The Guide to Education in Emergencies Needs Assessments is an initiative of the Global Education Cluster (GEC). It is an accompaniment to and provides a theoretical foundation for the Needs Assessment Package within the GEC’s Education Cluster Toolkit. The purpose of the Guide and Needs Assessment Package is to provide practical, relevant guidance and resources to education in emergencies (EiE) coordination staff conducting, coordinating and participating in secondary data reviews and joint, harmonized and/or multi-sector needs assessments. ‘Coordination staff’ as used in this guide refers to Education Cluster teams, EiE working groups, as well as those cases where UNHCR leads on coordination efforts in refugee scenarios. As such, the Guide will be helpful wherever stakeholders working in education are seeking to gain an understanding of the impact of a crisis of any kind on the functionality of the education system. Although the Guide is focused on education needs assessments where multiple partners are working together, the principles and guidance are also applicable to single agency education assessments.

Acknowledgments

The Guide draws heavily on previous GEC documents as well as other assessment resources. These include:

- The Short Guide to Rapid Joint Education Needs Assessments, 2010
- The Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit, 2010
- The IASC Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) Guidance, 2015
- The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Handbook, 2013
- The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations, 2006
- Technical guidance and tools provided by the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS)

Interviews were also conducted with the GEC Rapid Response Team (RRT) and other Education Cluster/Sector staff based on their deployments and work on assessments in crises over recent years. RRT members and a Technical Working Group, made up of staff from GEC partners and the Education Cluster Lead Agencies (CLAs), provided invaluable feedback throughout the writing process.

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1 Education Cluster team typically include coordinator(s) and information management officer(s)
2 Refer to the UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model
3 Note: The GEC Needs Assessment Package is an update from and intended to replace existing Education Cluster needs assessment products, including The Short Guide to Rapid Joint Education Needs Assessments and the Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit.
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List of acronyms

AAP    Accountability to Affected Populations
ACAPS  Assessment Capacities Project
ALNAP  Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in humanitarian action
AWG    Assessment Working Group
CDAC   Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities
CFS    Child-Friendly Space
CGD    Community Group Discussion
CLA    Cluster Lead Agency
CWC    Communicating with Communities
DO     Direct Observation
DTM    Displacement Tracking Matrix
EFA    Education For All
EiE    Education in Emergencies
EMIS   Education Management Information System
ERC    Emergency Relief Coordinator
FGD    Focus Group Discussion
GEC    Global Education Cluster
GIS    Geographic Information System
GPS    Global Positioning System
HC/HCT Humanitarian Coordinator/Humanitarian Country Team
HDX    Humanitarian Data Exchange
HNO    Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP    Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC   Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP    Internally Displaced Person
IFRC   International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IM     Information Management
IMO    Information Management Officer
INEE   Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO  International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM    International Organization for Migration
JENA   Joint Education Needs Assessment
KII    Key Informant Interview
MICS   Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MIRA   Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
MoE    Ministry of Education
MoU    Memorandum of Understanding
MRM    Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NGO    Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA   Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCNA   Post Conflict Needs Assessment
PDNA   Post Disaster Needs Assessment
PTA    Parent Teacher Association
RC     Resident Coordinator
RRT    Rapid Response Team
SAG    Strategic Advisory Group
SDR    Secondary Data Review
SMC    School Management Committee
SOPs   Standard Operating Procedures
SRP    Strategic Response Plan
TLS    Temporary Learning Space
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIS</td>
<td>UNESCO Institute for Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDAC</td>
<td>United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How to use this Guide

After a brief introduction to humanitarian needs assessments, this Guide is divided into six chapters intended to provide practical guidance on conducting, participating in and preparing for needs assessments. Chapter and section headings are written and structured as a task-based checklist for conducting assessments.

Chapter 1 focuses on identifying the key decisions needing to be made and the information needed to inform those decisions; this provides the basis for all assessment processes.

Chapter 2 explains how to meet those needs and highlight remaining information gaps by conducting a secondary data review (SDR).

Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 provide guidance on how to conduct and participate in the three types of assessments most relevant to Education Cluster teams: joint education needs assessments, harmonized needs assessments and multi-sector needs assessments.

Chapter 6 concludes the Guide with suggestions on how to prepare even before assessments are deemed necessary or a crisis strikes.

The Guide should be used hand-in-hand with the Needs Assessment Package which can be accessed as part of the broader GEC Education Cluster Toolkit. At the beginning of each chapter you will find a box referencing related resources in the Needs Assessment Package, each coded with the Guide’s section number to which it applies. The resources include additional instructions, checklists, tools, templates and country examples on how to conduct various assessment elements.

You will also find at the beginning of several chapters/sections a screenshot from the assessment work plan template outlining tasks, person(s) responsible and a potential timeframe. This template serves simultaneously as a work plan and as a checklist for the entire assessment process. The work plan tasks correspond and have been codified to match the chapters and sections in the Guide and Needs Assessment Package. It is an overarching tool for the Guide and Package and should be consulted regularly.

Figure 1: Assessment Work Plan Template

4 Note: Although part of the assessment processes, Chapters 1-2 have been separated out as individual chapters because they are 1) common to all three assessment types while simultaneously 2) independent from them (i.e. even if an assessment will not be conducted, Education Cluster teams are still responsible for conducting these two key activities).

5 The timeframes suggested in these screenshots are merely an example and are not meant to be prescriptive; they will need to be adapted for each context.
Introduction to humanitarian needs assessments

In the context of emergency response, a needs assessment is a time-bound process of collecting, collating and interpreting information from a range of sources in order to identify, understand and estimate the needs of the affected populations. The overall objective is to inform time-bound key decisions with the best evidence possible, which can result in a more timely, appropriate and evidence-based response.

Types of needs assessments

This Guide focuses on three types of assessments most relevant for Education Cluster teams:

1. **Joint education needs assessments**

A joint education needs assessment (JENA) is an inter-agency needs assessment focusing on the education sector; it is done jointly with multiple organizations. Typically, JENAs are led and managed by the Education Cluster in coordination with Education Cluster partners, including the Ministry of Education (MoE) or UNHCR where appropriate. JENAs consist of a common methodology and collection tools and result in a joint analysis and report. Depending on the context, an initial, rapid JENA typically takes place a couple of weeks to one month after the onset of a crisis, with a more detailed JENA following thereafter (if needed). See Chapter 3 for more information on how to conduct a JENA.

2. **Harmonized education needs assessments**

Whether a JENA takes place or not, the Education Cluster team should strive to harmonize assessments involving education as soon as possible after the onset of an emergency. Unlike joint assessments, harmonized assessments will likely not have a single, common methodology or collection tool. Rather, Education Cluster teams should work closely with partners who are conducting assessments to allow for standardized questions and language to be used. Ideally, harmonization should also occur around geographic areas and population groups to help avoid duplication and gaps in coverage. Although partners will have their own data, analysis and reports, the cluster team should be able to compile partner data from harmonized questions into a single database, analyze the data and generate regular, harmonized reports to be shared with stakeholders. See Chapter 4 for more information on harmonizing education assessments.

The figure below shows the difference between uncoordinated, harmonized and joint assessments:
3. Multi-sector/cluster needs assessments

As the name suggests, multi-sector assessments involve assessing multiple sectors, not just education. While there are different types\(^6\), this Guide focuses on those coordinated or led by an entity with a specific mandate or request to do so (i.e. OCHA, UNHCR, national government, INGO consortium, etc.) and where the Education Cluster will most likely be expected to participate. These include the OCHA-led multi-sector initial rapid assessment (MIRA) at the beginning of a rapid-onset emergency or medium-term recovery planning assessments such as a UNDP- or World Bank-led Post Disaster or Post Conflict Needs Assessment (PDNA/PCNA), or UNHCR’s annual Participatory Assessments. See Chapter 5 for information on multi-sector assessments.

Figure 3: Assessment timeline

Assessment cycle

Regardless of the type of assessment, most follow a similar process shown in the figure to the right. First, identify key decisions needing to be made and the timeframe and information needed to make them. Next, explore what information is already available, through an SDR. If the required information is available, then the ‘assessment’ stops there; if not, the SDR will highlight remaining information gaps. These first two steps should be done prior to (and regardless of) the planning or designing of primary data collection. The information needs/gaps, timeframe for the information and other contextual factors (resources, partner capacity, etc.) will determine whether a joint, harmonized and/or multi-sector approach will be required. Once determined, the assessment should be planned and designed followed by data collection, entry, analysis and reporting. Each of these steps for each assessment type are explored in the chapters below.

While an assessment may refer to a particular process, they are not one-off events. Emergencies are complex, evolving contexts with the needs of affected populations, and the decisions related to those needs, rapidly changing. A needs assessment should not be viewed as a single, large-scale assessment to fulfil all information needs; rather, it is a process of progressively and repeatedly collecting and analyzing information that is needed to inform evolving key decisions. Assessment findings for each phase of an unfolding crisis should inform the design and focus of assessments that follow.

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\(^6\) Individual organizations conducting multi-sector assessments (and the Cluster should ensure harmonization); Education Cluster combines a JENA with another sector, resulting in a cluster-led multi-sector needs assessment (however, these follow the same process as a JENA. An example of this was joint Education and Child Protection conducted in the Philippines in 2014 following the typhoon.
1. Identify key decisions and information needs

GEC Needs Assessment Package

**General**
- Assessment work plan template (Identify key decisions and information needs section)
- Assessment framework template

**Establish Assessment Working Group (AWG)**
- 1.1: AWG terms of reference (AWG ToR) template and examples

---

**Figure 5: Assessment work plan - Identifying key decisions and information needs**

The first step of any assessment is to identify the key decisions needing to be made and the information needed to make those decisions. The overall objective of humanitarian assessments is to inform prioritized, time-bound decisions. These decisions and related timeframe and information needs should be defined before any secondary or primary data collection begins and provides a framework for your assessment. Failure to do so will risk:

- Wasting time and resources collecting data that is not linked to informing decisions (and not used)
- An assessment influenced by *perceived* information needs instead of an evidence-based decision making processes
- An assessment that does not yield accountability to the affected population’s needs

The figure below illustrates relationship between the information needs and collected data:

---

Figure 6: Information needs, sources and gaps

---

7 Regardless of assessment plans, an Education Cluster should always identify and be aware of their key decisions and information needs.
No matter how well you plan and design your SDR and primary data collection, there will usually be: 1) remaining information gaps, 2) unused data and 3) primary data collected that was already available via the SDR\(^8\). Defining key decisions and information needs from the outset, however, will allow you to better plan and design the SDR and primary data collection in order to minimize the missing, unused and redundant data.

The types of decisions needing to be made will be influenced by multiple factors, including:

- The nature of the emergency (sudden onset/protracted crisis; natural disaster/conflict/refugee)
- The timeframe (strategic decisions require less detailed information at the beginning of an emergency with operational and programmatic decisions requiring more detailed information as time progresses)
- Severity of the event (Level 3 emergencies will trigger cluster activation and key funding decisions with fixed deadlines)

### Levels of humanitarian decisions

1. **Strategic**: setting overall goals and objectives; if response is needed, how to respond, overall resource requirements, etc.
2. **Programmatic and planning**: choosing the intervention modality which will achieve the strategic goals and objectives (this includes general targeting as well as general resource allocation)
3. **Operational**: program implementation and modification, detailed targeting and other project specific issues

#### 1.1. Establish an Assessment Working Group (AWG)

To help identify key decisions and information needs and reach consensus on their prioritization, create an Education Cluster AWG, even if undecided about conducting an assessment. The AWG should be comprised of key Cluster members, MoE representative(s) (when appropriate) as well as OCHA and relevant inter-cluster representation (e.g. a WASH specialist if information is needed around WASH in schools). The AWG should be large enough to ensure adequate representation and contribution but small enough to be productive and easily managed. An [AWG ToR template](#) can be found in the Needs Assessment Package.

After clarifying decisions and information needs; the AWG can help conduct a secondary data review, define an assessment’s objectives, locate resources, develop methodologies and collection tools, validate and agree on findings and recommendations, etc. Due to diverse tasks, participation and profiles needed may vary: strategic tasks (e.g. identifying key decisions, general planning, resource allocation, interpreting findings, action planning) require organizational heads and education experts while technical tasks (design, collection and entry, analysis) may require technical assessment expertise\(^9\).

### Working with MoE and government agencies

Working with the MoE and government counterparts can be crucial to the success of an assessment. In some cases, the MoE may take the lead in the assessment while the Cluster provides technical, financial and logistical support. Sometimes working with the government will not be possible or advisable, such as when the government is a party to the conflict. When working with government authorities those involved in the assessment will need to balance humanitarian principles and ensure the assessment remains neutral.

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\(^8\) As much as possible, this overlap should be designed to verify and triangulate information; for information that did not need verification, this is unnecessary duplication and should be avoided.

\(^9\) Alternatively, strategic tasks could be integrated into an existing Strategic Advisory Group (with participation of technical experts) and use the AWG strictly for technical tasks
Each country context will be different in terms of the willingness, resources and capacity of the MoE to be actively engaged in the assessment process. In terms of the primary data collection, it is important that focal points within the MoE are made aware of the assessment process as early as possible and given opportunities to contribute to it or co-facilitate it together with the Education Cluster if appropriate. The needs assessment process may be an entry point for MoE capacity building. MoE stakeholders may ask to observe each phase of the planning and implementation to learn how to improve ongoing Ministry-led national educational assessments.

Key areas where the MoE’s support is likely (where appropriate) to be required:

- Leading the AWG
- Supporting secondary data collection (e.g. extracting and giving permission to use data from EMIS, providing background strategy and policy documents from the MoE, such as education sector plans, education sector emergency preparedness plans, etc.)
- Obtaining permission to travel to any restricted areas
- Supporting training of researchers/data collectors
- Informing education counterparts in affected areas (including schools) of the assessment and inviting them to participate (or even giving them permission to share information) when appropriate
- Providing official documents for field teams to use to show the assessment has the approval of the MoE
- Assisting in the determination of the sites for primary data collection
- Reviewing and translate the data collection tools for proper contextualization
- Providing human resources for assessment field teams
- Providing human resources for data entry
- Leading on collaboration with national statistics agency
- Approving final report with findings and action points/recommendations for implementation

The level to which the MoE can support the assessment should be clarified during an initial tracking of partner contributions (see section 3.1.5).

### 1.2. Begin an assessment framework

Key decisions, deadlines and information needs should be recorded into an assessment framework (see the assessment framework template in the Needs Assessment Package). The framework is a guiding document for the entire assessment process and helps ensure that data for every question has a specific purpose for being collected (as well as a plan for how to analyze it once collected). Within the framework, break down your general information needs into smaller, associated indicators that can be more easily collected and measured. If you begin seeing thematic groupings as you list your indicators, ‘tag’ each of them with a main and sub-theme. These two columns will provide a thematic analytical framework for your secondary and primary data. For the main theme, consider using the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards Core Domains:

- Access and learning environment
- Teaching and learning
- Teachers and other educational personnel
- Education policy
- And two of the foundational domains: Coordination and Community participation

Your indicators and tags (especially sub-themes) will most likely evolve during the assessment process; however, it is still good practice to have these outlined in your drafted assessment framework. Also be sure to include specific reference to the geographic levels or areas of interest.
Figure 7: Assessment framework - Identifying decisions and information needs

1. Outline all key decisions needing to be made, deadlines and general information needed to inform those decisions.

2. Break down the general information needed into smaller, relevant indicators.

3. Tag each indicator with a main and sub-theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Decision</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>General Info need</th>
<th>INEE Domain (or theme)</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Secondary data question</th>
<th>Secondary data source</th>
<th>Primary data question (if needed)</th>
<th>Primary data source and method (if needed)</th>
<th>Analysis: How the data will be analysed and visualized (geographically, thematically, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What regions should be prioritized for EIE interventions?</td>
<td>15/10/16</td>
<td>Which regions have the largest # and % of children out-of-school because of the crisis?</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Out-of-school children (b/c of crisis)</td>
<td># and % of school-aged children (m/f) out-of-school b/c of the crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which regions have the largest # and % of schools closed because of the crisis?</td>
<td>15/10/16</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Schools open/closed</td>
<td># and % of schools (urban/rural and public/private) non-functioning because of the crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should urban, rural, public and private schools all be prioritized the same?</td>
<td>15/10/16</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Schools open/closed</td>
<td># and % of schools (urban/rural and public/private) non-functioning because of the crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Conduct a Secondary Data Review (SDR)

GEC Needs Assessment Package

**General**
- **Assessment work plan template** (SDR section)
- **Assessment framework template**

**Conduct an SDR:**
- 2.2: **SDR matrix template** (Excel)
- 2.5: **SDR report template** (Word)
- **Secondary data review webinar** with ACAP’s Rolf Bakken; 8 September 2015

Once you have identified the information needed to inform your prioritized decisions, the next step is to conduct an SDR. An SDR is an ongoing, summarization and compilation of available information for regular analysis to inform decision making\(^\text{10}\). Unfortunately, there is a tendency, once information needs are identified, to rush to the field and collect primary data. Primary data, however, should rarely ever be collected until an SDR is first conducted. Often much of the information needed is already available through secondary data; valuable time and resources do not need to be spent collecting this information. Furthermore, SDR analysis will highlight geographic and thematic information gaps and provide a better understanding of what information still needs to be collected (and from where), leading to better designed and more targeted primary data collection.

2.1. Plan the SDR

2.1.1. Determine the SDR team and lead focal point

Assign a lead focal point for the SDR who will be responsible for managing the process and ensuring tasks and products are completed within the specified time frame. This should most likely be someone from the Education Cluster Team, such as the Coordinator or Information Management Officer (IMO). Also determine who else from the Cluster or AWG should be involved and how (collection, analysis, report writing). The SDR team should be large enough to meet your needs (scale of information needs, quantity of sources needing to be reviewed, etc.) while small enough to be easily managed. Typically three to five individuals is sufficient.

