FAQ on Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Framework

February, 2025

Contents:

This FAQ is designed to provide clear and concise information about the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) for policymakers, education practitioners, and advocates. It primarily focuses on clarifying processes and evidence for endorsement and implementation with governments and providing technical information for practitioners, emphasizing an all-hazards and risks approach to ensure comprehensive school safety and resilience.

The resource aims to support members of the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) and others engaged in promoting school safety.

For more details on the CSSF and related initiatives, visit the GADRRRES website.

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A) Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) approach

1. Why Comprehensive School Safety?

- The education sector has experienced the devastating impacts of earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones, pandemics, violence and conflict and the slower impacts of climate change. We want every school, in every country, to be a safe school, and the education system as a whole to be resilient to the impacts of *all hazards*.
- An increasing number of hazard impacts and events are affecting children's education, with these only likely to increase due to climate change.
- This means ensuring all children, including marginalized learners, access safe, inclusive education.
- Schools must prevent gender-based violence and provide accessible infrastructure, as 84% of persons with disabilities lack disaster preparedness plans, and 39% struggle to evacuate (UN Disability and Development Report 2024).
- 234 million crisis-affected children are in urgent need of educational support(ECW,2025)
- 242 million children has their children disrupted by extreme climate events in 2024 alone (UNICEF, 2024)

2. What does GADRRRES mean by comprehensive school safety?

School safety = protecting children and staff from harm in schools, ensuring no interruptions in learning, and supporting children with the knowledge and skills that can keep them safe.

Comprehensive = covers all types of hazards and risks, for example: conflicts, earthquakes, flooding, disease outbreaks, terrorism, nuclear hazards and sea level rise, as well as everyday risks. Comprehensive also refers to stakeholders, ensuring a cross-government and cross-sectoral approach.

Foundation:
Enabling Systems and Policies

Pillar 1:
Safer Learning Facilities

Pillar 2:
School Safety and Educational Continuity Management

Pillar 3:
Risk Reduction and Resilience Education

The Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022-2030 (CSSF) is an all-hazards, all-risks approach to protecting children and education, offering governments a practical framework to advance children's rights, disaster risk reduction, peace building, climate action and the sustainable development agenda. The CSSF sets out a tangible, practical and proven model to strengthen the resilience of education systems, support education continuity and provide children with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to prepare for and respond to all shocks and stresses.

The [Comprehensive School Safety Framework](#) is composed of:

- **Foundation: Enabling Systems and Policies** (e.g. including risk reduction in national education policies).
- **Pillar 1: Safer Learning Facilities** (e.g. ensuring school buildings are resilient)
- **Pillar 2: School Safety and Educational Continuity Management** (e.g. making plans for different hazards)
- **Pillar 3: Risk Reduction and Resilience Education** (e.g. supporting children with knowledge and skills on different hazards)

3. *How do you implement the CSSF? What are examples of activities related to each component of the CSSF?*

Foundation: Enabling Systems and Policies

✔ Maintain and update Education Management Information System with risk assessment, risk reduction, and response-preparedness information.

✔ Ensure school safety is costed and integrated into the education sector budget.

✔ Governments and education authorities integrate gender-responsive and disability-inclusive measures in national education sector policies, ensuring that emergency preparedness, school infrastructure, and learning continuity plans address the specific barriers faced by girls and learners with disabilities

Pillar 1: Safer learning facilities

✔ Ensure quick refurbishment, rehabilitation, repair, retrofit, reconstruction or relocation based on risk assessment. This includes, for example, retrofitting buildings against earthquakes and floods, providing protection from heat through better ventilation and shading and repairing damage caused to infrastructure in conflict zones, such as removing all weapons or remnants of war.

✔ **Ensuring Risk-Informed, Inclusive, and Sustainable School Infrastructure** – Implementing **safe site selection**, **hazard-resistant construction**, and **universal design** while incorporating **green building materials** and **energy-efficient systems** for long-term resilience.

