palestine, and Myanmar <http://toolkit.protectingeducation.org/resources/toolkit-case-studies.html>

⁴ A number of existing tools already include provisions to include attacks on education within education sector planning or other related sectors, such as the Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022-2030 (GADRRRES); School Safety Context Analysis (Save the Children), Guide for Transitional Education Plan Preparation (UNESCO IIEP and GPE); Safe to Learn Diagnostic Tool (Safe to Learn and UNICEF); Administrative Data on Violence against Children (UNICEF).

- **Indicators can be used to assess needs and inform data-driven responses after an attack:** data collected through specific indicators can guide the ministry of education and/or education partners to assess the funding needed to respond to, for example, the destruction of schools or to put in place prevention measures, and then report on progress, leverage resources, and respond to challenges and gaps clearly identified and documented in the process.
- Overall, the ***Toolkit* can support ministries of education and governments in their efforts to report on progress in implementing the Safe Schools Declaration.** GCPEA has already explored the possible links between the adoption of the Safe Schools Declaration and the reduction of military use of schools and universities (Indicator 3.1.1).⁵ Governments, or other organizations that monitor the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration or Security Council Resolution 2601, can use similar approaches.

➤ **Additional learnings from GCPEA's process of developing and disseminating the *Toolkit* include:**

- **Testing and receiving feedback from diverse partners has been crucial in the development and refining of the tools.** GCPEA piloted the *Toolkit* through orientation sessions with partners and conducted [case studies in Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Palestine](#) to test different indicators and analyses of the *Toolkit*. By releasing a working draft, GCPEA gained extensive input from a wide range of partners and experts on specific and technical areas needed to refine the product.
- **Cross-sectoral and system-wide engagement is key,** especially to improve coverage through better trust and coordination. Attacks on education are interesting because they are a cross-cutting issue, and it is often not education actors who collect the information, particularly within the context of the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism. In the orientation sessions, it was useful **to bring education and protection actors from inside/outside the government around the table.**
- **Translation of the tools into multiple languages is essential .** GPCEA strategically translated parts of the *Toolkit* into Spanish and Arabic and the entire *Toolkit* into French. However, with more resources, more translations could be completed to reach a broader audience.
- **Making the tools available in the most accessible, clear, and easy way possible with the creation of a dedicated website and graphic design** also helped demonstrate their purpose and intended results (usability of the tool is key). GCPEA also maintained simple and clear language in all products.

⁵ Reported incidents of military use decreased by more than half between 2015 and 2020 in the 13 countries that endorsed the Declaration in 2015 and 2016 and experienced at least one incident of military use. The number of incidents dropped from at least 180 reported by the UN, NGOs, and the media in 2015, to about 70 in 2020. See : <https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/SSD-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

✦ [The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack \(GCPEA\)](#) brings together organizations (INGOS and UN Agencies) working in the fields of education in emergencies, higher education, protection, and international human rights and humanitarian law **to address attacks on educational institutions, their students, and staff in countries affected by conflict and insecurity**. The mission of the Coalition is to **ensure that all students and educators, schools and universities are protected from attacks and military use during armed conflict**, through advocacy that leverages the strengths of its diverse membership.

More precisely, GCPEA works:

- To highlight the incidence and impact of attacks on education in conflict and insecurity among key actors and cultivate public support for safe education.
- To promote better systems for monitoring and reporting attacks on education.
- To promote effective programs and policy to protect education from attack, including prevention and response measures.
- To encourage adherence to existing international law protecting education and the strengthening of international norms and standards, including the Safe Schools Declaration, as needed; and
- To fight impunity for attacks on education by promoting and supporting a range of accountability measures.