\(^\text{10}\) Regardless of assessment plans, Education Cluster teams should always have an ongoing, up-to-date SDR and regular SDR reports.
2.1.2. Create an SDR work plan
Create an SDR work plan outlining tasks, outputs, persons responsible and timeframe for completion of reports and products. This timeframe is key as it imposes limitations on the amount of to spend searching for and collecting data for each ‘round’ of SDR reporting.

2.1.3. Plan the SDR report and products
The SDR report and products should be planned from the outset. This should include determining the timeframe for generating the report, which accompanying products to create (presentations, summary sheets, infographics, dashboards, etc.), frequency of updates and the stakeholders with whom to share the report. See section 2.5 below as well as the SDR report template in the Needs Assessment Package.

2.2. Design the SDR

2.2.1. Identify SDR questions and sources
Revisit your assessment framework, further break down the indicators into questions that could potentially be asked of secondary sources, and identify those potential sources. The image below shows what this might look like, and the table following the image defines the three main types of secondary data and provides potential sources for where to find them.
Based on the indicators, identify what questions should be asked and potential secondary sources

### Education Cluster Assessment Framework Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Decision</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>General Info need</th>
<th>INEE Domain (or theme)</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Secondary data question</th>
<th>Secondary data sources</th>
<th>Primary data question (if needed)</th>
<th>Primary data sources and method (if needed)</th>
<th>How the data will be analyzed and visualized (geographically, thematically, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What regions should be prioritized for EiE interventions?</td>
<td>15/10/15</td>
<td>Which regions have the largest % and % of children out-of-school because of the crisis?</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Out-of-school children (b/c of crisis)</td>
<td># and % of school-aged children (m/f) out-of-school b/c of the crisis</td>
<td>What is the pre-crisis enrolment (m/f) in affected regions?</td>
<td>EMIS, World Bank, UIS</td>
<td>M&amp;E and Cluster partner assessments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which regions have the largest % and % of schools closed because of the crisis?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Schools open/closed</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should urban, rural, public and private schools all be prioritized the same?</td>
<td>15/10/15</td>
<td>Have urban, rural, public and private schools been affected the same by the crisis?</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Schools open/closed</td>
<td>Location and type of schools (Urban/Rural; Public/Private)</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Key sources</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-crisis secondary data</td>
<td>Information that is already available about the area that has now been impacted by the crisis. Population data, key education indicators and status of the education system in the country before any interruptions caused by the emergency (e.g. student enrolment, attendance, teacher data, education facilities, etc.)</td>
<td>- MoE Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and National Education Strategy/Plan and curriculum&lt;br&gt;- National statistical bureau and other national databases&lt;br&gt;- National education staff and colleagues&lt;br&gt;- UNFPA may have population estimates/pyramids&lt;br&gt;- DevInfo&lt;br&gt;- UNICEF MICS&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;- UNICEF country statistics&lt;br&gt;- UNICEF State of world’s children&lt;br&gt;- World Bank EdStats&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;- UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)&lt;br&gt;  - UIS country profiles&lt;br&gt;- UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Database&lt;sup&gt;13&lt;/sup&gt; as well as narrative documents that describe and explain education.&lt;br&gt;- OCHA Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)&lt;br&gt;- OCHA Country CAPs&lt;br&gt;- Human Rights Watch Country Info&lt;br&gt;- ACAPS&lt;br&gt;- Amnesty International Country Info</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-crisis secondary data</td>
<td>Secondary data relevant to education that has been collected after the onset of the emergency (e.g. changes in enrolment, number of damaged schools, assessment data carried out by education partners, etc.)</td>
<td>- Information from the national government and MoE&lt;br&gt;- Existing assessments including multi-sector assessments, assessments from other clusters, agency assessments&lt;br&gt;- Conversations, emails and phone calls with inter-sector humanitarian colleagues, Cluster partners, education staff&lt;br&gt;- OCHA humanitarianresponse.info&lt;br&gt;  - Country profiles as well as assessment registry&lt;br&gt;  - Regular OCHA situational reports (sitreps)&lt;br&gt;- OCHA Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX)&lt;br&gt;- ReliefWeb&lt;br&gt;- OCHA country pages&lt;br&gt;- OCHA Country CAPs&lt;br&gt;- Humanitarian Needs Overview&lt;br&gt;- Humanitarian Response Plan&lt;br&gt;- UNICEF Emergencies Country info&lt;br&gt;- UNICEF Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) for attacks on education data&lt;br&gt;- IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix for IDP data and schools acting as IDP sites&lt;br&gt;- IFRC Country Appeals&lt;br&gt;- Global Education Cluster website&lt;br&gt;- ACAPS&lt;br&gt;- Media reports and social media (local and international)&lt;br&gt;- Communications materials from stakeholders in country</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar crisis secondary data</td>
<td>Lessons learned about the impact of previous emergency 1) in the same country or 2) in another country; can provide valuable insight into what to be prepared for as the emergency unfolds and support analysis and interpretation of findings.</td>
<td>- See historical information from all key sources listed above for 'In-crisis secondary data'; in addition:&lt;br&gt;- ALNAP&lt;br&gt;- International Recovery Platform: Countries and disasters&lt;br&gt;- Past PDNAs&lt;br&gt;- Humanitarian Practice Network</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>11</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys: database with internationally comparable data on the well-being of women and children from more than 100 countries.

<sup>12</sup> The World Bank Education Statistics portal is a comprehensive data and analysis source for key topics in education such as access, completion, learning, expenditures and equity.

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO’s Education for All Global Monitoring Report is an authoritative reference that aims to inform, influence and sustain genuine commitment towards Education.
2.2.2. Design the SDR matrix

The Needs Assessment Package contains an SDR matrix to help you enter and analyze secondary data. To use the matrix, the SDR team enters relevant pieces of secondary data and then provides information (i.e. ‘tags’) pertaining to that data: geographic location, dates, source, reliability of source, timeframe (pre-, in-, post- and similar crisis), name of and link to document. Additionally, each piece of secondary data should be assigned pre-determined thematic tags. These tags (as well as the other information included) are how you will be able to sort, filter and pivot your data during analysis. Determining your thematic tagging system, therefore, is simultaneously designing your data analysis. As such, the tags in your SDR matrix should be based on your information needs and thematic categorization as outlined in your assessment framework (i.e. the main theme/INEE domain and your sub-themes).

![Image: Tagging secondary data]

Figure 10: Tagging secondary data

Geographic tags | Relevant ‘piece’ of secondary data | Thematic tags

2.2.3. Determine secondary data compilation

Determine how all secondary data will be compiled into a ‘master’ database. If the SDR team compiles data into a single, online SDR matrix\textsuperscript{15} compilation is already complete. If SDR team members enter data into an offline matrix, like the template for the GEC SDR matrix, determine who, how and when the data will be compiled. Often, this is a simple task of copying and pasting, however, the frequency and process should be clearly communicated with the entire SDR team. As SDR matrices may contain sensitive information, be sure follow strict data security protocols (see section 3.3.4).

\textsuperscript{14} Pivot is reference to an Excel pivot table and is one way of summarizing and analyzing data.

\textsuperscript{15} Excel online, Google Sheets, etc.
2.3. Collect and enter secondary data

2.3.1. Compile secondary data sources
Before collecting, first identify where you will begin looking for information. Secondary data can comprise published research, internet materials, media reports, meeting minutes and data which has been cleaned, analyzed and collected for a purpose other than the current needs assessment. It should not, however, be confined exclusively to formally documented information and may also include emails, phone calls and conversations with individuals who are informed about the pre-, post-, and past crisis situation. National colleagues are an invaluable source of information as they often have children of school going age, neighbors, friends and extended family and may have access to information from affected areas. Make time to discuss individually or in a group. Where there are resources to do so listening to local radio stations and monitoring social media in local languages can provide valuable insight.

As you come across relevant secondary data sources, store the documents, website links, emails, conversation notes, etc. into an easily accessible repository. Ensure the folder taxonomy and file naming is well-structured to facilitate organization and ease-of-use. After data has been collected and entered from these sources into your SDR matrix, you may need to consult them again.

2.3.2. Train the SDR team and assign sources
Train your SDR team on how to review compiled sources and properly enter and tag relevant data into the SDR matrix. The training need not be long, and typically with a small group, two hours will be sufficient.

Potential SDR training content:
- Key decisions, information needs and questions outlined in the assessment framework; this will help give team members a clear, ‘big-picture’ vision of what they are trying to find
- Timeframe and ‘cut-off’ dates for collection (for particular rounds of SDR reporting)
- Good practices for quickly reviewing sources (do not need to read every page; looking for key words and only relevant information)
- How to enter data into the SDR matrix and how to correctly and consistently tag it; avoid copying and pasting large amounts of text containing multiple, relevant pieces of information that should be divided, entered and tagged separately
- Considerations for reliability of sources
- Assign sources for review to each team member (see ‘Sources’ worksheet on the SDR matrix template)
- When and how to submit their data to the SDR lead for compilation

2.3.3. Conduct and manage the SDR
Regularly review team members’ work, especially at the beginning, to ensure quality collection and entry and resolve any questions or problems early. Answer questions about how to properly tag the information. You may occasionally need to edit your tags. This is fine; however, every change should be communicated with the entire team. Failure to do so will cause problems during analysis and significant amount of data cleaning.

2.4. Analyze secondary data
Compilation, cleaning and analysis should be an ongoing (perhaps daily) process and not wait until immediately before the collection deadline. As mentioned above, tagging your data geographically and thematically in the matrix will now allow you to analyze the data accordingly. The SDR report template in the GEC Needs Assessment Package is designed to help you analyze your data. For more on analysis, see section 3.4.

16 If you used an Excel-based SDR matrix, use pivot tables to easily summarize your data; Google and YouTube are full of tutorials on how to do pivot tables; here is one example.
2.5. Generate and share an SDR report and products

An SDR report should be a simple, easy-to-read summary of what you know and do not know from the secondary data. It does not typically need to be as polished or time consuming as an assessment report. Based on the report and depending on your time, you may also wish to develop accompanying products such as a presentation, infographics, etc. (see section 3.5.2). For a list of stakeholders you may wish to share your report and products with see section 3.5.3.

2.5.1. Use the SDR Report Template

The GEC Needs Assessment Package contains a user-friendly SDR report template which, like the assessment framework and SDR matrix, uses the INEE domains as an overarching reporting framework. Tables are used to summarize the data from your SDR matrix into geographic and thematic categories.

Figure 11: SDR report template

Share findings, reports and products regularly with cluster members, the MoE (where appropriate), OCHA, other relevant clusters/stakeholders. They in turn will be able to help fill your information gaps and become rich sources of secondary information. Should they decide to collect primary data, the SDR findings can inform their questions and methodology and lead to an increase in harmonization of assessments (see Chapter 4).

Using the SDR report, immediately update your assessment framework. The secondary data may have provided enough information to inform some of the key decisions; these can now be made and removed from the framework. Based on the remaining decisions and information gaps (and/or secondary data that may need to be triangulated or validated), decide with the AWG how this data will be collected: through a JENA, a harmonized education needs assessment or through a multi-sector needs assessment (if one will be conducted).

2.5.2. Continue SDR and reporting on an ongoing basis

Your SDR should be an ongoing activity and not end after the generation of the first report. Either assign an individual (e.g. SDR lead focal point) the responsibility for keeping the matrix up-to-date and generating regular reports or schedule dates to reconvene the SDR team to conduct another ‘round’ of SDR and reporting.
**SDR tips to remember:**

1. *Define and judge your data:* Define what you are looking for and collect only what you can use; be careful to also judge the trustworthiness of the data and source.

2. *Prioritization of data:* Ensure geographic level of disaggregation is appropriate to the decisions being made; more detailed can be more useful, but will also be more time consuming. Some data will be difficult or impossible to find; decide whether it justifies the time required.

3. *Integrating datasets into your secondary data:* Do not try integrating complete datasets into your SDR matrix. For example, a displacement tracking matrix (DTM) from IOM, may have data on schools sheltering IDPs. Rather than entering raw data from the DTM into your matrix, first summarize relevant information and then record the summarization. For example, “5 schools in District X are currently sheltering IDPs”.

4. *Accessing the EMIS:* Accessing the Education Management Information System may be difficult. As some MoEs may be hesitant to share, you may need to explore multiple options. This may include establishing or improving relationships with the MoE and the statistics department, clearly articulating why you need access, what you will do with it and how it will benefit the MoE. Consider using pre-existing relationships of non-emergency staff or the political influence of your Cluster Lead Agencies.

5. *Use SDR to improve cluster buy-in and harmonization of assessments:* As mentioned above, sharing SDR findings, reports and products with relevant stakeholders can lead to greater cluster buy-in and more harmonized assessments.
A joint education needs assessment (JENA) is an inter-agency assessment focusing on the education sector; it is done jointly with multiple organizations and is typically led by the Education Cluster and, where appropriate, the Ministry of Education. The table below outlines some advantages of a JENA:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed and cost efficiency</td>
<td>Pooled resources (financial, personnel, logistical) typically lead to greater efficiency and lower overall costs; individual organization strengths, capacities and expertise can also be leveraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE buy-in</td>
<td>MoE leadership and involvement, where appropriate, helps ensure MoE buy-in and approval of findings and report. Participation on field teams can prove invaluable when visiting sites and gets MoE officials in the field, witnessing the impact of the emergency on the education sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater and better coverage</td>
<td>More staff for increased sample size and geographic spread; potential implications for using more robust methodologies and sampling strategies (e.g. representative sampling).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces duplication and fatigue</td>
<td>Helps ensure organizations are not assessing same areas and populations multiple times; reduces assessment fatigue of the affected populations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better trained data collectors</td>
<td>Having common collection tools, developed in consultation with partners, allows for standardized, targeted data collector trainings as well as a single dataset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better and faster analysis</td>
<td>Centralized data entry and analysis; this allows for more concentrated, higher levels of technical expertise focused on analyzing the dataset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, common report</td>
<td>Key findings and recommendations presented in a single, shared report for all cluster members. This helps ensure all members have a shared understanding of the situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1. Plan the field assessment

**Figure 12: Assessment work plan - Plan the field assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Task</th>
<th>Sub-Task</th>
<th>GECNA Guide</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a s1ENA: Plan</td>
<td>Define the objectives and scope</td>
<td>3.1.1.</td>
<td>AWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a s1ENA: Plan</td>
<td>Create an assessment work plan</td>
<td>3.1.2.</td>
<td>AWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a s1ENA: Plan</td>
<td>Determine assessment coordination team</td>
<td>3.1.3.</td>
<td>AWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a s1ENA: Plan</td>
<td>Draft an assessment ToR</td>
<td>3.1.4.</td>
<td>AWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a s1ENA: Plan</td>
<td>Develop a budget and track partner contributions</td>
<td>3.1.5.</td>
<td>AWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a s1ENA: Plan</td>
<td>Plan assessment analysis, report and products</td>
<td>3.1.6.</td>
<td>AC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.1.1. Define the objectives and scope

The objectives of your assessment are to inform your prioritized key decisions. These can be taken directly from the assessment framework and used to formulate the overall assessment research question(s). Articulating these from the outset clarifies expectations of what the assessment is to achieve. When defining objectives, a good rule of thumb is to keep them SMART, meaning:

- **Specific**
- **Measureable**
- **Achievable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time bound**

Once objectives are defined, consider the potential limitations for achieving them:

- **Context:** security, access, type of crisis, etc.
- **Deadlines:** Flash Appeal, revisions, Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), and other key milestones
- **Resources:** financial, human, logistical

These limitations will help define the assessment’s scope as the rest of the assessment’s plan and design is finalized (e.g. budget, geographic coverage, sampling strategy, collection technique, etc.).

**Examples of previous Education Cluster assessment objectives:**

- To show trends with regard to two main indicators arising in almost all of the field studies done by Cluster members, namely: percentage of schools functioning, representation of the different categories of teacher in the schools (tenured teachers, contract teachers, community teachers).
- Understand the percentage of schools open/closed and the number of weeks open schools have received students during the first term of the 2014-2015 school year.
- Changes in enrolment compared to 2013-2014 and with the pre-emergency baseline (2011-2012 levels).
- Document attacks against schools during the crisis period (2012-2015).
- Provide overview of water and sanitation in schools and school canteens (as of April 2015).
- Provide the Ministry of Education and Education Cluster partners an understanding of the views of teachers, students and parents regarding school closure and reopening (as of April 2015).
- Determine level of community acceptance of local curriculum and target language for children in refugee context and priorities of students and parents in terms of language and curriculum.

### 3.1.2. Create an assessment work plan

Create an assessment work plan with key tasks, responsible persons and deadlines. The assessment work plan template in the GEC Needs Assessment Package already contains many of the key tasks that you can simply contextualize with the AWG. While the work plan may appear to present tasks in a chronological, step-by-step
order, many should be done simultaneously or in conjunction with others (e.g. a budget, which should be drafted early, will need to be modified based on stakeholder analysis, sampling strategy, etc.).