✔ **Conducting Multi-Hazard Risk Assessments** – Evaluating risks like **earthquakes, floods, and storms** before construction to enhance school safety and sustainability.

Pillar 2: School Safety and Educational Continuity Management

✔ Conduct inclusive risk assessments that consider all children and staff, addressing all hazards. Identify risks such as flood-prone areas and safe spaces for attacks while

> accounting for gender-related vulnerabilities, violence risks, and accessibility needs to ensure safe evacuation and inclusive contingency planning.
>
> ✔ Reduce risks through structural, non-structural, infrastructural, and social and behavioral interventions.
>
> ✔ Prepare education continuity plans for all hazards (e.g. pandemics/epidemics, climate impacts, natural hazards etc.). This includes remote learning, temporary learning spaces, changes to school calendar and timetable etc. as needed. This also includes contingency planning and response planning.

Pillar 3: Risk Reduction and Resilience Education

> ✔ Develop curriculum standards and materials as well as informal learning opportunities for risk assessment, risk reduction, safety and response-preparedness. Include life skills, green skills, health and well-being, and first aid.
>
> ✔ Train teachers on all hazards, Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation, health and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.
>
> ✔ Prepare to adapt teaching methodologies post-disaster by implementing accelerated education programs, catch-up initiatives, and multiseries pedagogical approaches to ensure continued learning for all students.
>
> ✔ Teacher training should include inclusive strategies, ensuring learners with disabilities participate in disaster education and that girls' safety concerns are addressed in school drills and resilience programs.
>
> ✔ Update curricula and materials to integrate climate change education across subjects, covering climate science, biodiversity, climate justice, resilience, post-carbon economies, and sustainable lifestyles. This equips learners with skills for sustainable development and the transition to digital and green economies. (Source: UNESCO Greening Curriculum Guidance)
>
> ✔ Train teachers on integrating climate change content into their teaching practices.

4. **Are there any *case studies* and resources available to learn more about the *CSSF in practice?***

The CSSF and its supporting documents intend to strengthen the implementation, collaboration and collective impact of government duty-bearers and humanitarian and development actors.

And ... Yes! There are a number of different case studies and resources available.

- GADRRRES Operational Guidance Resources Brochure 2023
- 💡 CSS Operational Guidance Catalogue 2023
- 🔍 CSS Targets & Indicators (2022-2030)
- ✍️ Template: School Emergency Drills and Exercises: Quality checklist and evaluation forms
- ✍️ Template: School Maintenance Checklist

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- Champion Countries - Case Studies ([Nepal](#), [Philippines](#))
- [Best Practice: Sub - Regional Government Initiatives Empower Comprehensive School Safety](#)
- [GADRRRES - Advocacy Brief](#)

The [Targets and Indicators](#) are intended to guide policy and program development and aim to stimulate monitoring and evaluation of risk reduction and resilience efforts in the education sector. They are expected to support national and sub-national education authorities to incorporate risk reduction into education sector strategies and plans.

GADRRRES Support for CSSF Implementation

GADRRRES drives CSSF adoption by providing technical guidance, strengthening regional networks, and facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration. It advocates for school safety and supports capacity building to help over 70 countries integrate CSSF into policies and education systems.

B) Endorsing the Comprehensive School Safety Framework

5. Who can endorse the CSSF?

We call on all governments, federal governments, sub-national governments, donors, private sector organisations, and NGOs to endorse the CSSF.

6. How can governments endorse the CSSF? and what does this mean?

All details relating to endorsement of the CSSF for governments are available on the GADRRRES website. **Over 84 countries have already endorsed the CSSF** – will you join them? [Click here!](#)

7. How can organisations endorse the CSSF? and what does this mean?

All details relating to endorsement of the CSSF for organisations are available on the GADRRRES website.

8. What happens after endorsement?

After endorsing the CSSF, you will be included on the GADRRRES website. We can also support in preparing press releases, case studies and communications assets to highlight your commitment to school safety. You can also:

- reach out to GADRRRES for further support
- find key resources online
- connect with other countries implementing the CSSF and learn from their approaches
- institutionalise the CSS in education policies
- request a detailed CSS policy brief for further actions.

