



Every child & youth counts. : Briefing for the Act for **safe schools** today. : Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2025

Education is the foundation for a better future, empowering children and youth, strengthening communities, and driving social and economic progress. Right now, the promise of education is being undermined by a range of interconnected crises and hazards, with a lack of preparedness leaving education systems at risk. But while disasters are inevitable, the adverse impacts on children's learning are not. Experience and expertise gathered from decades of work in school safety and resilience have culminated in a framework for a different future: the [Comprehensive School Safety Framework for Child Rights and Resilience in the Education Sector 2022-2030](#).

The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES)[†] encourages all governments to endorse and commit to act on the Framework at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The risks to children's learning are widespread – and worsening

Crises disrupt learning for millions of children every year. From the climate crisis to conflict and outbreaks to outages, children – and their learning – face a wide range of risks. At its peak, the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered schools for [1.6 billion learners](#). In 2024, [242 million children](#) experienced school disruption due to extreme climate events. And right now, [234 million school-aged children](#) in crises are in urgent need of support to access quality education. These risks are compounded by the interplay between them.

The likelihood of disasters affecting education is only set to increase as the climate crisis deepens. Flooding, extreme storms, drought, and other climate-related impacts are on the rise. Already, approximately [one billion children](#) live in countries at extremely high risk from the impacts of climate change.

Impacts on education can have long-term effects on children and societies

Crises and disasters have diverse yet devastating impacts on education. Environmental disasters can damage or destroy schools and surrounding infrastructure, attacks on institutions jeopardise the safety of children and staff, and disease outbreaks can make it unsafe to go to school. These hazards are often interconnected—for example, flooding can lead to waterborne disease outbreaks, further disrupting education. Collectively, these impacts contribute to school closures, which in turn interrupt learning, affect children's well-being, and [can increase dropout rates](#).

Even when schools remain open and children attend, their learning is likely to still be affected. Violence and conflict can cause physical harm and psychosocial distress, making it harder for children to focus and [increasing the risk of dropout](#). Similarly, crises like heatwaves disrupt concentration and academic performance, with [reports showing significant declines in test scores](#) during periods of extreme heat.

Some children may be unable to attend their school, even if it remains open. When crises and disasters exacerbate poverty, [children can be pulled out of school](#) because families are unable to afford school fees and other associated costs. In the worst cases, children and their families may be forced to flee their homes and, with it, their schools. Some children may even be forced to abandon their learning journey altogether.

While disruption can have devastating consequences for children's learning, **education is also a powerful force for positive change.** Investments that provide resilient schools and education systems can reduce climate risks for [275 million children](#). Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) education improves children's and communities' resilience in the face of crises, teaching them the lifesaving knowledge and skills they need when disaster strikes. Education also promotes peaceful societies and economic prosperity, giving children hope for a better life after crises hit.

An alternative future with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework

The **Comprehensive School Safety Framework** is an evidence-based approach to protecting children and education systems from a range of crises and disasters. The Framework includes recommendations, roles, and responsibilities for all aspects of school safety, covering three pillars:

- **Pillar 1:** Safer learning facilities, to strengthen the resilience of education systems.
- **Pillar 2:** School safety and education continuity management, to keep schools open and children learning in times of crisis.
- **Pillar 3:** Risk reduction and resilience education, to provide children with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to prepare for and respond to shocks and stresses.

These pillars are connected to existing education and DRR approaches through enabling systems and policies, also defined in the Framework.

Importantly, the Framework adopts an **all-hazards, all-risks approach**, reflecting the reality of many countries and making it relevant for a wide range of disasters and the compounding effect of multiple crises.

Evidence shows that comprehensive school safety policies can:

- **contribute to cost-saving**, as investing in resilient infrastructure has been shown to return [\\$4 for every \\$1](#) spent in low- and middle-income countries.
- **support whole-of-community knowledge and approaches**, strengthening the preparedness of communities through child-led knowledge sharing and [piloting of resilience building practices](#).
- **keep children in school and learning**, [preventing dropout](#) and ensuring the peacebuilding, economic, and development potential of education is unlocked.

Endorsing the Comprehensive School Safety Framework not only demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that every school is a safe school; it means agreeing to make the necessary policy and programmatic changes, allocate funding, and implement actions to drive forward comprehensive school safety. It is both a political commitment and a roadmap to successful and safe schools for all.

To date, 84 countries have endorsed the Framework.

Call to action

The [Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) presents a critical moment for action to strengthen resilient education. GADRRRES encourages all governments to seize this opportunity, including through Ministerial statements, to:

- Commit to building the resilience of education systems to all-hazards by **formally endorsing the Comprehensive School Safety Framework**.
- Set out the **short-, medium- and long-term actions their government will take to implement and institutionalise the three pillars** and foundation detailed in the Framework.
- Pledge to **monitor and report on progress** at a milestone Ministerial meeting on school safety in 2026.

GADRRRES and its members stand ready to support governments to interpret the Framework and adapt it to their context. Governments and partners are encouraged to visit the [GADRRRES website](#) for resources or [contact the Alliance](#) to:

- Secure a place at an invitation-only virtual briefing ahead of the Global Platform;
- Be represented by your UN Permanent Representative at a high-level reception in Geneva in May; or
- Receive tailored support from a GADRRRES focal point, including support to integrate the Framework into existing policies.

All-hazards, all-risks approach



Technological



Environmental



Violence & conflict



Health



Everyday

† The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) was established in 2013 to provide a comprehensive approach to school safety. It is a multi-stakeholder alliance composed of UN agencies, international non-governmental agencies, humanitarian and development organisations and networks, youth organisations, donors/multilateral funds, and private sector organisations that work together to advocate for and support child rights, resilience, and sustainability in the education sector across the humanitarian, development, peace nexus. GADRRRES has regional networks in Asia, the Pacific, the Americas and the Caribbean and West and Central Africa.