3.1.3. Determine assessment coordination team

The assessment coordination team is responsible for direct supervision and management of the assessment and will typically include an assessment coordinator and information analyst(s). When budget allows, full-time coordination teams can be recruited. Often, however, either the cluster teams must fulfill these roles (i.e. cluster coordinator as assessment coordinator and IMO as information analyst) and/or the assessment coordinator and information analyst may need to be the same person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Coordinator</th>
<th>Information Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible for planning and designing an agreed, context-specific assessment approach and methodology and ensuring that the assessment fulfills its goals and objectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures all team members are briefed on assessment objectives and their role in meeting them. Facilitates team and AWG work including planning, analysis and review of findings and information sharing. Manages the performance of team members and coordinates reporting to ensure all members deliver required outputs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures all key stakeholders are involved in the assessment and that appropriate resources are available to complete the assessment in the given timeframe.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures quality control, appropriate monitoring of data collection and ongoing surveillance of developing needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supports awareness-raising regarding assessment results and assessment preparedness requirements with all relevant stakeholders, including MoE and other related national ministries.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensures that lessons learned are captured during the assessment to feed into best practices documents.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides support to the design and management of sampling, collection tools, databases, and analysis.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with other clusters, government representatives and other relevant technical expertise to develop and agree upon a common methodology and tools.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures data collection tools and the methodology used are sound and coherent. Ensures that data are properly entered and cleaned, analysis is completed on time, and problems are identified and rectified quickly.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performs daily quality checks and collaboration with field teams throughout the assessment. Ensures assessments teams on the ground have received the necessary training and resources to complete their work efficiently.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.1.4. Draft an assessment ToR

Draft and agree-upon a ToR which should include: a brief background to the assessment, objectives, proposed sampling strategy and geographic coverage, data collection technique, expected outputs, roles and responsibilities, and timeframe. It is important to draft this ToR early in the assessment process, even if some of the details pertaining to sampling and methodology will be finalized later. An assessment ToR template and country examples can be found in the GEC Needs Assessment Package.

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17 Note: the assessment coordination team should not be confused with the assessment working group (see section 1.1) nor with the assessment field teams (see section 3.2.6).
3.1.5. Develop a budget and track partner contributions

Your budget should include a list of all items/personnel required, their associated costs and who will provide the items and/or cover the costs. It is important that the overall scope of the assessment is in-line with available resources; in cases where scope exceeds available resources, it will need to be revisited and redefined. An assessment budget template outlining key costs (personnel, training, collection logistics, workshops, etc.) is included in the Needs Assessment Package:

**Track partner contributions**

After drafting what is needed and estimating costs, contact and meet with partners, including the MoE, to see what resources they can contribute. Broad participation helps ensure budgetary needs are met, increases inclusivity and transparency and develops partner ownership of the process, findings and report. Make sure these commitments are confirmed in writing with any required Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) or legal/contractual documentation. Ensure contributions and funds are sufficient prior to beginning and can be released and used within the needed timeframe. Ideally, these documents and budget outline, with potential
partner contributions, will have been done during the pre-crisis assessment preparedness phase (see Chapter 6).

Track the contributions throughout the planning and budgeting process. If payment of per diems to MoE staff is not centralized by the assessment coordination team, it is good practice to at least ensure that all contributing partners agree in advance to a standard rate; this will avoid setting problematic precedents or creating disparities among partners.

3.1.6. Develop a code of conduct and informed consent forms

Ethical considerations for data collection are also necessary while planning the assessment. Develop a code of conduct for assessment field teams to be incorporated and signed during the training. Translated informed consent forms (or scripts if informed consent will be given verbally) should also be developed for use by data collectors and respondents where relevant. Consent forms should outline the purpose of the assessment, confidentiality, how their responses will be used, explicitly obtain assent/consent and how they will be notified of assessment results (see section 3.5.3 for more information).

Note: if your data collection will involve children, first seek permission from duty-bearers (teachers, parents/care-givers, etc.) before engaging with children. Children must be provided with information about the assessment that is appropriate to their age, competencies, context and evolving capacities. Explicit, verbal, informed consent should be obtained. Ensure that children (and others) understand that consent is negotiable and that they can withdraw at any point.

Further information on ethical considerations when working with children see:
- Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC)'s Researcher Support Guide
- Ethical Principles, Dilemmas and Risks in Collecting Data on Violence against Children

**Ethics and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)**

Assessments are not neutral: they are “interventions” in themselves and can raise expectations that an intervention will happen. It is essential to consider ethical and AAP issues at the outset and throughout the assessment process, from conceptualization to post-dissemination. AAP explicitly calls on partners to support five commitments: advancing leadership/governance, transparency, ensuring feedback and complaints mechanisms, enabling participation and involving populations in design, monitoring and evaluation efforts.

An ethical approach to conducting assessments demands:

- **Those affected by the crisis participate actively** in identifying their own needs and priorities.
- **Good communication to ensure informed consent**: participants understand that they don’t have to participate in the assessment if they prefer not to, and they understand the purpose of the assessment and its limitations. Obtaining consent from parents/care-givers, school personnel and children demonstrates respect for the individual participant’s dignity; their capability and right to make decisions about matters that affect them.
- **Parameters for confidentiality are clear and** is assured for participants when/where relevant.
- **Foresight regarding any potentially negative impact of the exercise.** Do not use methodologies that risk stigmatizing children and youth, endangering them in any way, or increasing family separation. In extreme cases, assessments may even endanger the safety of respondents (e.g. by labelling children or youth and attracting the attention of groups that prey on children and youth at risk).
- **A commitment to follow-up action**, if required. Those involved in the assessment must also be aware of and adhere to reporting and referral mechanisms should any sensitive data be reported, especially in relation to abuse or exploitation.

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18 For more on using a child participatory methodology as a collection technique, (see section 3.2.3).
3.1.7. Plan assessment analysis, report and products

Be sure to adequately plan, schedule/assign (in the work plan) and budget for analyzing the data (which may include an interpretive workshop; see section 3.4.7), report writing and product dissemination. Communicate these dates and requested inputs/participation with partners well in advance. Final products may include:

- Assessment analysis and report
- Presentation on the report
- Summary sheets and infographics
- Anonymized datasets for deeper analysis by others
- Joint action plan (with action plan workshop)

For more information on analyzing data see section 3.4; for more on generating reports and products see section 3.5.
3.2. Design the field assessment

Assessment design is the planning process for the technical aspects of the assessment, specifically how you will collect, manage and analyze the data. It requires technical expertise and will typically be led by the assessment coordination team. The design of the assessment should be done in conjunction with the planning process described above as each will inform and affect the other. Factors influencing design:

These factors will influence what is or is not possible when designing the assessment. If the time, resources and security/access is not going to provide for a sufficiently robust design to meet the assessment objectives:

- Check with decision makers about information needs; if these can be reduced, adapt design accordingly.
- Check with decision makers about any flexibility in the assessment timeframe to inform decisions.
- If the proposed assessment costs do not match the available budget, try to mobilize additional resources. If donors and headquarters are aware of the implications of not adequately resourcing the assessment, they may be inclined to dedicate more to it. If not, you will need to alter the assessment design to match the available budget.

3.2.1. Determine assessment questions and sources

Based on information needs outlined in your assessment framework (see below for example), determine which primary data questions to ask and to whom. Common sources:

- Head teachers
- Teachers/education personnel (including non-formal education service providers and temporary classroom facilitators)
- Students/out-of-school children and youth

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If needed, request support from the Global Education Cluster (help.edcluster@humanitarianresponse.info)
- Parents/caregivers of the students and/or out-of-school children and youth
- Community/IDP site leaders
- Direct observations at a location (school, IDP site, temporary classrooms, community site, etc.)

You will most likely collect data from multiple types of sources, leading to richer, triangulated information. For example:

**Triangulating data**

During a focus group discussion (FGD), parents report their children are going to school. However, in an interview with the head teacher, she explains that children have not been attending school. The assessment team visits the schools and observes the head teacher is correct. Teams should revisit parents who may not have wanted to be seen in a negative light and to try and understand why their children are not attending.
To address remaining information needs, determine your primary data questions and targeted sources for each question.

### Education Cluster Assessment Framework Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Decision</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>General info need</th>
<th>INEE Domain (or theme)</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Secondary data question</th>
<th>Secondary data source</th>
<th>Primary data question (if needed)</th>
<th>Primary data source and method (if needed)</th>
<th>Analysis: How the data will be analyzed and visualized (geographically, thematically, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What regions should be prioritized for EEE interventions?</td>
<td>15/10/16</td>
<td>Which regions have the largest # and % of children out-of-school because of the crisis?</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Out-of-school children (b/c of crisis)</td>
<td>% and % of school-aged children (m/f) out-of-school b/c of the crisis</td>
<td>What is the pre-crisis enrollment (m/f) in affected regions?</td>
<td>EMIS, World Bank, UIS</td>
<td>How many children (m/f) attending pre-crisis?</td>
<td>Head teacher</td>
<td>Head teacher Teacher Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which regions have the largest # and % of schools closed because of the crisis?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Schools open/closed</td>
<td>% and % of schools (urban/rural and public/private) non-functioning because of the crisis</td>
<td>How many total schools in affected regions? How many schools are closed in affected regions because of the crisis?</td>
<td>EMIS, World Bank, UIS</td>
<td>How many children (m/f) attending today?</td>
<td>Head teacher</td>
<td>Head teacher Parents Direct observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should urban, rural, public and private schools all be prioritized the same?</td>
<td>15/10/16</td>
<td>Have urban, rural, public and private schools been affected the same by the crisis?</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Schools open/closed</td>
<td>Location and type of school (Urban/Rural; Public/Private)</td>
<td>Location and type of school (Urban/Rural; Public/Private)</td>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Direct observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.2. Develop a sampling strategy

Since time and resources do not allow you to visit all communities and schools or talk to all head teachers, parents or students in all areas affected by a crisis, a sampling strategy is required. Sampling is the process of collecting information from a subset of the entire population\(^\text{21}\); this allows you to collect data from a significantly reduced number of locations and informants, cutting costs and time, while still obtaining needed information. The table below summarizes the three types of sampling most common for JENAs with their advantages, disadvantages and when you may want to use each. A longer guidance note on sampling strategies is included in the Needs Assessment Package; when selecting a sampling strategy you may also wish to contact the Global Education Cluster for additional support: help.edcluster@humanitarianresponse.info.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages/challenges</th>
<th>When to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Allows results to be extrapolated/generalized to the wider population/area</td>
<td>Only possible when lists of targeted schools, households etc. are available and selected locations are accessible</td>
<td>When time, resources and expertise allow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May require a larger sample size for which you have time or resources</td>
<td>When you have a list of schools/sites in affected areas to visit (e.g. EMIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Requires specialized training to ensure proper implementation</td>
<td>When you want to be able to generalize findings to the entire affected area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>Useful when time/resources are limited and assessment is correctly supervised and selection criteria respected</td>
<td>Generalizations beyond visited areas should be made with extreme caution, or not made at all</td>
<td>When time, resources and expertise do not allow for representative sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can have smaller sample size than representative sampling (and therefore can be more cost- and time- effective)</td>
<td></td>
<td>When you want to be able to select sites/individuals for a specific purpose (based on existing knowledge of the crisis, certain expertise of key informant, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can show trends of situation with relatively small amount of data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Useful to understand any differences in impact/need based on differences in type of site/location; even when primary data sources are limited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Can be done rapidly</td>
<td>Least rigorous sampling option of the three and not recommended unless other options are impossible; biased</td>
<td>When representative or purposive sampling are not possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Useful when access and time is limited</td>
<td>Does not take into consideration key differences between locations and is unlikely to inform on impact on different groups affected by crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{21}\) In this section the term ‘population’ does not necessarily refer to the entire population of a country, or necessarily to people; rather it refers to all individuals, locations or sites within a specified area of interest (e.g. all schools in the affected area, all students in the affected area, etc.)
3.2.3. Select a collection technique

To determine your collection technique, revisit your assessment framework and for each primary data question and source identified, ask: “What is the best way of getting this information?” Main approaches are outlined in the table below. For more information on developing associated tools see section 3.2.4 and corresponding folder in the Needs Assessment Package which contains various country examples as well as guidance on child participatory methodologies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct observation (DO)</td>
<td>Assessment field teams directly observe:</td>
<td>Usually carried out alongside other methods; data collectors are constantly observing, but if there is not a structured way of recording their observations key information may be lost. Structured direct observation using a checklist is designed specifically to meet the information needs of the assessment, provide added insight into conditions and triangulate other information. Especially useful when the observers are familiar with the pre-crisis situation.</td>
<td>Observation checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communities (what is going on around the school)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Classrooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Learning materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Safety considerations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- On-going teaching and learning (i.e. lessons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informant interviews (KII)</td>
<td>Key informants for education assessments could include:</td>
<td>Interviews with individuals who have knowledge that relates to what the assessment is trying to find out. A key Informant is being asked to comment on the overall situation as they understand it not just on their specific circumstances; however bias is unavoidable.</td>
<td>Key informant interview questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- School administrator, head teacher, teachers/education personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children and young people both in and out of school (see child participatory methodologies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- School Management Committee members (SMCs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Community leaders (such as traditional and religious leaders)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Individuals from the different groups in a community (such as women’s groups, youth groups, forest user groups)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Individuals from different sectors within a community (such as based on type of livelihood or income level as well as ethnicity or religion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Local authorities and education officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Representatives, board members or staff, of local NGOs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group discussions (FGDs)</td>
<td>A group of 6-12 people usually having something in common and selected specifically to contribute to the objectives of the assessment</td>
<td>Give qualitative information to understanding the education environment and conditions (helps to understand the ‘Why’). The aim is to come up with a range of different perspectives on what is important according to the participants.</td>
<td>Focus group discussion questionnaires (different questionnaires)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Information Source</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community group discussions (CGDs)</td>
<td>A group of 6 plus people available to discuss the topics of the assessment</td>
<td>Often in the initial stages of an emergency response carrying out actual FGDs can be challenging; it may be difficult to limit the size of the group, acquire the right composition (homogeneity), or have assessment team staff with adequate training in FG skills. In these cases a looser adaptation of community group discussion can be useful to give voice to affected people on key issues.</td>
<td>Community group discussion questionnaire (different questionnaire per group type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child participatory methodologies</td>
<td>Children and young people both in and out of school</td>
<td>Conducting KIIs or FGDs with children and/or young people should be quite different than KIIs or FGDs with adults; they should be age-appropriate. Use art, drawing, theatre and other similar activities to allow the children to express issues and concerns in a safe and non-distressing manner. Requires skilled facilitators to both manage the process and analyze and draw out the findings.</td>
<td>Child participatory methodology (see Needs Assessment Package for section 3.2.4 for more resources)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When selecting, consider other planning and design elements such as your timeframe, budget and capacity of assessment field teams. You may also need to use multiple collection methods; for example:

*Figure 18: Multiple collection techniques*
3.2.4. Design, translate and pilot collection tool(s)

Once questions, sources and methods are identified, begin developing your corresponding data collection tool(s). You will likely need a data collection tool for each of the different types of sources and collection methodologies you have decided to assess. Questions to be included on the tools can be taken directly from your assessment framework and modified for each of the different targeted audiences. This helps ensure each question is linked to informing key decisions and that you do not collection more information than is necessary. The assessment’s information analyst should support this process to ensure each question is worded and structured appropriately from an analytical perspective. The MoE (where appropriate) should approve all collection tools and methodologies as early in the process as possible; in some instances, especially in large-scale assessments and where there is a need, it may be worthwhile to include a few EMIS questions on the tools.

Designing questions and collection tools is a specialized skill. The Needs Assessment Package contains several resources including a checklist for developing data collection tools, JENA tool examples and many resources on child participatory methodology. As with sampling, contact the Global Education Cluster for additional support: help.edcluster@humanitarianresponse.info.

Technology is a tool – not a solution

There are increasing moves toward mobile data collection using software and smart phones or tablets. This can save time collecting, entering and cleaning data. Nevertheless, mobile data collection does not take away the need of having a well-planned and well-designed assessment and well-trained field teams. Even when used, it is good practice to draft all collection tools on paper first (this also provides a backup in case the technology stops working in the field). If collecting qualitative data where large amounts of note taking may be required, mobile technology may also not be well-suited. While electronic data collection has its advantages, it may not be the most appropriate solution in all contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Can send data more quickly and regularly from the field as it is being collected (facilitating quicker analysis)</td>
<td>- Requires additional equipment and costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Data validation techniques can be integrated on the collection tools leading to cleaner data</td>
<td>- Requires additional training for field teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Data is entered at time of collection (no need for a separate data entry team and process)</td>
<td>- Can be a distraction to respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Need a frequent source of power (solar or electricity) to charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Need reception if data are uploaded remotely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once designed, translate (if relevant) and pilot your data collection tools. Be sure to discuss potentially confusing or problematic vocabulary with the translator(s) (e.g. attendance vs. enrollment). No matter how perfect you feel your questions and data collection tools are, there will be glaringly obvious mistakes once you begin collecting data. Piloting will reduce these mistakes. Ideally, field-test the tool with relevant crisis-affected respondents or with people as similar as possible to those who will be assessed. If a field pilot is impossible, at the very least do a role-play pilot on colleagues unfamiliar with the tools but familiar with the context.
Piloting as a form of accountability to affected populations

Piloting data collection tools is also crucial for ensuring accountability to affected populations by:
- Highlighting the existence of possible ethical problems that have been overlooked and ensuring the developed consent forms are well understood;
- Checking the appropriateness of selected respondent types and questions being asked of them;
- Ensuring all questions are appropriate and not threatening or overly sensitive;
- Ensuring questions being asked are enabling affected populations to fully express their needs (and if not, allowing for additional questions to be added).