C) What is the Global State of Comprehensive School Safety?

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9. So far What kind of policies are being implemented around the world?

Governments, organizations, and schools worldwide are implementing policies to strengthen comprehensive school safety. These initiatives play a critical role in ensuring the right to education for all children, particularly in times of crisis. To learn more about how these policies are being put into action and their impact, explore the following resources:

🔗 **CSS in Action** – Discover inspiring stories of school safety efforts from around the world and see how they are making a difference.

🔗 **Case Studies** – Access detailed case studies showcasing successful school safety policies and strategies that can serve as models for other regions.

10. What kind of monitoring is in place?

In 2017, with support from the World Bank GFDRR, Save the Children facilitated a global CSS Policy Survey in 68 countries across Latin America, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific regions. The CSS Policy Survey asked about national policies in the areas of the foundation and 3 pillars of CSS.

In 2024 the **Prudence Foundation** supported the revision of the survey to be aligned with the updated CSSF and be in a digital format. As of February 14, **50 countries** had participated in this global effort. The **CSS Global Report** and **Regional Reports** (Asia and Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, and Africa) will be released in May/June, providing further insights into the state of school safety worldwide.

The monitoring of progress in Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Policy was supported by the CSS Policy Survey, conducted at regular intervals—ideally every 4 years. This survey tracked the evolution of CSS policies globally, using an inclusive approach:

- **Increased Reach and Inclusion:** The survey was available in 14 languages, expanding accessibility across diverse regions.
- **Automated Reporting:** Automated reports provided immediate analysis of national and sub-national data, allowing comparisons across sub-regions.
- **Comprehensive Monitoring:** Beyond measuring progress on CSS Framework components, the survey also addressed related issues like Education in Emergencies, Sustainability and Climate Adaptation, Health and Hygiene, Violence Prevention, Finance, and CSS Commitments for 2025-2030.

D) CSS and other approaches

11. Is CSSF based on disaster risk reduction (DRR)?
- The CSSF was born from a disaster risk reduction approach, but in practice has always included risks beyond natural and climate-change induced hazards.
- The updated CSSF in 2022 includes an all-hazards, all risks approach. This approach means that we can effectively build the resilience of education systems and students not only to the climate crisis but also to any other hazard students may experience.

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- While a particular risk such as climate change might be the entry point for strengthening resilience, we can then also ensure education stakeholders are aware of and address other risks such as violence against children, and public health outbreaks.
- This approach is rooted in the humanitarian-development nexus, actively engaging both development and humanitarian actors through for example anticipatory action, accelerated learning, temporary learning shelters and education continuity planning.

12. Why is the CSSF different from other frameworks?

- There are many frameworks and approaches responding to the impact of climate change induced hazards, health hazards, disasters, attacks and conflict on education. These **generally only focus on one type of hazard.** This means schools, children and teachers may be better equipped to deal with that hazard but are still unprepared and vulnerable to other hazards.
- **The CSSF gives us the opportunity to work together with a common shared goal – to protect schools, children and teachers from all hazards.**
- The CSSF captures all relevant approaches under its foundation and 3 pillars, from curriculum changes, resilient infrastructure, access to school, preparedness, anticipatory action, early warning and pre-emptive planning to ensure education can continue in the face of any hazard.
- Now we're scaling this even further to ensure school safety, preparedness and climate change adaptation are top priorities for the global education sector, donors, and governments.

13. How are the CSSF and Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) connected?

The CSSF:

- The CSSF is a comprehensive approach to school safety, meaning it covers all types of risks and hazards including conflict, violence and attacks on schools.
- By endorsing the CSSF, States commit to put efforts into protecting schools from any risk.
- The endorsement process began before the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015, through the Worldwide Safe Schools Initiative.
- As of January 2025, over 80 countries have endorsed the CSSF.