3.2.5. Design the analysis

As the collection tools are being designed, it is imperative that the assessment’s information analyst determine how each question on each tool will be entered into a database, analyzed and visualized. This perspective will help to catch potential problems that may arise during data entry and analysis, and questions may need to be rephrased or reformatted accordingly. It will also help when designing how the data entry tool will be structured (see section 3.2.8). How each question will be analyzed should be recorded in the assessment framework:
**Figure 19: Assessment framework - Analysis**

### Education Cluster Assessment Framework Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Decision</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>General info needed</th>
<th>INEE Domain (or theme)</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Secondary data question</th>
<th>Secondary data source</th>
<th>Primary data question (if needed)</th>
<th>Primary data source and method (if needed)</th>
<th>Analysis: How the data will be analysed and visualized (geographically, thematically, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What regions should be prioritized for EIE interventions?</td>
<td>15/10/16</td>
<td>Which regions have the largest # and % of children out-of-school because of the crisis?</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Out-of-school children (b/c of crisis)</td>
<td># and % of school-aged children (m/f) out-of-school b/c of the crisis</td>
<td>What is the pre-crisis enrolment (m/f) in affected regions?</td>
<td>EMIS, World Bank, UIS</td>
<td>How many children (m/f) attending pre-crisis?</td>
<td>Head teacher: KII</td>
<td>Regional comparison of # of children out-of-school because of the crisis (density map and bar chart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Which regions have the largest # and % of schools closed because of the crisis?</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Schools open/closed</td>
<td># and % of schools (urban/rural and public/private) non-functioning because of the crisis</td>
<td>How many total schools in affected regions?</td>
<td>EMIS, World Bank, UIS</td>
<td>How many schools are closed in affected regions because of the crisis?</td>
<td>Head teacher: KII</td>
<td>Regional comparison of % of children out-of-school because of the crisis (density map and bar chart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should urban, rural, public and private schools all be prioritized the same?</td>
<td>15/10/16</td>
<td>Have urban, rural, public and private schools been affected the same by the crisis?</td>
<td>Access and learning environment</td>
<td>Schools open/closed</td>
<td>Location and type of school [Urban/Rural; Public/Private]</td>
<td>Location and type of school [Urban/Rural; Public/Private]</td>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Direct observation: school visit</td>
<td>Direct observation: school visit</td>
<td>- Thematic comparison: % of closed schools that are urban vs. rural (pie chart)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determine and record how each question will be analyzed and visualized.
### 3.2.6. Determine assessment field team composition

Your data will only be as good as your field teams. Selecting your teams and having appropriate team composition, therefore, is of utmost importance. The table below outlines the structure of a typical team:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team lead (1)</td>
<td>(Also one of the data collectors); Selected based on level of experience in emergency settings, experience in assessments and local knowledge. Responsibilities include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Planning and oversight of the daily logistics for the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ensure all team members adhere to the code of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Monitor the wellbeing of the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide support to team members as required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify key informants at the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Introduce the team and objectives and leads first meeting with community gatekeepers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communicate with the assessment coordination team daily on progress, challenges, changes to planning; sends data, if possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Act as team focal point for security information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Debrief team at each site to discuss findings, check collected data, verify discrepancies before leaving the location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collectors (2-5)</td>
<td>Responsible for collecting data as defined by the assessment methodology and as trained. Data collectors drawn from education partners and MoE in country; preferably with data collection experience already. If the assessment is taking place across a broad geographic area, it may be more effective to constitute assessment field teams of people already working or located in or near the affected area(s), leading to quicker, cheaper collection. Furthermore, links between assessment, project planning and implementation are enhanced. In this case, training may need to take place in different locations. Ensuring that the assessment field teams working in different locations benefit from the same level of training and information is important to ensure consistency and quality of data collection. Number of data collectors depend on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Time allowed for each field visit. If the time at a site is constrained, it may be best to have a larger field team to collect all the information rather than having to return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Volume and variety of data to be collected at each site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Budget/availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Capacity of collectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Transportation availability (ideally, the team should be able to travel together in one vehicle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Security: there may be reasons to limit the size of field teams if a rapidly changing security environment would require them to leave the site quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the number of collectors is insufficient, you may need to recruit from local institutions such as universities, research institutes and (local or federal) government agencies such as Bureau of Statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data enterer (if applicable)</td>
<td>If assessment field teams will be reporting data back to the coordination team on an ongoing basis, the data collector with the greatest technological/data entry capacity may need to be designated as data enterer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver (1)</td>
<td>Responsible for transporting field teams. Can also take responsibility for managing the logistic requirements in the field such as meals and accommodation. In some contexts a person who drives the vehicle may also be a data collector, but the rigors of driving in emergency contexts should not be underestimated and this option should only be used if it is considered appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator (1-2)</td>
<td>Needed when data collectors lack local language skills; should attend same training as rest of team. If translators are hired in the field, time must be set aside to brief them on the assessment objectives, terminology, and data collection methods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of total teams will depend on:

- The number of sites to be visited and people interviewed per site
- Methodology and time needed to employ the assessment tools in each site (e.g. FGDs take time)
- Budget and number of people available
Distances between sites and travel time

The profiles and characteristics of the team members themselves are also important to take into consideration:

Table 7: Considerations for assessment field team composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Effort should always be made to include a mix of men and women on assessment field teams. Recruiting women may be challenging due to social and cultural norms and the fact that women will be required to travel for the assessment. It will be very difficult, however, to ensure the assessment captures the needs of female respondents without having female team members. Sometimes it will not be possible to include only one woman on an assessment field team and thus two women will be needed per team. Travel and accommodation arrangements should also consider any gender sensitivities(^\text{22}).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Language of field team members is also an important consideration as you will want to make sure that collectors can effectively communicate with respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity, religion, marginalized groups</td>
<td>Ensure teams are as suitable as possible in terms of language, political, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic make up for collecting information from the targeted communities and for working together as a team. This will be particularly important where political and/or inter-ethnic/inter-religious conflict has occurred either as part of the current crisis or in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>The organization people work for and other affiliations (e.g. political) can impact data collection. Ensure that field teams are made up of people from different organizations. This includes considering that in some cases affected communities may not be open with government assessment teams. Where possible minimize perceived hierarchies between organizations, such as UN and NGOs, which could lead to disconnect within teams and low quality data collected. Ensure that the training includes time for team and relationship building to boost team cohesiveness. Team members should separate themselves from their own agency mandates and adopt an organizationally neutral position. As such branding (stickers, T-shirt, bags with logos, visiting card, etc.) should be avoided. However, a practical approach to this needs to be adopted as there are benefits of using staff experienced in working in locations and with good existing relationships with local communities and local governments. In these cases, the organizations of these individuals will likely be known and they will need to explain their role in relation to the assessment. This does not apply to staff of national or local government authorities accompanying the assessment teams who should identify themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and international staff</td>
<td>Consider implications of national staff versus international staff on a case-by-case basis. While national staff are usually preferred because they have language skills and local knowledge that can assist them in seeing first-hand the changes in a context as a consequence of an emergency, international staff bring neutrality and profile to the work that may sometimes be beneficial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of local context</td>
<td>Knowledge of the local context generally and specifically in relation to education when collecting data. Access to local networks and understanding how to move around and get things done in the field is also a big advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Additional attributes of assessment field team to consider include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Education technical expertise and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Knowledge and experience of child participatory methodology (when relevant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Generalists with assessment experience and participatory appraisal experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- People with strong interpersonal skills, good communication skills, local language skills, cultural competence, objectivity and neutrality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Previous disaster and emergency response experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{22}\) Additional incentives or considerations may be needed for women to participate as part of the team, such as accompaniment of a male in their family as part of the assessment team or bringing along their young children. These should be considered based on the context specific requirements and constraints of the assessment.
3.2.7. Prepare field team packages and data collection plans

Prior to training teams, prepare a package for each assessment field team containing the essential information and documents they will need. The contents of the package may include:

**Assessment field team package**

- A short overview of the emergency and the location of the assessment
  - Map of the areas to be assessed
- Data Collection Plans
  - Instructions for site, group and KI selection
  - Protocols for site substitution if required
- Copies of data collection tools
  - Guidelines on the data collection techniques that will be used
  - List of key terms used in the data collection tools and definitions
- Communication procedures and contact list (with emergency contacts and security procedures)
- Instructions on the use of any electronic devices being used in the assessment (tablets, GPS, smartphones)
- Letters of introduction for notice of arrival on site (e.g. from MoE)
- Code of conduct
- Informed consent forms with instructions

A crucial element of the field team package will be the team’s data collection plan. Your assessment work plan should specify the general timeframe for data collection. However, detailed data collection plans should be drafted for each assessment field team. Collection plans should include: team composition (roles and contacts), assigned sites (and replacement sites), collection schedule (when each site will be visited), a list of activities to conduct at each site and a list of activities conducted each evening. A collection plan template can be found in the Needs Assessment Package:
3.2.8. Design a data entry tool

Paper-based data collection\(^{23}\) requires an electronic data entry tool. The information analyst should develop the tool based on the collection tools and may use Microsoft Excel or Access for offline data entry functionality or with an online software\(^{24}\). Use the same coding as the data collection tool to facilitate data entry. Also use data validation techniques, such as dropdown lists or value criteria (dates, numbers, text, etc.) whenever possible to decrease data entry errors. The images below show the collection forms and data entry tools for JENAs conducted in Liberia (Microsoft Access) and CAR (Microsoft Excel), respectively. These original tools, and others, can be found in the Needs Assessment Package.

\(^{23}\) If you are using mobile data collection technology, data is most likely being directly uploaded to an online database with a pre-defined analysis template thus speeding up the data entry and data cleaning process.

\(^{24}\) Any software with a form functionality, such as Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, or Survey Gizmo should work.

Figure 21: Data entry (MS Access)

Figure 22: Data entry (MS Excel)
3.2.9. Select an approach and team for data entry

Typically, there are three methodological options for data entry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data entry option</th>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Centralized: data entry team established at a centralized hub to enter data collected on paper and sent in from the field | - Easier for assessment information analyst to train enterers and oversee/manage entry process  
- Appropriate if teams and/or communities are not very comfortable with technology  
- Does not require any new equipment  
- Training of data collectors does not need to cover mobile technology | - Requires a protocol for contacting team members if there are any questions regarding data  
- Requires transfer of data to entry hub and additional time for this |
| Decentralized: data entry completed by assessment field teams on laptops at the end of each day | - Results in data with fewer mistakes because the people who are actually collecting the data are the ones entering it  
- Does not require any additional equipment (tablets, smart phones); although does require at least one laptop | - Requires at least one team member to be trained on data entry tool (most likely in Excel or Access)  
- This most competent data enterer on the team can become over-burdened  
- Teams can be tired after a day in the field resulting in potential errors |
| Mobile data collection technology: When mobile data collection tools are used (rather than paper), data is captured electronically on the tablets or smart phones and automatically entered and compiled into online database | - Results in data with fewer mistakes because the people who are actually collecting the data are the ones entering it  
- Saves time because a separate data entry step is not required  
- Allows the assessment coordination team to receive data immediately | - Budget for and availability of required technology  
- Extensive opportunities to practice and come to terms with any technology is required in the training  
- Exposure of field assessment teams to technology and attitudes of communities to technology must be considered  
- Electricity and internet access need to be available |

Based on your selected method(s), identify your data entry team. If using the field teams, ensure at least one person is proficient in data entry and software of the data entry tool. Otherwise, establish your data entry hub, (adequate number of enterers and computers with required software). Like assessment field team composition, data entry teams are also typically going to be comprised of cluster members and MoE staff with potential recruitment from local universities. Select only people who have strong computer skills and preferably who already have data entry experience.

**Data entry in Liberia Education Cluster Needs Assessment**

In January 2015, the Liberia Education Cluster successfully used a centralized data entry methodology during a joint education needs assessment. The MoE provided 5 EMIS staff as well as a data entry hub (a room with 10 computers). The EMIS staff were already well trained on how to enter data, and the Cluster recruited an additional 5 interns from a local university studying computer science and similarly skilled with data entry. The Cluster’s IMO, acting as both assessment coordinator and information analyst, first trained all 10 data enterers on the data collection and data entry tools and then oversaw and managed data entry as the paper questionnaires returned from the field with the assessment field teams. Data from hundreds of KIIs and FGDs were recorded in only a few days.
3.3. Collect and enter primary data

Figure 23: Assessment work plan - Collect and enter primary data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Cluster Assessment Work Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary task</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct an EIA Collect and enter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect and manage the data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a debrief with assessment field teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect and enter primary data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1. Train assessment field teams and data entry teams

All members of assessment field and data entry teams must participate in a mandatory assessment training prior to data collection (including drivers and translators). The less technical education and/or assessment experience the team members have, the more important the training. An additional training (or an addendum) should be held just for data enterers.

The training should be as practical as possible, using group-work, role-play and simulation to practice the techniques that will be used in the field and become familiar with the data collection tools. There is always the pressure of time on all components of an assessment process and this pressure is often used to condense the amount of time spent on training assessment field and data entry teams. Allow at least two full days for training. The time spent in adequately training teams will pay off in better quality data. A draft training agenda template can be found in the Needs Assessment Package:

Figure 24: Training agenda template
3.3.2. Conduct and manage the data collection
The assessment coordinator is responsible for managing the primary data collection, including overseeing all preparation and execution of operational, administrative and logistical elements of the field work. A data collection management checklist to help assessment coordinators can be found in the Needs Assessment Package (see image below).

During collection, the assessment coordination team should have daily contact with each team leader and be available to receive calls at any time from the teams (report updates, problems, changes, security issues, etc.). Depending on the number of teams, consider dividing oversight of them to different people, especially where there are perceived organizational hierarchies between partners. If distances and logistics allow, random visits to teams in the field are recommended in order to check the quality of the work, mental and physical health of the teams as well as their cohesion and problem-solving abilities.

![Data collection management checklist](image)

3.3.3. Debrief with assessment field teams
Debrief with the field teams (or at least the team leader) as they return from the field. This provides an opportunity to discuss the collection process, any major challenges and potential validity problems with the data. Field teams provide a great deal of insight into the data that may not be apparent from simply analyzing it. Field teams may also provide ideas on data to collect during subsequent assessments not included in the initial assessment. During debriefs, begin cleaning the data, by quickly ‘spot-checking’ the completed data collection tools with the individual data collectors.

3.3.4. Enter primary data
If a decentralized data entry methodology is used, or if mobile data collection technology is used to collect data, then data entry is already complete. When possible during the collection process (e.g. when assessment field teams have internet connectivity), the electronic data should be shared with the assessment coordination team on a daily basis for compilation and on-going analysis. When paper-based collection tools are used, sending them to the assessment coordination team prior to their return is more difficult (although not impossible: phones can scan the forms and then emailed or physically sent via courier). Upon reception of the completed paper-based tools, data entry teams should be on hand and ready for immediate entry.

25 If the assessment coordinator cannot do this, the AWG should select a dedicated individual to these tasks.
Data security

The data collected during the assessment may contain sensitive information, such as informant names and contact details, and should be protected and treated responsibly. Furthermore, the data collected represents a large amount of time, resources and effort and should be protected from potential loss or damage. To help avoid potential problems, data security protocols should be followed:

- Keep all physical, paper-based forms in a locked location (preferably away from any potential damage such as flooding).
- All databases are password protected.
- If raw data is going to be shared externally, all sensitive data should be removed or coded; the key to the coded information can sit with the assessment coordination team. For example, rather than having your dataset contain the names and contacts for all head teacher key informants (and even the school name itself), you could simply include a series of coded numbers; the key containing the codes with associated names, contacts, schools, etc. could exist in a separate, password-protected file, securely stored on the assessment coordinator’s computer only.
- Have multiple backups of all data (external hard drive, secure online storage, etc.).
3.4. Analyze the data

Figure 26: Assessment work plan - Analyze the data

Analysis is the process of interpreting available information including ‘raw’ data to identify significant facts, trends and anomalies to inform decision-making. Analysis should start as soon as you begin to receive data and continue as long as you are receiving new data. It does not necessarily require any particular qualifications apart from having a critical mind and common sense. Analysis is not a single action, but a process consisting of several steps, building on each other, increasing your understanding of the findings with each step. The figure below describes these steps of analysis:

Figure 27: Data analysis steps

Integrating secondary and primary data analyzes

When analyzing your primary data, be sure to integrate your secondary data analysis (see Chapter 2) as much as possible. It should be an essential compliment to your primary data analysis; used not only to triangulate and validate your primary data findings, but also to help you when comparing, explaining, interpreting, forecasting and recommending (see below). When findings are presented in the assessment report, this should include both primary and secondary findings.

3.4.1. Prepare the data: clean, summarize and visualize

Clean the data

Data cleaning should occur as soon as you receive data. This will happen both while reviewing the paper-based forms at the time of the assessment field team debrief as well as while reading and analyzing the data in the electronic database. Initial cleaning should focus on simple mistakes such as typographical errors (misspellings, extra zeros, etc.) and blank entries. As analysis progresses, you may begin to see anomalies and outliers in the data (i.e. data that does not make sense) which will need to be verified or cleaned.
Examples of potential data errors:
- The number of people in need appears too high or too low in comparison with baseline population figures for the area.
- Reports indicate that the water and sanitation facilities in schools are inadequate in locations where other reports indicate the schools are closed.
- Assessments indicate that teachers are reporting that they are not receiving salaries when at the same time it is said that all the teachers have fled the area.

It should not necessarily be assumed that any of the above statements are automatically incorrect or problematic, there could be explanations for all of them. In a severe crisis, the number of people in need may amount to a high proportion of the population. Schools may not be operating and their water and sanitation facilities may be impacted so that even if they did open it would be an issue. Teachers who were working in an area may have fled and others who were teaching in different locations may have returned to their homes and it may be true that they report not being paid.

What these examples point to are areas where the data needs further investigation. Most of the time there will be an explanation to such anomalies; they can occur because of misunderstandings between key informants and data collectors or simply because the data was entered inaccurately. Often, these issues can be resolved through discussion with field assessments teams and checking entries. In some cases, the anomaly may be an indicator of problems being more severe in one area than others and in some cases it can point to poor quality information which will need to be removed from the overall analysis.

The role of an analyst is to continually review, refine and revise the findings against new data and information as it comes in, and by incorporating new sources as they are identified, for example through the ongoing secondary data review.

If some of the questions on your collection tools have collected qualitative data, another element of preparing/cleaning the data will be to thematically categorize the information with a standard vocabulary that can easily be analyzed. A simple example is if you have a multiple choice question that has an open, ‘Other’ option. You will need to read through all the qualitative ‘Other’ responses and group them thematically. However, be sure to save the raw data as quotes from the affected population will be useful for the assessment report and presentations, and strengthen accountability.

**Summarize the data**

As you clean the data, begin summarizing it. Typically, this will involve going through your database question by question and summarizing the information into easy-to-read tables. The structure for how you summarize the data (i.e. the structure of your tables) will depend on the comparisons you wish to make (see below). For example, if you wish to compare data geographically, your table will need to summarize the data by the desired geographic breakdown; if you wish to compare data pertaining to type of school (government, non-government, religious, etc.), gender (male, female) and/or location type (urban, rural) then your table will need to summarize the data for a particular question based on these criteria. Often, these criteria correspond with the sampling methodology strata identified during primary data collection design. It is common, therefore, especially while exploring the data, to create multiple tables for data pertaining to a single collection tool question, each with a unique breakdown and perspective based on differing summarization criteria.

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26 Note: cleaning, summarizing and visualizing data is very much a repeating, cyclical process rather than a clear, linear one; your first data cleaning attempts will catch as many errors as possible, however, summarizing and visualizing data is also part of the cleaning process as they will highlight more elements that need cleaning (after which your summaries and visualizations should be updated).

27 If you are analysing your data in Excel, pivot tables are particularly useful for this process. Google and YouTube are full of tutorials; here is one example. Additional resources on data cleaning can be found here.
**Visualize the data**

Summarizing data into tables may be enough for analysts and decision makers to draw important meaning from the data. However, at times it may be difficult to make sense of the information if it is only presented as numbers in a table. Being able to clearly see the data in an organized way is key for meaningful analysis. This is important for the information analyst(s) themselves and especially for the wider community who will help with the analysis. Analysis should eventually involve people from the cluster who are education specialists and have a sound knowledge about education in the country context and education in emergencies but will need to actually see and understand the data in order to use their knowledge to explain it. Good visuals are also essential if organizing larger analysis workshops with stakeholders who do not know the details of the assessment, but are still asked to provide inputs to its findings. You need to be able to see the differences to be able to explain them. Be sure, however, that you do not use visuals just for the sake of using visuals. Be sure that they add value and have a short explanation in order to facilitate analysis. The Needs Assessment Package contains a two-page guidance note on data visualization demonstrating different types of visualization options.

The tables and graphics below show the process of summarization and visualization. The first table contains summarized, aggregated data for pre-crisis and post-crisis (time of assessment) student enrolment (boys/girls). The table and numbers are important (and much easier to understand than the raw data itself), but it is still difficult to compare or make meaning in that format. The next table is the same data, but a formula has been used to present it showing the percentage of students who are not attending school due to the crisis. Suddenly, simply by summarizing the same data in a different format, it is much easier to understand. From this table, you can easily create a bar chart or even a map visualizing the same information but again in a way that makes it even easier to understand and draw meaning from the information. The entire analysis process rests on how well your summarization and visualization facilitate the process of meaning-making.

![Figure 28: Summarization to visualization](image_url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-crisis Enrollment</th>
<th>Post-crisis Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bambari Bangui</td>
<td>3367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangui</td>
<td>7044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haut Mbomou</td>
<td>2407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haute Kotto</td>
<td>4302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kémo</td>
<td>8712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mambéré Kaidi</td>
<td>1535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana-Grimp</td>
<td>5797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Mambéré</td>
<td>6505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombella M'Poko</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouaka</td>
<td>6996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangha Mbaéré</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>49386</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of students still absent</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bambari Bangui</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangui</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haut Mbomou</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haute Kotto</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kémo</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mambéré Kaidi</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana-Grimp</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Mambéré</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombella M'Poko</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouaka</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangha Mbaéré</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
<td><strong>70%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summarize**

**Visualize**
3.4.2. Compare the data

As you summarize your cleaned data into various tables and visuals, you will naturally begin comparing the data. There are many different ways in which you can compare data:

- Within a single question pertaining to geographic area, school type, gender, location type, etc. (as discussed above).
- Between multiple questions from the collection tools; this could be questions asked from the same tool (% of students back at school vs. % of teachers back at school) or related questions from multiple tools (top barriers to education identified during KIs with head teachers and FGDs with parents and students).
- Over time: pre-crisis data from SDR findings vs. current/post-crisis data collected via primary data collection; between multiple assessments done at different time periods.

To compare data well, you need to be inquisitive and curious and constantly asking questions of the data. For example: How does school attendance compare across locations? Is there a difference between boys and girls? Between young children and adolescents? During analysis, you must constantly verify the results by putting the data against each other and seeing if and how they make sense. Working with data requires a good eye for detail and an open mind, enabling you to discover irregularities that need to be followed up more closely. As you compare your summarized data, you will begin to develop an understanding of what is known about assessed situations, people, places, or objects; what is valid or worth noting about who, what, when, where, and how as well as remaining information gaps.

3.4.3. Explain the findings

The next step is to try and explain the findings being produced when comparing the data in order to provide the why. This step of the analysis process probes the reasons or immediate causes of a situation, explaining why a situation has or is developing in the way portrayed by valid sources. At this level, you, as an analyst, do not just organize and report interesting information, but must use argumentation to give context for the facts, judgments, and observations about patterns or trends. This sort of reasoning should accompany findings in assessment reports to provide an explanation for why the findings are as they are. Answering why is about providing context to the findings and point out immediate contributing factors for a particular issue. Sometimes explanation may be obvious:
If it is reported that children are not attending school and also that schools are being used as collective centers for sheltering IDPs, this is a clear cause and effect that can be pointed out.

However, even when the connection appears obvious as in the example above, it is important to be explicit; for example:

Even if families want their children to return to school, and even if teachers are available and children can access the school building, they will not be able to resume classes unless some action is taken to address the living arrangements of the IDPs currently residing in the school, and remedy any damage to school buildings, facilities and learning materials.

Other explanations to a certain problem may be found in the context and require comparison with pre-crisis secondary data. Explanatory analysis seeks to discover and explain associations or cause-effect relationships between different data points. Sometimes factors that are not directly linked to the education facilities or personnel may play a key role in preventing children from attending school. To find explanations for why a situation is as it is, you often need to dig deeper and look for the root causes:

In a rural area where people are largely dependent on their own crops for food and livelihoods, and known to be food insecure, children may be needed to assist in agricultural activities in the wake of a crisis, thus keeping them away from school.

3.4.4. Interpret the findings

The next step in the analysis process is to give meaning to the initial findings. This is done through interpreting the findings; the goal being to answer the question: what does it mean? Interpretation implies going beyond just comparing the data and explaining the findings; it is bringing together all the pieces of information that you have at your disposal, assessing if they make sense and identifying what is most important (and what is not important) and why. Interpretation examines the significance and relevance of a problem or topic of interest as it relates to the decisions that need to be made, using logic to interpret and make judgments about the situation. The figure to the right shows typical questions we need ask to interpret the meaning behind the data. For example:

Should the focus be on providing temporary learning spaces for an IDP population when schools are occupied? This may be necessary, but the right course of action may be to work on moving IDPs into alternative accommodations. Another question would be whether the IDPs are expected to return home soon, like in a flood situation where water recedes. Funds could then be directed towards rehabilitation of the schools damaged. Or in a refugee situation:
Involve host country MoE as early as possible to ensure inclusion of refugees into host country education system. If school infrastructure is insufficient in the affected areas, collaborate with MoE to implement double shifts or find temporary education solutions. If infrastructure is sufficient, focus capacities on supporting national systems to cope with the influx, with a particular focus on support to teacher capacity development.

Interpreting findings involves using all information available to make sure that it is a plausible interpretation and not just an opinion. In needs assessment, we generally do not have the volume, nor the quality of data that we would like, and analyzing needs-related information during emergencies relies on the ability of analysts to draw conclusions from very imperfect and fragmented information. One way to increase the quality of interpretation despite the issue of limited or insufficient quality of information is through increasing the involvement and consensus of experts during shared analysis, such as during an interpretive workshop. This is discussed further in section 3.4.7.

3.4.5. Forecast

Forecasting involves comparing the pre-crisis situation to the present situation and trying to consider how the situation will evolve over time based on different types and levels of response and other potential developments. This is the step in the analysis process where potential scenarios are developed and we ask: What if? What else? When then?

As an analyst, you should always look to the future, asking what might happen next and proactively anticipating what course a situation may take. What will happen if decision makers do not pay attention now? What will happen if the situation goes unaddressed? Forecasts are generally based on lessons learned from previous emergencies, the analysts’ and stakeholders’ experience, knowledge, and strategies for modelling evidence and developing possible outcomes for a given initial situation. For example:

What will the consequence be if decision makers decide to focus on rebuilding schools, without prioritizing temporary emergency education services in the rebuilding period? This forces several other questions; how long is the rebuilding period likely to take? Will this mean that a large number of children have been out of school for so long that they are not likely to return? How will livelihoods of teachers be impacted during this time? Will teachers still be available once reconstruction is complete?

Forecasting may also lead to contingency planning, especially if the developments we are envisaging are dependent on certain assumptions about what may happen next.

For example, will this be a relatively local emergency, perhaps contained to a limited number of learners affected, or is the situation more widespread? If the situation deteriorates, e.g., if water levels in a flood continues to rise, do we expect the caseload to increase, and therefore need to plan for more facilities over time?

When looking to the future:
- Include support and review from selected key informants and local experts, preferably from MoE or other key national education service providers
Focus primarily on the likely impact on the education sector, but also secondary consequences for other sectors.
- Include just enough detail to permit decision-making and communicate to others the anticipated conditions and needs of the affected population.
- Acknowledge that the forecasts you develop will never be able to predict exactly the future and therefore will never be completely right.
- Consider features that are not directly linked to the present crisis but could affect response and education. Examples of these factors could be seasonal (wet season, cold season that would affect reconstruction and the nature of temporary arrangements), political (upcoming elections that could cause unrest), or education specific (key examination periods and any policies that relate to the number of days children can be absent from school, etc.).

3.4.6. Recommend
The final step in the analysis process is to develop recommendations for decision makers and key stakeholders. The recommendations should be based on the interpretation of the findings and the forecast and highlight what recommended decisions should be made and actions taken (and by whom). For more on recommendations see section 3.5.1.

Using the Assessment Report Template for analysis
The visual elements of preparing data will most likely occur within various data analysis software (e.g. Excel, Tableau, GIS, etc.). As you begin to compare, explain, interpret, forecast and recommend, however, it may be useful to use the ‘Findings’ section in the assessment report template. Good practice is for the information analyst/IMO to draft all tables, visuals, comparisons and explanations for a particular section/theme of the findings and then pass them one-by-one, immediately upon completion to the assessment/cluster coordinator for drafting the interpretation, forecasts and recommendations.

3.4.7. Conduct shared analysis
After the assessment coordination team has completed an initial round of analysis, there must also be a shared analysis (i.e. interpretive workshop) in which the AWG, MoE (where appropriate), wider cluster members and relevant stakeholders come together to discuss and analyze the findings. Objectives may include:
- Establish a common understanding of the situation by agreeing on the findings
- Compensate lack of evidence with expert judgement
- Resolve inconsistencies in the data through discussion and information sharing
- Identify patterns in the data, for example by determining trends
- Develop likely scenarios for how the situation may evolve
- Agree on recommendations and priorities and the way forward

During shared analysis the summaries, visuals, comparisons and draft explanations already prepared should be provided in a structured format to the participants to workshop (you may want to use thematic breakout groups for this). The aim is to have the participants provide their insight and expertise in further comparing, explaining, interpreting, forecasting and recommending. Note: When providing participants with findings, only include the summary/visuals and brief explanation; do NOT include your own drafted interpretations, forecasts and
recommendations. Drafting these is a good exercise to do before the workshop as it will provide you with greater ownership and understanding of the data; however, the purpose of the shared analysis is to get the opinions of other relevant stakeholders and sharing too much will bias these opinions. Prepare and have groups use a contextualized interpretive workshop template in the Needs Assessment Package to guide their analysis:

Be sure the workshop has a strong, non-biased facilitator. Bias in analysis processes is unavoidable and inherent. As a facilitator you should ideally be in a position where you can be objective and neutral, without any particular stake in the outcome. This will help prompt a discussion in an objective manner, without being perceived as someone leading it towards a particular conclusion. For a best possible result, consider:

- Selecting participants that represent different viewpoints to ensure diversity of opinion, e.g., MoE, civil protection agencies, donors, other humanitarian agencies, etc;
- Defining a clear purpose of the workshop and an agenda, formulating where you ideally would like to end up;
- Ensuring that the participants are as well and consistently informed of the data as possible so you do not end up only sharing information instead of discussing what it means.

If you involve stakeholders with varied expertise in analyzing the data, you will gain a wider perspective and a stronger consensus. However, you will need to balance this against any biases that these stakeholders might have.

28 The assessment team should circulate the drafted initial analysis to workshop participants prior to the workshop so that they have time to become familiar with the content and come prepared to discuss and ask questions.
Five dos and don’ts for an interpretive workshop

1. Do not get bogged down in discussions that relate to the methodology and process of the assessment. This will divert resources away from interpretation and analysis of the findings.

2. Do focus on analysis of findings rather than solely sharing of information. When information is being shared it should be because it is either new information that has only just come to light OR information that assists in interpreting findings.

3. Do not confuse facilitation with participation. A neutral facilitator, who does not portray a vested interest in a specific outcome, is crucial to maintaining the independence required to lead a discussion on assessment findings.

4. Do explain definitions and concepts, including population affected, priority needs etc. to ensure all participants have a consistent understanding.

5. Do emphasize the difference between the analysis of humanitarian needs as different from the identification of required response interventions.

The importance of conducting a shared analysis cannot be overstated. As mentioned above, humanitarian assessments typically do not have the volume or quality of data that we would like for informing our decisions. One way to overcome the issue of limited or insufficient quality of information is to rely on a high level of agreement between experts from the education sector and other relevant sectors (e.g. child protection, WASH, etc.) on what the findings mean. One reason shared analysis is important in assessments is because it provides the opportunity to balance the lack of information with the level of consensus on the conclusions reached. For example, you can have very limited evidence, but still a strong agreement among experts that a displacement situation will worsen in the coming month, leading to increased school dropout levels. This is generally good enough to inform decisions.

Additional thoughts on the analysis process:

Transparency – Make clear what data your analysis is based on, and the source of that data. Be honest about gaps in your data, and explain the reasons for those gaps (e.g. lack of access, time, resources, etc.). This will help you and others to plan future assessments, build scenarios, and allocate resources efficiently.

Consistency – Make sure conclusions are consistent and that analysis does not suffer from too many inconsistencies. As emergency assessment data will always contain an element of uncertainty, communicate this and explain how sure you are.

Collaboration – If you manage to balance the strength of your evidence with a high level of agreement among stakeholders, you gain a higher level of confidence in your findings, which also creates co-ownership and adds weight to the final outcome.

Plausibility – Decision makers’ willingness to accept an interpretation is closely connected with their ability to see its plausibility and the level of expert agreement. An interpretation is not a fact but a theory. Often, the best an analyst can hope for with their explanations is that others will say, “Yes, that is obviously right,” but rather “Yes, I can see why it might be possible and reasonable to think as you do”. As an analyst, you need to decide what possible interpretation best accounts for what you think is the most important and most interesting to notice about the findings given the context you are working in.

Imperfection – Remember that analyzing needs-related information is not an automatic process, you cannot expect to feed data into an analysis model and the right answers will fall out from the other end. Analysis and interpretation take intuition, judgment and experience. Even then the conclusion will have a degree of uncertainty as the information used to reach it is often far from perfect or complete. However, by applying sound methodologies throughout the assessment and approaching analysis as a process in itself within the assessment, we can reduce uncertainty considerably.

This can be challenging as in many cases the person who had the role of assessment coordinator also will be tasked with designing and facilitating the shared analysis session.
3.5. Generate and share an assessment report and products

Figure 35: Assessment work plan - Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary task</th>
<th>Sub-Task</th>
<th>EE KA Reference</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a JENA: Report</td>
<td>Write the assessment report</td>
<td>3.5.1, AC, IA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a JENA: Report</td>
<td>Prepare an assessment presentation</td>
<td>3.5.2, AC, IA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a JENA: Report</td>
<td>Design summary sheets and infographics</td>
<td>3.5.2, AC, IA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a JENA: Report</td>
<td>Prepare datasets for sharing</td>
<td>3.5.2, IA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a JENA: Report</td>
<td>Translate assessment products</td>
<td>3.5.3, AWG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a JENA: Report</td>
<td>Disseminate and share report and products</td>
<td>3.5.3, AWG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a JENA: Report</td>
<td>Conduct an action plan workshop</td>
<td>3.5.4, AWG, AC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.1. Write the assessment report

The assessment coordinator is responsible for ensuring the assessment findings are turned into a user-friendly report. The table below shows and explains a suggested layout:

Table 9: Assessment report layout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive summary</td>
<td>Purpose of this section is to draw readers, particularly decision makers who may not read the entire report, to the key findings (aspects of the education situation that have been negatively impacted as a result of the crisis, the magnitude of the problem, what will happen if needs are not addressed, etc.) and main recommendations. Use bullet points if helpful. Note: Although it comes first in the report, it is typically much easier to write the Executive Summary last.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Provides a brief background to the crisis and context as well as a rationale and the objectives for the assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>It is important that readers understand what the findings and analysis are based on by knowing how the assessment was conducted and why it was conducted in that way. The methodologies section should clearly state: - How secondary data was used - Sampling strategy and locations visited - Data collection methodologies - Data management/entry methodologies - How the data was analyzed - Rationale for all points listed above - Timeframe of the assessment in its entirety as well as the time frame devoted to primary data collection and analysis - Limitations and constraints of the assessment - Assumptions, biases and known information gaps - Recommendations for further assessment(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Presentation of analysis and findings (summarization, comparison, explanation, interpretation, forecast, recommendations); explains very clearly the impact of the crisis on the education sector, how the crisis is likely to continue impacting the sector, etc. How you choose to structure/order the themes and sub-themes of this section will depend on what makes the most logical sense given your findings and context. However, you may wish to follow the structured framework outlined in your assessment framework since it is organized by assessment objectives, INEE core education domains and relevant sub-themes. The bulk of the assessment report will address these sub-themes, outlining them one by one and explaining the findings, analysis and recommended actions for each. Remember: data visualizations (tables, graphs and maps) should be included where they add value and clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of recommendations</td>
<td>Presenting recommendations within the findings section provides a clear link between a presented finding and specific, concrete recommendation(s) resulting from that finding. However, this also</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
means that the recommendations are spread throughout the report and may be difficult to locate and know who towards which group a recommendation is directed.