The SSD:

- The [Safe Schools Declaration](#) (SSD) is an inter-governmental political commitment to protect students, teachers, schools, and universities during armed conflict that was developed under the leadership of Norway and Argentina.
- The SSD outlines a set of commitments that endorsing States agree to take to strengthen the protection of education from attack, including implementing the [Guidelines for protecting schools and universities from military use during armed conflict](#). Restricting military use of education facilities has proven to be an effective way to ensure the continuity of safe education during armed conflict.
- The Declaration was opened for countries to endorse at the First International Conference on Safe Schools in Oslo, Norway, in May 2015.

- As of January 2025, 120 States have endorsed the SSD. To endorse the SSD, States must send an official letter to Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who will publish the endorsement on its website.
- While the SSD can be formally endorsed by States only, it can inspire action among humanitarian assistance providers as well as non-State armed groups.

GCPEA is a member of GADRRRES demonstrating a joint commitment to ensure the safety of schools from attacks and any other risk. GCPEA is an inter-agency coalition established in 2010 to advocate for the protection of education from attack globally.

The CSSF and the SSD:

The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) and the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) are unique yet complementary. The CSSF adopts an all-hazards, all-risks approach, providing a comprehensive framework to protect learners, educators, and education systems from all types of hazards, including conflict and violence. One significant risk linked to conflict and violence is the threat of attacks on educators and education systems, which is specifically addressed by the SSD.

The CSSF explicitly recognizes the SSD as a critical commitment to promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion in schools, particularly by integrating strategies that protect education in times of armed conflict. In practice, some of the SSD commitments are implemented within the CSSF as a foundational framework that also addresses the intersecting impacts of climate change, armed conflict, and other hazards. By endorsing the SSD, governments demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding education through the all-hazards approach outlined by the CSSF.

We recommend endorsing <u>both</u> the SSD and CSSF and utilising the guidance from both in order to ensure safety of schools. Further information on SSD and guidance is available here.

14. How do the CSSF, SSD, and INEE frameworks complement each other?

We acknowledge that the efforts of GADRRRES, GCPEA, and INEE extend far beyond the scope described below. However, a broad outline of how the CSSF, SSD, and INEE frameworks complement each other is detailed below:

The [**Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF)**](#), the [**INEE Minimum Standards**](#), and the [**Safe Schools Declaration (SSD)**](#) are highly complementary, offering a cohesive approach to enhancing school safety and resilience in various contexts. The CSSF provides a holistic framework for addressing school safety through its all-hazards and risks approach, bringing together multiple sectors to address risks ranging from natural disasters to conflict-related challenges. The INEE Minimum Standards serve as a practical resource within this framework, equipping education practitioners with tools and guidance to implement actions outlined under the CSSF, such as educational continuity planning, accelerated education programs, and curriculum adaptation while also explicitly referencing the SSD. Meanwhile, the SSD reinforces the principles of the CSSF and INEE by establishing commitments to protect schools from attack, reduce military use of educational facilities, seek to ensure the continuation of education during armed conflict, advocate for conflict-sensitive approaches to education and uphold the right to education in crises. Together, these tools and commitments form an integrated system that supports countries in ensuring the safety and continuity of education, while promoting resilience and safeguarding children's rights.

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15. Does the endorsement and implementation of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) support the advancement of SDGs?

YES, the endorsement and implementation of the **Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF)** directly contributes to multiple **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, with **SDG4 (Quality Education)** at its core. Here's a concise breakdown with practical examples:

SDG 4: Quality Education.
The implementation of the **Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF)** contributes to ensuring schools are safe and operational during crises, ensuring uninterrupted learning for all, including vulnerable groups. Its **all-hazards and risks approach** places learners at the center, fostering inclusive and resilient education systems. For example, resilient schools in flood-prone areas can continue classes while prioritizing safety and well-being. The CSSF promotes **multi-sectoral collaboration** at all levels, aligning efforts with international education strategies and supporting **SDG4, Target 4.c** on global cooperation and capacity-building.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being.
Safe schools reduce injuries and trauma during emergencies and serve as platforms for promoting health, including hygiene awareness and vaccination drives. They also support mental health and well-being by offering psychosocial support and safe spaces for learners to recover and thrive. All these elements should be integral to a school's preparedness and resilience approach, ensuring comprehensive support during and after crises.

SDG 5: Gender Equality.
The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) ensures girls' education continues during emergencies, reducing risks of early pregnancy and child, early, forcer marriage and union (CEFMU. In areas impacted by multiple risks and hazards, keeping schools open provides girls with safe, inclusive environments to pursue their education and secure better opportunities.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.
The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) equips future generations with skills for economic recovery. Inclusive vocational training in retrofitting and resilient construction ensures all learners, especially young women, can overcome gender barriers and contribute to community resilience

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.
The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) ensures equitable access to safe and inclusive education by addressing barriers faced by marginalized learners, such as children with disabilities and girls. This is achieved through inclusive policies, accessible school infrastructure, assistive technologies, trained staff, tailored evacuation strategies, and equitable access to learning materials, enabling all students to thrive, especially during emergencies.

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SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.
The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) helps schools and communities build resilience by sharing vital preparedness information. For example, schools in heatwave-prone areas can develop education continuity plans, such as remote learning strategies or staggered schedules, to ensure students' education continues safely when schools must close due to extreme heat.

SDG 13: Climate Action.
The Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) incorporates climate education into curricula, teaching learners how to adapt to and respond to climate-related risks. For example, school safety clubs led by young people can organize community preparedness activities, such as creating flash flood response plans, promoting heatwave safety awareness, and practicing emergency drills. These initiatives not only educate but also empower communities to better prepare for future climate-induced hazards.

SDG16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
Protecting schools from attacks and maintaining them as safe spaces promotes stability in conflict zones. For instance, in war-affected areas, secure schools provide continuity of education and a sense of normalcy, reinforcing trust in institutions and offering a safe and inclusive space for children and young people.

The CSSF's implementation supports not only **SDG4** but also contributes to global resilience and development across multiple SDGs. It ensures education remains a driving force for sustainable, equitable, and peaceful societies.

E) Global Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector

16. Who are GADRRRES?

- The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) was established in 2013 to support and advocate for a comprehensive approach to school safety.
- It is an alliance composed of UN agencies, international non-governmental agencies, humanitarian and development organisations and networks, youth organisations, donors/multilateral funds, and private sector organisations.
- GADRRRES have regional networks in Asia, the Pacific, the Americas and the Caribbean and West and Central Africa.
- GADRRRES developed the Comprehensive School Safety Framework which has been endorsed and used by more than 80 countries.

17. What does it mean to be a member?

General Membership is open to UN agencies/international organizations, international non-governmental organizations, donors, global funds and networks, with a strong global mandate in child rights, risk reduction and/or education.

Criteria:

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- The organization has a strong mandate in children's rights, risk reduction and/or education, and contributes to improving knowledge and practice in risk reduction and resilience in the education sector.
- The organisation has an international mandate and outreach.
- The organisation has the capacity and commitment to ensure active participation in GADRRRES.

18. What are the Regional Affiliates?

Regional Affiliate Membership is open to multi-stakeholder alliances organized at a regional level with a strong mandate in children's rights, risk reduction, and/or education.

GADRRRES have regional networks in Asia, the Pacific, the Americas and the Caribbean and West and Central Africa.

To learn more about the Regional Affiliates , **CLICK HERE!**

19. What does it mean to be a partner?

GADRRRES Partner which might include donors, private sector organisations, academic institutions, coalitions, and others which endorse the CSS Framework, support the aims of GADRRRES, and are willing to provide material or in-kind support, but do not meet the criteria for membership.

20. How can I get involved with GADRRRES?

To join GADRRRES as a member or partner or one of the Regional Affiliates, please email gadrrres@gmail.com

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