In addition to presenting recommendations with findings, it may be useful to have an additional section wherein all recommendations are compiled, organized according to relevant targeted audience and prioritized (in terms of importance and how time bound they are).

| Annexes                  | Some potential annexes include: a glossary, copies of the data collection tools, a list of organizations that participated in the assessment, etc. |

The assessment report template in the Needs Assessment Package contains the structure and information in the table above and is intended to help assessment coordination teams write their reports:

![Assessment report template]

**Figure 36: Assessment report template**

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  - 2.2 Sampling strategy ......................................................... 4
  - 2.3 Data collection, entry and analysis methodologies .......... 4
  - 2.4 Limitations and assumptions ......................................... 4
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**Acknowledge limitations**

Every assessment has limitations, assumptions, biases and gaps. Acknowledging these throughout the report helps others understand how you reached your conclusions. This is important for transparency and accountability because it enables others to judge your assessment for themselves, and ensures that other stakeholders (particularly those arriving in later phases) have a clear understanding of the conditions that the assessment was subject to.

**For example:**

- The number of schools visited as compared to the total number of schools in the affected area
- The fact that the assessment aimed to use head teachers as key informants but in reality found many were not in their posts
- That children themselves were not included in the assessment because there were no staff available with sufficient training in child participatory methodologies
Be prepared to defend any conclusions you draw and recommendations you make and explain the basis of these. You should also be prepared to explain any major limitations, anomalies or contradictory results, and suggest what you think is the most suitable response. It can be useful to think about how findings can be used to support the full range of organizational requirements: logistics, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, etc.

Additional tips when writing the assessment report:
- Keep the report as succinct and short as possible while still effectively presenting the findings
- Use bullet points wherever appropriate rather than long explanatory text
- Sharing the writing: information analyst can draft the methodology, initial explanation of findings and all visuals; as the analyst moves from one section to the next, the coordinator can immediately follow and provide relevant interpretation, forecasting and recommendations (based on their own expertise as well as the feedback received during the interpretive workshop)
- Write simply and avoid jargon and technical language as much as possible
- Define key terms throughout and include a glossary
- Include visual aids where appropriate to make the assessment findings as easy to see as possible; be mindful when using colors as the report may be printed in black and white
- Focus on what value the assessment findings are adding to the existing understanding of the situation and what actions need to be taken
- When assumptions are made, clearly explain them and their rationale
- Distinguish between facts/observations and judgement/interpretation
- Clearly Identify information gaps (the known unknowns) and needs for further assessment phases
- Be clear and transparent about the limitations of your analysis, the methods used to reach conclusions and your degree of uncertainty or confidence on the findings
- Date your products and share updates as new information becomes available or the situation changes

3.5.2. Prepare and translate other assessment products

Assessment presentation
Prepare a standard assessment presentation (i.e. PowerPoint slides or equivalent) for the cluster and partner use. Presenting findings to various audiences will encourage explanation, discussion and buy-in; it can also be a useful advocacy exercise. Having a standard presentation helps ensure consistent messages are being shared. The format can follow the same structure as the assessment report and should cover all key findings and recommendations; however, the slides should be light on text and not include copied and pasted paragraphs from the report. Be sure that each slide contains enough information to avoid any confusion, but focus on including key graphic representations of information and several explanatory bullet points.

Summary sheets and infographics
A summary sheet is a document of 1-3 pages presenting key findings simply and visually. These are also known as dashboards or info-graphics and are used to present an overall summary of information in a quick and user-friendly way. Areas of use may be:
- For regular updating of information in rapidly changing situations;
- When forwarding education specific inclusions in multi-sectoral reporting, for example Humanitarian Needs Overviews and appeal documents;
- For advocacy and presentation of key messages, e.g., to donors and headquarters;
- If there is a need to provide printed versions of the information;
- It can also be useful for Cluster partners to be able to have the key facts on hand in any inter-cluster, multi-sector meetings or for any unplanned exchanges with donors and decision makers to ensure the case for supporting education can be advocated based on evidence at any opportunity.
There is no set template for a summary sheet, but it should be guided by the assessment objectives, the thematic headings included in the report and the most notable findings. The simplest way to prepare a summary sheet is to extract the most important findings from the assessment report with a focus on information presented in maps and graphs. Be mindful that the information on a summary sheet needs to be clear to the reader in a “stand-alone” way, i.e., without the report attached, so ensure that there is a note which can enable the reader to find the full assessment report and that any maps and graphs are clearly labelled. See section 3.4.1 for more information on visualization.

**Datasets for sharing**

After all data has been cleaned and finalized, an anonymized version of the database should be made available to relevant and interested stakeholders. This serves two purposes:

1. Supporting operational decision-making at field level where greater detail may be needed and individual organizations may want to perform further analysis on parts of the data
2. Transparency to show the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment

If the database is going to be shared, whether raw data from a primary data collection or the organized secondary data set used for the assessment, it should only be made available once it is clean. You will need to keep two versions of the database: one for internal use and another for public distribution. This is not only sound research methodology in any situation and helps ensure information is not lost or altered, but also for security and safety concerns. Your assessment may have implications on disaster-affected communities, even after their information has been anonymized, particularly in conflict situations or where there are unresolved political issues. In some cases access to the data may need to be restricted if releasing it widely would create specific and obvious risks to disaster-affected communities. These are complicated issues, so consult the communities involved, staff in your organization, and any relevant coordinating body before data is openly shared. It can be useful to have a clear stance on this from early in the assessment process to manage expectations.

**3.5.3. Disseminate and share report and products**

It is important to consider the actual process of getting the assessment findings and recommendations to the people who need them. The appropriate format for sharing information and communication channel for the intended audience will vary depending on the context. The following table is not exhaustive but presents some of the key audiences, formats for sharing findings and communication channels that should be considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Information format</th>
<th>Communication channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AWG</td>
<td>Assessment report</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis affected communities</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentation</td>
<td>Formal presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE (including local education authorities)</td>
<td>Summary sheets and infographics</td>
<td>One-on-one discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other government agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings and workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Cluster partners</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teleconferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cluster groups</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UN agencies</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>INGOs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs (national)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Online posting (upload to the assessment registry on humanitarianresponse.info)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymized datasets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30 Anonymizing the database makes it impossible for any readers to identify key informants.
**Sharing information is a core tenant of accountability to affected populations**

A key group that is often under-emphasized in terms of sharing assessment findings is the affected communities themselves, especially those who have participated in the assessment. While it can prove difficult and sometimes costly, it is important that the affected people are acknowledged as at the center of crisis response and recovery and every effort should be made to ensure they have access to the information compiled about their situation. Some ways of trying to address the gap in communicating assessment findings include:

- Consider how findings will be shared with communities from the outset of assessment planning. Arrange to have a web address where the report will be made accessible once it is complete so that this can be shared with focus groups, community groups, community leaders and key informants when assessment field teams visit sites.
- Make sure assessment field teams are trained in how to explain what the findings of the report will be like so that when people do see them they are not surprised. The information is general and it helps compare one location to another rather than give the specific detail of their one site.
- Look for linkages with Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC)\(^1\)/Communicating with Communities (CWC)/Info as Aid groups that may be working on on-going communication channels with affected communities. If key findings are shared with these groups they may have ways of sharing the information on radio or social media.
- If resources are being sought for the assessment consider including costs specifically to share information back with the communities visited for the assessment. With resources, assessment teams may be able to make presentations at sites where primary data was collected.
- Ensure that plans and mechanisms are in place so that affected population participants can feed back on the assessment process (this is especially important due to the risk of abuse by field teams).

3.5.4. **Conduct an action plan workshop**

Once the assessment report with all findings and recommendations is finalized and shared, it is important to meet again with the AWG, MoE, cluster members and relevant stakeholders to develop a concrete action plan highlighting what actions need to be taken as a result of the assessment findings and recommendations. The action planning workshop should not be confused with the interpretive workshop for shared analysis: the interpretive workshop is held before the finalization of the report to interpret and reach consensus on assessment findings; the action planning workshop is conducted after the finalization of the report to decide on key actions and how to take the recommendations forward.

The workshop will most likely only need to be a half-day event. Prepare by knowing who will be attending (how many and from which organizations) and how you will structure it. If you use breakout groups, determine whether you want them grouped thematically (around themed findings and recommendations) or organizationally (so individuals are planning what their organizations need to do specifically) – or both. The **Needs Assessment Package** contains an **action plan template** which you can prepare and use during the workshop:

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\(^1\) The CDAC Network aims to ensure that communities affected are actively engaged in decisions about the relief and recovery efforts in their country. [http://www.cdacnetwork.org/](http://www.cdacnetwork.org/).
Joint Education Needs Assessment: Action Plan Template

Prior to the workshop, determine if you will be using breakout groups and what group composition will be. Then prepare an action plan sheet for each group by writing the findings and recommendations that you want them to discuss. If you will not be using breakout groups, prepare a single action plan sheet.

**Group: [XX]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding/Recommendation</th>
<th>Action to take</th>
<th>Assigned to</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A joint education needs assessment is a fantastic opportunity for education actors and other stakeholders to synergistically combine expertise and resources and conduct a collaborative, consensus-based needs assessment. However, sometimes joint needs assessments will be impossible to conduct due to various constraints. Furthermore, JENAs are not the only education-relevant assessments that will be taking place during an emergency. Some organizations will conduct their own multi-sector (including education) or education-focused assessments; other clusters may also conduct assessments and include education-related questions. Regardless of whether a joint education needs assessment has taken or will take place, the Education Cluster should continuously strive to harmonize education-related assessments.

There can be a misconception of what harmonized assessments or harmonization of assessments means. Some individuals see harmonization simply as collecting the final reports from organizations’ various assessments, pulling out education-relevant information and then compiling that information into a shared report. This is a secondary data review, not a harmonized assessment. Harmonizing assessments involves pre-emptively agreeing with partners on common indicators and questions, geographic coverage and interoperable methodologies; it also involves receiving raw data from these assessments (not just the final reports) on a regular basis, compiling and analyzing data for common questions/indicators and generating a report. Since partner assessments will most likely take place on an ongoing basis, compilation, analysis and harmonized reports should be done regularly, as information needs require. This is unlike joint assessments which are typically a one-off exercise.

Harmonizing assessments can have several advantages:
- Increases the geographic coverage of data collected
- Avoids duplication and burden on affected population

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32 Many of the tasks, processes and principles for harmonized assessments are the same or similar to joint assessments; this chapter focuses on presenting unique guidance for harmonized assessments and where necessary will reference relevant joint assessment sections.

33 These other assessments will more or less follow the same assessment cycle presented in the introduction and discussed throughout Chapters 1-3.
- Improves the opportunity for data to be shared between organizations
- Can increase the general quality of assessments being conducted by education partners
- Despite not having the resources to conduct a JENA, the Education Cluster can still receive primary data necessary to fill information gaps and inform key decisions

4.1. Plan the harmonization of assessments

The more effort that is put into planning the harmonization of assessments, the easier it will be to generate a shared report and understanding from assessments carried out by different stakeholders. Laying the groundwork for the harmonization of assessments takes time and coordination. Agreements on how assessments will be harmonized should be part of assessment preparedness (see Chapter 6). A well-designed harmonized approach allows the flexibility for individual organizations to ensure their specific information needs are met while collecting data on a set of agreed questions common to all assessments in contrast to a joint assessment, in which partners may feel they are compromising on their specific information needs. As the steps below indicate, harmonization of assessments should not be seen as an “easier” alternative to a JENA, however in some contexts where JENAs are not possible or appropriate harmonized assessments can provide an acceptable alternative.

4.1.1. Create a harmonization work plan

Like joint assessments, harmonizing assessment will require clarity around the tasks needed to be accomplished, those responsible and the timeframe for accomplishing them. Typically, the Education Cluster team (coordinator and IMO) will be responsible for the majority of the tasks pertaining to harmonizing assessments; however, you should also reach out to the AWG and cluster members for relevant support. The sections discussed below should give you an idea of the different tasks to include in the work plan. See section 3.1.2 for more on developing a work plan as well as the work plan template in the GEC Needs Assessment Package.

4.1.2. Define the objectives

While the individual assessments you are trying to harmonize have their own set of objectives, you should also clarify the specific objectives for harmonization: what are you are trying to achieve or inform by bringing these assessments together? With the support of the AWG, you should have already developed an assessment framework identifying the key decisions that need to be made and the information needed to make those decisions (see Chapter 1). You should also have an ongoing SDR an initial round of analysis and reporting showing what information is already available and highlighting existing information gaps (see Chapter 2). The overall objective of harmonizing assessments, like joint assessments, is to fill these gaps; specific objectives will be defined by the key decisions and information needs outlined in your assessment framework (see section 1.2).

4.2. Design the harmonization of assessments

4.2.1. Design harmonized questions and analysis

Like joint assessments, harmonized assessments also require an assessment framework. As mentioned above, key decisions, general information needs and secondary data questions and sources should have already been outlined. Based on the remaining information needs, you can determine and also outline in the assessment framework the primary data questions that need to be asked (and harmonized) as well as potential sources and

Typically, harmonization does not require a dedicated assessment coordination team as in the joint assessment.
collection methods (see section 3.2). Once determined, you can then indicate how each question will be analyzed (see section 3.2.5).

The drafted assessment framework will provide a foundation for the harmonization workshop (see below). Prior to the workshop, share the draft assessment framework with the AWG for feedback, particularly around the questions you want asked and terminology used. The framework should also be revisited and updated after the workshop based on decisions made.

4.2.2. Conduct a harmonization workshop
After the assessment framework has been approved by the AWG, you should conduct a harmonization workshop with Education Cluster members, MoE and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. other clusters that may be including education-related questions in their assessments). Prior to the workshop, contact relevant actors and find out who has, is or will be conducting an assessment, what methodologies and tools they are using, and their geographic focuses. Record these assessments in the assessment inventory tool (see below) which should significantly help you understand your assessment context and prepare for the workshop. You can also do a small analysis of the assessments (geographic coverage, methodologies being used, conflicting units of measurement, etc.) to show workshop participants the added value and need for harmonization.

There are at least three components of harmonization to consider during the workshop:

- **Thematic harmonization** includes agreement on common questions, terminology and units of measurement that should be included in collection tools. There should be a clear understanding and consistent use of assessment-specific vocabulary. You may wish to use your drafted questions outlined in the assessment framework as a starting point.

- **Methodological harmonization** encourages a discussion around determining the most appropriate sampling and data collection methodologies given the agreed-upon questions to be asked; while harmonized assessments do not have to use the same methodologies, having similar methodologies makes the harmonization process much easier.

- **Geographic harmonization** ensures appropriate geographic coverage, reducing duplication and gaps.

Of course you will not always reach a perfect consensus, agreement or level of cooperation during the workshop, but experience has shown that stakeholders are typically very receptive to harmonization efforts and are willing to make adjustments to their assessments as it means they will receive valuable, supplemental data. You can also use the workshop as an opportunity to get commitments from partners to share their assessment products (tools, data, reports, etc.) and to present to them what you will do with the products once you receive them (see below). Be sure to update your assessment framework reflecting the results of and decisions made during the workshop.

4.2.3. Design data collection and entry tools
Designing data collection tools may seem counter-intuitive as by definition harmonized assessments do not share a common collection tool. Although partners will most likely be using their own tools for their assessments, if you share with them a tool containing the standardized questions agreed upon during the harmonization workshop, they will be much more likely to integrate (often via copy and paste) into their tools. Furthermore, some partners will want to do an assessment but not have the technical expertise to design their own collection tools; these partners will often gladly use the tool(s) provided by the Education Cluster.

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35 You can also cross reference this geographic information with your Education Cluster Monitoring Tool to see who is working where, even if they are not planning on conducting an assessment; this could help you identify potential partners that could help fill information gaps in as well as highlight which partners may benefit most from the data and analysis for a particular geographic area.
In addition to the data collection tool you will need two data entry tools:

- An inventory of assessments (explained below)
- A database for the raw, harmonized data shared by partners

For more on designing data collection and data entry tools see section 3.2.4 and section 3.2.8, respectively.

4.2.4. Develop harmonization Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Based on the results of the harmonization workshop, it is recommended to develop SOPs governing context-specific assessment harmonization in which all the agreed provisions relating to the harmonization process are outlined and shared with relevant stakeholders. The SOPs should include information pertaining to the agreed-upon thematic, methodological, and geographic issues as well information sharing protocols.

4.3. Collect and enter harmonized data

4.3.1. Develop and maintain an inventory of assessments

The successful harmonization of assessments requires the ability to know who has conducted an assessment, where it was conducted, what it covered, and how it was conducted. Establishing and maintaining an inventory of assessments will aid in the mapping and analysis of existing information and initiatives, and be of great help for overall reporting on the crisis including when specific products are required, for example, the Humanitarian Needs Overview. An Excel-based, assessment inventory tool can be found in the Needs Assessment Package. It seeks to capture general information about each assessment (geographic coverage, methodology used, availability of final reports, etc.).

Figure 39: Assessment inventory tool

Rather than burdening partners to complete the inventory, the SOPs should specify that partners simply share all assessment products (collection tools, datasets and report) with the Education Cluster team. An individual assigned as assessment inventory focal point (most likely from the cluster team) then files everything into a repository and records the relevant information in the assessment inventory tool. The inventory should be reviewed regularly to help identify gaps and avoid duplication in assessment coverage. It should not attempt to hold the actual assessments’ raw data, but rather provide metadata for each assessment providing readers with an at-a-glance summary of completed, ongoing and planned assessments.

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36 These could easily be contained in the same tool or Excel file; however, experience shows that sometimes it is easier having them separated to share with partners (e.g. you may want to share the inventory but not the raw data).

37 Partners may wish to anonymize their datasets if they contain sensitive information (see section 3.3.4).
4.3.2. Compile harmonized data

As partners submit their assessment products, including their raw datasets, you can begin compiling the data for the pre-determined, harmonized questions and indicators into your data entry tool. Typically, shared data will already be in an electronic database and compilation will only be a matter of copying and pasting into your tool. Where this is not the case and large amounts of data need to be entered, consider using a data entry team (see section 3.2.9).

4.4. Analyze the harmonized data

Once compiled, you will hopefully have a dataset that looks as if it had been collected during a single, joint assessment. To clean and analyze this data, follow the same analysis process described for joint assessments in section 3.4 (including conducting a shared analysis or interpretive workshop). Note: if a joint assessment has already been conducted do not forget to integrate this data into the harmonized analysis as well. Since harmonized assessments, like the SDR, will be ongoing, analysis (and reporting) will typically be done in regular ‘rounds’. It is important, therefore, to schedule cut-off deadlines for when data will be analyzed and reported; data received after the deadline will be incorporated into the next round of analysis and reporting.

4.5. Generate and share an assessment report and products

The process for generating and sharing an assessment report and products as well as the type of products you may wish to develop is also the same as outlined for a joint assessment in section 3.5; the assessment report template referenced can also be used for writing harmonized assessment reports. However, as the number of harmonized questions will most likely be less than the number of questions in a joint assessment, the report will probably be shorter. Joint assessment reports and products are also fairly static; harmonized assessments will be ongoing and reports and products should be updated on a regular basis.
5. Engage in multi-sector needs assessments

This chapter focuses on assessments that are multi-sector in focus, and coordinated or led by an entity with a specific mandate or request to do so (e.g. national government, OCHA, UNHCR, or an INGO consortium). This chapter presents the main variations in types of multi-sector assessments and how the Education Cluster can engage in these assessment processes to make them as useful as possible.

Recent years have seen a growing emphasis on the importance of multi-sector assessments in humanitarian crises, particularly in the early days and weeks following a sudden onset disaster. It is now expected that a multi-sector assessment will be undertaken to provide initial information on humanitarian needs, to assist stakeholders in coming to a shared understanding of the key priorities for response, and to provide an evidence base for strategic decisions.

5.1. Types of multi-sector assessments

A multi-sector approach is generally considered most suitable in the initial days and weeks after a sudden onset natural disaster where a specific event has triggered an emergency. However there can, and have, been justifications for multi-sector assessments in conflicts/protracted crises and later stages of an emergency response.

Multi-sector assessments are mainly used to inform strategic rather than operational decisions. This is due to the assessment’s broad nature, providing “big picture information” rather than detail, and to enable cross-sector analysis. An exception to this is the annual UNHCR Participatory Assessment process that directly informs operational planning.

Access to, and availability of, information will vary from one situation to another and the approach for multi-sector assessment should be adjusted accordingly. For example, pre-crisis and in-crisis secondary data availability varies. Sometimes the appropriate assessment approach will be to focus on harmonizing existing information to generate an overall picture of the impact of the crisis. In other situations, there will be a need for a well-designed primary data collection exercise to address information gaps. The multi-sector approach will be different in each situation.

Table 11: Expectations of a multi-sector assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multi-sector assessments can inform</th>
<th>Multi-sector assessments can usually not inform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Definition of priority sectors and issues within sectors</td>
<td>- Sector specific information at school, household, or individual level (e.g. how much water per person per day is available at the school?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Geographic areas where the impact of a crisis has been greatest</td>
<td>- Sufficient information to inform design of projects and interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Priority affected groups within an affected population that are most at-risk and in need of humanitarian attention</td>
<td>- Statistically representative post-crisis primary data for quantitative analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Estimates of the number of people in need based on pre-crisis population figures, knowledge of the geographic impact of the event and other proxy indicators (e.g., poverty)</td>
<td>- In-depth sectoral information needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Give voice to affected people on their priorities Information to guide subsequent, more detailed assessments</td>
<td>- Detailed information on the specific locations of and beneficiaries for standard programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Definition and selection of standard programs to be mobilized immediately (e.g., surveillance,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GEC Needs Assessment Package

- Multi-sector assessments checklist (for engagement of the Education Cluster)
- MIRA Guidance
- PDNA Guidelines
5.1.1. The Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA)

MIRA is an inter-agency process that follows guidance endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The MIRA guidance provides a tool and an analytical framework, which is designed to achieve a common understanding of the situation and how it is likely to evolve. In the case of Level 3 (L3) sudden onset crises, the MIRA is suggested as one of the first steps a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) should take in response to a crisis.

The MIRA is a 2-step process that takes place in phases 1 and 2 of a sudden onset emergency. It begins in phase 1 with a multi-sector SDR, which is used to inform the initial strategic response planning and funding requests, particularly potential flash appeals. Based on the findings of the initial SDR, the second step in the MIRA process involves community-level primary data collection using a multi-sector tool. This information, along with deeper secondary data analysis, informs on-going response planning and resource mobilization. The timeline below shows the different phases of a rapid onset emergency and where the MIRA is situated:

![MIRA timeline](image)

Relevant governmental authorities will be consulted and encouraged to lead the MIRA process, however it is more likely that practical coordination will come from OCHA under the authority of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in support of the national government. See also the MIRA Guidance linked at the beginning of this chapter.

5.1.2. Other multi-sector assessments

Not all multi-sector assessments will be formally considered “MIRAs” because not all emergencies are sudden onset and not all trigger an IASC system-wide L3 emergency response. The MIRA Guidance nonetheless provides useful information that can be adapted for any multi sector assessment. For example:

- An L3 emergency is not declared but an event or a culmination of factors have taken place. Stakeholders decide that the best way to understand the impact is through a multi-sector approach.
- During a protracted crisis where stakeholders see value in having an updated overview of the situation, e.g., to see how it has changed since the response began).
- A multi-sector approach is needed but for some reason, some aspects of the MIRA methodology have been significantly deviated from, e.g., the circumstances warrant household level data collection.

38 Taken from the MIRA Guidance, July 2015 Revision: p.3
Refugee contexts, where UNHCR annual planning is based on annual participatory assessments. If a multi-sector assessment is initiated in a context where clusters have not been activated an education sector-working group should be formed to focus on emergency education needs, and how to productively engage with the multi-sector assessment. In refugee emergencies, education actors will need to engage with UNHCR. The key similarity between MIRAs and other multi-sector assessments is that a stakeholder specifically tasked with the coordination role is leading the assessment. The Education Cluster must engage with the assessment to ensure it is as useful as possible to meet education information needs.

5.1.3. Post Disaster/Post Conflict Needs Assessments (PDNA/PCNA)

After an initial understanding of humanitarian needs has been achieved and initial response is underway, an assessment of damages, losses and medium-term human recovery needs is often requested by affected governments, partners, and donors. The PDNAs/PCNAs are designed to be the basis for detailed recovery planning that links back into a sustainable development process. Governments lead these assessments, and in its role as cluster lead for early recovery, UNDP often plays a coordination role.

Education is included in the PDNA framework as one of the social sectors and is most often included in PCNAs under the umbrella of basic services. It is important to note that a PDNA/PCNA is likely to take place in the initial months after a crisis. Information, analysis and learning from Education Cluster assessments should be made available to education sector specialists involved in the PDNA process. In fact, knowing a PDNA/PCNA may take place at a later stage, it is good practice to reach out and include those who may be leading the PDNA/PCNA in-country during the planning and design phases of a joint or harmonized needs assessments. PDNA/PCNAs sometimes leverages new resources, partners and data that can be of use to Education Clusters. See also the PDNA Guidelines link at the beginning of this chapter.

5.2. Education engagement in a multi-sector assessment

Education needs and priorities must be understood as early as possible in responding to a crisis, which requires engagement with the assessment process by the Education Cluster. Be proactive in finding out about assessment plans and becoming involved. Education sector specialists must be involved in question design, not just in the education specific questions, but also in relation to ranking overall priorities of affected communities. Often general questions are accompanied by a list of pre-defined options; if education or issues related to education and children are not included in the list, education could be overlooked as a priority sector.

In general, the more the Education Cluster engages with a multi-sector assessment process, the more it can expect to get out of it. Participating actively and constructively in the process is the best way to ensure education is adequately represented in the assessment.

Even with the best coordination structures in place, planning an emergency assessment attempting to meet the requirements of multiple stakeholders and cover multiple sectors is a complex process. Any support provided (e.g. technical, in-kind resources such as vehicle use, etc.) by education partners is likely to result in better quality focus on education issues within the assessment. If the assessment is left only up to the generalist humanitarian assessment experts normally coordinating a multi-sectoral assessment, they will likely be providing minimum sector coverage of education, and focus more on what is perceived as “lifesaving” sectors. It should not necessarily be assumed that education would automatically be included in multi-cluster

39 This could be a sub-group of an existing development focused education sector group if relevant.
assessments without active engagement of the education cluster. It is the assessment coordination team’s responsibility to coordinate the exercise but the clusters/sectors are responsible for the content.

Without advocacy, education may not be considered as a “life-saving sector” and thus not prioritized by emergency specialists without an education background. Multi-sector assessments can be the first opportunity to give communities affected by a crisis a voice. One of the objectives of a MIRA is to understand the priorities of affected population. Experience has shown that resumption of education, or first time access to education, are considered as priority issues for people affected by a crisis. Humanitarian response has a responsibility to be accountable to the affected population, this means listening to and acting on their priorities.

**Advocating for the inclusion of education in multi-sector assessments (adapt to your context)**

- Resumption of education is consistently prioritized by affected populations.
- Experience has shown that education is often a priority sector for the people affected by the crisis. ‘To go back to school’ is one of the first things children and their families ask for in an emergency.
- Information on the impact a crisis has had on education is required as early as possible so that planning and resource mobilization for emergency education responses, such as temporary learning spaces, as well as for long-term rehabilitation of education services can begin.
- Education has a critical role in bringing a degree of normalcy and stability to the lives of children impacted by an emergency.
- While children are in school they are protected from some of the risks that are present after a crisis including physical risks as well as the risk of trafficking.
- Learning from past emergencies indicates the longer children are out of school the less likely they are to return to school affecting individual learning and future prospects as well as national outcomes (e.g. economic).
- Learning from past emergencies has shown that the longer children remain out of school the more likely they are to and to be involved in activities with a negative impact including child marriage and child labor.
- Every child is entitled to education. Education is a basic right, even in an emergency.
- Determining the key areas for response should include giving people affected by a crisis an opportunity to voice their needs and priorities and not rely solely on the opinions of external experts.
- Education is connected to other sectors. These linkages will be different in each context but examples include:
  o Child protection, as Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) sometimes transition to Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS). Additionally, CFS sometimes utilize government teachers in the absence of formal schools operating.
  o Shelter, as schools are often used as collective centers to house displaced people
  o Food security and nutrition, as school feeding may have been a part of the pre-crisis situation and is now impacted, or, as an opportunity to initiate school feeding to enhance current food security.
  o WASH, as any water and sanitation rehabilitation should include services available at schools and also because schools can be powerful places to include key hygiene messaging needed for preventing disease spread.
- Ensuring education is included in a multi-sector needs assessment enables a more complete cross sector analysis, can provide entry points for other interventions and should enable a more comprehensive humanitarian response.

**5.2.1. How to engage with a multi-sector assessment process**

Multi-sector assessments will require varying levels of effort and engagement from the Education Cluster. In some cases, the role expected of cluster experts will be clearly defined, e.g., attending key meetings and submitting education-related questions, while in other cases the Education Cluster will have to carve out its own space and proactively become useful in the assessment process.
The roles outlined below are adapted from the MIRA, and will normally be a part of any multi-sector assessment. Note that while the language may be different, the roles represent key functions that need to take place in order to achieve the assessment objectives. These should be adjusted to fit specific contexts such as a UNHCR led assessments.

Table 12: Engagement of Education Cluster in multi-sector assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Activities and points of engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-sector assessment coordinator</td>
<td>An assessment coordinator will be responsible for leading the overall coordination of a multi-cluster assessment. He/she will usually work closely with one or more others, including an Information Analyst or IMO, specifically dedicated to the assessment to cover key coordination and analysis tasks. These roles are also described in section 3.1.3. The Education Cluster should have regular contact with the assessment coordinator, and make sure they know that the cluster is ready to contribute to the assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-sector assessment coordination team</td>
<td>Often a multi-sector group is set up to support the design, planning and implementation of a multi-sector assessment. Ensure education is represented in this group. This could be the cluster coordinator or the IMO but, as a multi-sector assessment takes place at a very busy time in an emergency, it may also be possible to consider a cluster member to take on this role; this should be someone who has existing country knowledge and technical assessment experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Cluster team</td>
<td>Ultimately, it will be up to the Education Cluster team to ensure education is represented in a multi-sector assessment. The Education Cluster team will typically consist of a cluster coordinator and an IMO who will jointly ensure the cluster’s engagement in the assessment. The Education Cluster team should also make sure communication on the assessment to cluster members is as streamlined as possible. It is important to ensure consistency and that the cluster is unified in what it wants out of the assessment thus the information it is feeding into the assessment process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment field teams and logistics</td>
<td>Some Education Cluster partners may have staff they can dedicate to being part of the assessment field teams, which contributes to highlighting the Cluster’s commitment to and ownership of the assessment ensuring that individuals with a focus on education will be part of the multi-sector teams collecting the information. When partners dedicate human and other resources to the assessment it is usually at the partner’s own cost. Logistics (e.g., printing, tablets/or smartphones, vehicles, training rooms, guesthouses in field locations etc.) may also be required for an assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A range of activities can contribute to ensuring that education is included meaningfully in a multi-sector assessment.

Table 13: Multi-sector assessment activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify Education Cluster key decisions and information needs</td>
<td>Regardless of whether a multi-sector assessment will take place, the Education Cluster and the Cluster’s AWG should identify the key decisions needing to be made and the information needed to make those decisions; this should be outlined in the assessment framework (see Chapter 1). The Cluster’s AWG should identify which of these key information needs could be fulfilled through a multi-sector assessment. AWG should also discuss the personnel and other resources that could be dedicated to a multi-sector assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a rapid SDR</td>
<td>Another activity the Education Cluster and Cluster’s AWG should be doing regardless of a multi-sector assessment is conducting an SDR. However, if a multi-sector assessment is decided, you should ensure that an initial analysis and report of the SDR findings is produced and shared with the multi-sector assessment coordination team before the primary data tool is finalized, which can happen quite rapidly, so do not worry if your SDR analysis and report are not as detailed as you would like. You should continue updating your SDR while primary data is being collected and can provide an update prior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40 Also called assessment team in some contexts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Update the education assessment framework</td>
<td>Based on information needs post-SDR, update your education-specific assessment framework; include the needed questions and indicators and how you would analyze each question. Begin to think about what questions could potentially be answered through the multi-sector assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with MoE (where appropriate) on the multi-sector assessment</td>
<td>Once a multi-sector assessment is decided, be sure that the MoE is aware, involved and kept up-to-date, which should demystify the process for the MoE. If communication with local education departments is required, it can be requested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be involved in assessment planning</td>
<td>Be involved in planning from the outset, ensuring someone from the Education Cluster is attending all meetings and workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Know who the key people involved in the assessment are and make sure they know who the education focal point for the assessment is. Be aware of the differences in coordination in non-refugee and refugee emergencies, in addition to mixed settings (refugee and IDP), and the different coordination mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in the design or review of the multi-sector assessment framework and analysis design</td>
<td>Attend the meetings and/or workshops when the multi-sector assessment framework and analysis is being designed; come prepared with your education-specific assessment framework outlining the questions you are advocating to include in the assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocate for using terminology that is consistent with existing education sector information and for any age breakdown to be relevant to baseline information and the key cut-off points within the education system, i.e., pre-primary, primary, secondary school, which ensures comparisons to the secondary data/baselines can be made and assists with the ongoing monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide this information to the assessment coordination team. Note: this can be challenging in some contexts (e.g. refugee contexts) where a generic age framework is used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be involved in/informed of primary data collection design</td>
<td>Be involved in, or at least understand, the decision making surrounding the primary data collection design: sampling strategy, collection methodologies, etc. (see section 3.2). Make sure the information needs related to education match the approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocate that school head teachers be considered as important key informants (education information will be more reliable).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide education questions to be included in the primary data collection tool(s)</td>
<td>Based on the education questions included in the multi-sector assessment framework, ensure these questions are appropriately integrated into the collection tool(s). If head teachers or education personnel are to be used as key informants, ensure that there is a way of reflecting this decision on the tool(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is always good practice to engage with other, relevant clusters when considering needs assessments, however this is especially important when education is not prioritized on a multi-sector assessment as inter-sectoral linkages can allow space for education questions to still be incorporated (e.g. WASH Cluster including a question on WASH in schools).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: Although not an education-specific question, ensure that 1) on the questionnaire is an accountability to affected population (AAP) question pertaining to communities’ prioritized needs and 2) that education is one of the multiple-choice options for this question. Experience has shown that populations often prioritize education much higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41 The multi-sector assessment framework may be called something different depending on the context (e.g. ‘analysis plan’).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend the assessment team training</td>
<td>Ensure someone from the Education Cluster attends the assessment team training and leads on the education components of the primary data collection. This will ensure education is understood as well as possible and should contribute to better quality data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in data collection</td>
<td>Where possible, provide Education Cluster members for field work, logs, data collection, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update your SDR analysis and report</td>
<td>While assessment teams are in the field, revise and update your SDR. This will allow you to capture information you did not have time to record before the assessment as well as newly available information. Share your updated SDR with those responsible for analysis and writing the assessment report and do so in a format that, as much as possible, can be directly used in the assessment report. Make sure it is mindful of the succinct nature of a multi-cluster report. Remember that primary data is likely to only provide qualitative information but that a quantitative picture of needs is also necessary. Work with the MoE and outside baseline data to come up with estimates of key numbers and relevant baselines; for example:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                             | - # or % of classrooms impacted  
|                                             | - # or % of classrooms non-functional  
|                                             | - # or % of classrooms being used as collective centers  
|                                             | - # or % of teachers presently absent  
|                                             | - # or % of temporary classrooms required  
|                                             | - # or % of classrooms that will require rehabilitation  
|                                             | Consider other key baselines that may not be under the MoE (e.g. private schools, religious schools, non-formal schools) and how to get or estimate this information. Be aware that in refugee settings information may be under a different ministry. In addition to the quantitative information also focus on: |
|                                             | - Key pre-crisis education vulnerabilities and concerns  
|                                             | - Lessons that have been learned from previous emergencies in the country as well as from similar events elsewhere  
|                                             | - Any important time specific information (e.g. upcoming exams and the implications if students do not take them)  
| Participate in joint analysis of the findings| The assessment coordination team will usually schedule a joint analysis session to share preliminary findings and look at cross-sector linkages; be sure to attend this analysis session.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Be available to review the education sections of the final assessment products | Make it clear to the assessment coordination team you are ready to review the education portion of the final assessment products at any time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### 5.2.2. Limitations and possibilities with multi-sector assessments

A multi-sector assessment has limitations. The decisions that this kind of assessment supports are primarily strategic decisions. A lack of clarity on this in past emergencies has resulted in:

- Primary data collection tools/questionnaires that are very long and seek excessive detail resulting in long processes that delay or fail to inform key decisions and/or the collection of information that was not used
- Criticism of multi-sector assessments because they are seen as not sufficiently detailed or representative

A multi-sector assessment is not intended to replace cluster/sector specific assessments, multi-sector questionnaires need to specifically focus on “big picture” indicators and not be the sum of all information needs from all sectors. A consistent understanding of the value and purpose of a multi-sector assessment should clarify
expectations of stakeholders and, the Education Cluster team should be ready to manage the expectations of its partners in this regard.

Within a multi-cluster assessment, each sector will only be able to submit a limited number of questions (approximately 3-5 questions, on average). The Education Cluster at the country level will need to consider which questions are most important and appropriate for inclusion in the multi-cluster assessment.

Quantitative information, such as estimates of affected population figures, will not come from primary data collection, but rather from a range of secondary data sources and estimates. The Education Cluster will need to ensure it takes responsibility for any specific education related figures and provide a brief explanation of where the figures came from and how they were estimated.

Primary data collection for a multi-sector assessment will, in most cases, be conducted at the community-level, meaning the information will be based on direct observations of field teams, interviews with key informants and/or community group discussions. It is important to understand what information can be obtained from what information source and how questions should be designed.

For example, when the indicator tries to measure/understand the percentage of school age children and youth currently attending school/learning space:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information source</th>
<th>Example question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key informant who is a school head teacher</td>
<td>Can you estimate the percentage of children currently attending this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informant who is a general community member</td>
<td>Have you observed a reduction in the number of children attending school here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including a local leader, member of local administration)</td>
<td>Do you see any children attending school here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct observation of assessment teams</td>
<td>Visit the school during school hours if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Is the school functional?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Were children observed attending classes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Were children who appear to be of school age observed out of school during school hours?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community group discussion (CGD)</td>
<td>Confirm that members of the group have school-aged children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Are any school-aged children attending school these days?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If “yes”: Which would you say is true:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Most children are attending school (more than 75%, %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Some (25-74%, ¼ - ¾)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Few (less than 25%, ¼ )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, a multi-sector assessment aims to identify big-picture, shared priorities for response and enable strategic decision-making. It provides a top-down analysis about the impact of a crisis so stakeholders can gain an initial shared understanding of the situation, and how it is likely to unfold in the immediate future.
6. Assessment preparedness

Repeated lessons learned from emergencies show that if country-level stakeholders are ready to carry out assessments when crises occur there will be significant benefits in terms of quality and timeliness. Assessment preparedness is the process of reviewing the operational context in terms of risks, taking collective decisions about the most suitable assessment approach for the kinds of emergencies that are likely to occur and doing groundwork at the country level to be prepared to implement an assessment process.

The level of assessment preparedness should be proportionate to the emergency profile of the country and should be embedded in, or linked to, other emergency preparedness or contingency planning activities. It can be a detailed and resource intensive exercise or it can involve taking minimum key decisions. Assessment preparedness can be multi-sector, or it can be something carried by individual clusters.

6.1. Multi-sector assessment preparedness

For multi-sector assessment preparedness, the objective will be to design a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder assessment approach, adapting global tools and guidance (such as the MIRA) to the specific context. Multi-sector assessment preparedness will not be led by the Education Cluster; rather by an organization with a coordination, disaster preparedness or multi-cluster focus (e.g. OCHA, UNHCR, national government, INGO forum). Just as with a real time multi-sector assessments, ensuring education is included in the assessment preparedness process will require active engagement from the Education Cluster/Sector Working Group.

6.2. Preparedness for education assessments

Organizations working with the Education Cluster should also take steps to be better prepared to carry out assessments together. The principles are the same as for multi-cluster assessment preparedness but the focus is specifically on joint education assessments and the process will usually be led by the Education Cluster together with, or in support of, the MoE.

Having engaged in assessment preparedness does not mean that stakeholders can automatically begin an assessment without discussion, planning or orientation of those involved. What it should mean however is that the planning and design of an assessment is streamlined because key decisions have already been made, relevant pre-crisis data has already been located and stored in such a way that it is accessible and ready to use. Lessons learned from past emergencies in the context should also be incorporated. The box below outlines some suggested assessment preparedness activities. These activities have also been integrated into an assessment preparedness checklist in the Needs Assessment Package.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should happen in any context</th>
<th>What should begin as soon as an assessment seems likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Develop an AWG ToR and determine membership that can be activated as required.</td>
<td>- Establish a shared understanding within the Education Cluster about what an assessment is, what it involves and when it is likely to be carried out, including the mechanism for triggering an assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Always have an ongoing SDR. Compile and store pre-crisis secondary data, including baseline data, lessons learned, and risk analyses, populate key indicator sets, and compile common datasets. Work with partners to collect secondary data on an on-going basis, updating the SDR as new information becomes available.</td>
<td>- Agree on how coordination of an assessment would be led; this could be by designating a coordination lead agency (e.g. MoE supported by the cluster lead).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prepare and keep an up-to-date assessment inventory</td>
<td>- Select key partners that will be involved in an education assessment, including drafting of MoUs, budgets and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What should happen in any context</td>
<td>What should begin as soon as an assessment seems likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Review assessment planning already undertaken, particularly MoE contingency planning, based on lessons learned. Plan to review assessment preparedness annually.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Agree on SOPs for what takes place once an assessment is triggered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify key informants relevant for the education sector, maintain a list of their location and contact details in case of emergency. Focus particularly on emergency prone areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plans that could be activated at the onset of crises. Track partner contributions and map out which partner would contribute what to an assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Review assessment tools from the GEC Needs Assessment Package and from other countries and adapt to the country context. Translate into local languages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Agree on the appropriate data collection technique(s) for the context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider the organization of logistics and human resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop partnerships with national research institutions and other national bodies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conduct awareness raising sessions on the assessment at the strategic level among partners that will use the information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop protocols for data sharing and a dissemination plan for communicating the findings, particularly with the MoE and national statistics authority.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Carry out training sessions at the operational level for staff who will be involved in the assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex: Glossary

**Accountability**: How an organization balances the needs of different groups in its decision-making and activities. Most organizations have processes in place that will meet the accountability requirements of more powerful groups such as project donors or host governments. Accountability may also imply making sure that the women, men, and children affected by an emergency are involved in planning, implementing, and judging our response to their emergency, which helps ensure that a project will have the impact they want to see. (Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies: The Good Enough Guide)

**Analysis**: The process, or skill, of interpreting “raw” data to identify significant facts, trends and anomalies in order to inform decision-making (UNDAC Handbook / ACAPS training material); or the structured, transparent and controlled human process of transforming raw data into actionable insight for decision-making.

**Baseline data** describes a situation that existed before an event. An event might be a drought or an incident of political upheaval, or it may simply be the first time the indicators were ever measured. You can compare your dataset against the baseline data to see how the situation you are studying appears when weighed against the situation as measured before the event. In other words, baseline data can help you to interpret the impact of an event. (Operational Data Management Learning Programme, Glossary of Technical Vocabulary, UNCHR)

**Clusters**: Groups of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action, for example, education, food and nutrition, health, water-sanitation-hygiene, protection, etc. They are designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and have clear responsibilities for coordination. (IASC – Humanitarian Response Info)

**Disaggregation** means that data is separated. For population data, this refers to data at the individual level, so that you can see each person’s information, or to data that is divided into different demographic groups, such as sex or age group. (Operational Data Management Learning Programme, Glossary of Technical Vocabulary, UNHCR)

**Extrapolation**: Extending a set of findings or conclusions to be applicable also in other areas by assuming with a certain degree of confidence that existing trends will be similar. (Oxford Dictionary, ACAPS Training Material)

**Flash Appeal**: A funding instrument that may be used in any crisis that requires a coordinated response beyond the capacity of in-country assets. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator triggers it in consultation with all stakeholders. It provides a concise overview of urgent lifesaving needs. It is most often used in sudden onset natural disasters. Slow onset emergencies can be more difficult as it is harder to prove the sudden worsening of a situation. The Flash Appeal should be issued within one week of an emergency, and contain an analysis of the context, along with specific sectoral response plans to address acute humanitarian needs, normally for up to six months. (Flash Appeal FAQ, OCHA)

**Generalist**: A staff member without specialized skills, whereas a specialist has a qualification or experience in a specific area, for example, a health worker. Generalists can play a crucial role in providing analysis, increasing flexibility and reducing costs. Specialists may still be needed, particularly for more in-depth assessments. (ACAPS Training Material)

**Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)**: The IASC is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination relating to humanitarian assistance at the global level. It is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian partners. Under the leadership of the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), the IASC develops humanitarian policies, agrees on a clear division of responsibility
for the various aspects of humanitarian assistance, identifies and addresses gaps in response, and advocates for effective application of humanitarian principles. (UNDAC Field Handbook, 2013)

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE): An open global network of individuals and representatives from NGOs, UN agencies, donor agencies, governments, academic institutions, schools and affected populations, working together to ensure all persons the right to quality, relevant and safe education in emergencies and post-crisis recovery, or achieve a minimum level of educational access and quality in emergencies, as well as to ensure the accountability of the workers who provide these services. INEE has developed the INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery, which are designed for use in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery and in humanitarian advocacy. They are applicable in a wide range of situations, including natural disasters and armed conflicts. The standards give guidance on how to prepare for and respond to acute emergencies in ways that reduce risk, improve future preparedness and lay a foundation for quality education. (INEE, 2015)

Humanitarian Coordinator: The UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) may appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) to serve as the United Nations senior official in a country experiencing an emergency, or where an existing humanitarian situation worsens in size or complexity. The functions of a HC are separate from a UN Resident Coordinator (RC), but these positions are almost always combined in one person – the RC/HC. When a humanitarian crisis erupts or a situation of chronic vulnerability sharply deteriorates, the Resident Coordinator will continue to lead and coordinate the inter-agency response as the Humanitarian Coordinator and will report to the Emergency Relief Coordinator on humanitarian matters for the duration of the emergency. The HC function normally phases out once the emergency subsides. (UNDAC Field Handbook, 2013)

Humanitarian Country Team (HCT): Once an HC is designated, the UN Country Team will be expanded with additional members and become a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The HCT is an in-country decision-making forum focused on providing common strategic and policy guidance on issues related to humanitarian action. HCT membership generally mirrors that of the IASC at country level, composed of United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian organizations resident and/or working in the country. The HCT is chaired by the HC, or in the absence of an HC, by the RC. Subject to their individual mandates, the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement may participate in an HCT. Some HCTs have also decided to include representatives of key assisting governments in their membership. (UNDAC Field Handbook, 2013)

Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO): An HNO is a process by which the humanitarian community collaboratively analyzes existing humanitarian information and reaches a shared understanding of the most pressing issues and of the likely evolution of the situation, in order to inform the country team’s strategic response. The HNO document describes the impact of the humanitarian crisis, provides and explains an estimate of which population groups have been affected, analyzes their situation and gives an overview of the operational environment. The HNO captures both the current situation and the projected evolution of needs during the planning cycle. The HNO is initiated on a regular basis by the HCT who should define a clear timeline for all the steps in the process. (HNO Guidance, IASC 2015)

Level 3 (L3) emergencies: A Level 3 (L3) emergency is a major sudden-onset humanitarian crisis triggered by natural disasters or conflict that requires system-wide mobilization. L3 emergencies necessitate a full activation of the humanitarian system to ensure the most effective response to the needs of affected people. The declaration of an L3 emergency is made by the ERC, in consultation with the IASC Principals, within 48 hours of the onset of a crisis. The decision is based on an analysis of five criteria – scale, complexity, urgency, capacity and reputational risk. Once made, the declaration is intended to enable IASC members to put in place the right systems and mobilize resources to contribute to the response as per their mandates. (UNDAC Field Handbook, 2013)
The Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA): The MIRA Guidance outlines an approach to undertaking a joint multi-sector assessment in the earliest days of a crisis or change in the context. It guides subsequent in-depth sectoral assessments and provides decision-makers with timely, accurate, sufficiently reliable information to collectively identify strategic humanitarian priorities. The MIRA is conducted under the leadership of the RC/HC and, wherever possible, is led by the government. Designed to identify humanitarian priority needs during the first days and weeks following an emergency, the MIRA is the first step in the HCT's response to the situation. Based on its findings, humanitarian actors can develop a joint strategic plan, mobilize resources and monitor the situation and the response. The MIRA will not however, provide detailed information for the design of localized response projects. The main benefit of the MIRA is the elaboration, from the onset of the crisis, of a concerted operational picture based on the best information available from primary and secondary sources, expressed through two key products: a situational analysis, ideally issued 48-72 hours after the disaster's onset, and updated as required and possible in the following days, and a MIRA report (normally released after two weeks). (MIRA Guidance and UNDAC Field Handbook, 2013)

The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): OCHA is the secretariat for the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. OCHA also ensures there is a framework within which each actor can contribute to the overall response effort. OCHA activities are focused around five core areas: Coordination, Information Management, Humanitarian Financing, Policy and Advocacy. (UNDAC Field Handbook, 2013)

Primary data: Most generally understood as data gathered from the information source and which has not undergone analysis before being included in the needs assessment. Primary data is collected directly from the affected population by the assessment team through field-work. Primary data is most often collected through face-to-face interviews or discussions with members of the affected community, but can also be gathered through phone interviews, radio communication, email exchange, and direct observation. (ACAPS Technical Brief: Qualitative and Quantitative Research Techniques for Humanitarian Needs Assessment: An Introductory Brief)

Purposive sampling means where you choose your sample – i.e., where you will visit and who you will talk to – with a specific purpose or with one or more specific predefined groups in mind. (ACAPS Technical Brief: Purposive Sampling and Site Selection)

Qualitative information: Virtually any information that is not numerical in nature and is difficult or even impossible to quantify. Qualitative data are often textual observations that portray attitudes, perceptions or intentions. They are typically expressed as words, rather than numbers, and are used to describe and provide meaning and context to a situation – the story behind the statistics. Qualitative data have a unique perspective – a view from inside – and answer questions such as how, and why? Rather than what, or how many? (WFP Technical Note 8)

Quantitative information: Characterized by the collection of information which can be analyzed numerically, the results of which are typically presented using statistics, tables and graphs. (ACAPS Technical Brief: Qualitative and Quantitative Research Techniques for Humanitarian Needs Assessment: An Introductory Brief)

Sampling: The selection of a part of a population for the purpose of determining characteristics of the whole population. The methodology used to sample from a larger population will depend on the type of analysis being performed, knowledge of the population, time and resources availability and access to the population. (ACAPS Training Material)

Secondary data: Information that has typically been collected by researchers not involved in the current assessment and has undergone at least one layer of analysis before inclusion in the needs assessment.
Secondary data can comprise published research, internet materials, media reports, and data that has been cleaned, analyzed and collected for a purpose other than the needs assessment, such as academic research or an agency or sector specific monitoring reports. (ACAPS Technical Brief: Qualitative and Quantitative Research Techniques for Humanitarian Needs Assessment: An Introductory Brief)

Spatial data: Any data that can be mapped, or “information about locations and shapes of geographical features and the relationships between them, usually stored as coordinates and topology.” (ESRI GIS Dictionary)

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): UNHCR was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. It also has a mandate to help stateless people. (UNHCR, 2015)

UN Development Programme (UNDP): UNDP focuses on the development-related aspects of disasters and aims to mainstream disaster risk reduction into national development strategies through the provision of technical assistance and capacity-development in order to strengthen disaster risk management and establish mechanisms to support post-disaster recovery. UNDP seeks to ensure that disaster risk reduction considerations are factored into national and regional development programmers and that countries use the recovery process following disasters as a window of opportunity to mitigate future risks and vulnerabilities. The UNDP has representation in most developing countries of the world and is also the custodian of the RC system. (UNDP, 2015)

Vulnerability is a set of “conditions determined by physical, social, economic, environmental and political factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of shocks/hazards.” (UNISDR Basic Terms of disaster risk reduction)