



Strengthening the Resilience of Education Systems in West and Central Africa

A call to action ahead of the Global Platform for Disaster
Risk Reduction (GP2025)



Global Alliance for
Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience
in the Education Sector



West and Central Africa
Education in Emergencies
Working Group

Do you know about the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF)?

Developed by the [Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector](#) (GADRRRES) in 2012, the [CSSF](#) has since become the key framework for implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) within the education sector. In 2022, GADRRRES – an alliance that includes UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDRR, the World Bank and Save the Children, among other members - updated the CSSF to integrate climate change and attacks against schools, in addition to other hazards affecting school safety. [The West and Central Africa Education in Emergencies Working Group](#) (R-EiE WG), co-led by UNICEF and the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the regional affiliate of GADRRRES.



Honourable Conrad Sackey

Minister for Basic and Senior Secondary Education
Sierra Leone

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My Ministry, on behalf of Sierra Leone, endorses the CSSF, as an important step toward building our education system's resilience and ensuring a safe environment for learning.”

85 countries have already [endorsed the CSSF](#), confirming their engagement in support of resilient education systems. The latest endorsement was by the Government of Sierra Leone, during a global GADRRRES webinar in February 2025. Countries in West and Central Africa, where regional education initiatives are already in place, are encouraged to join this growing movement. Please endorse the CSSF today to strengthen the protection of schools in the face of climate and other risks.

In West and Central Africa, the need for urgent action to build resilience in the education sector is more critical than ever. In 2024, [21 out of 24 countries in the region were affected by large-scale floods, affecting the education of at least 12.5 million children.](#) In addition to climate hazards, school safety in the region is increasingly threatened by attacks on institutions, leading to widespread school closures—[over 13,000 schools were closed in September 2024.](#) Disease outbreaks further exacerbate the situation, disrupting the education of most vulnerable children.

As we approach the [Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (GP2025), 2-6 June 2025 in Geneva, at the occasion of which a Ministerial Roundtable on School Safety is planned, the R-EiE WG reaffirms its commitment to support risk reduction and resilience-building in the education sector. Echoing the call to action by GADRRRES, R-EiE WG members strongly encourage governments in the region to seize this strategic opportunity to reaffirm their political leadership, including through bold and ambitious Ministerial statements, and to:

- Affirm their political commitment to strengthening the resilience of education systems to all risks by endorsing the CSSF as a regional and international reference framework.
- Develop a clear roadmap outlining concrete short-, medium-, and long-term measures that the government intends to implement to institutionalize the three pillars and foundations of the CSSF, in line with national priorities in education, risk management, and sustainable development.
- Promote the active engagement of children and youth as key actors in risk reduction and resilience building by providing them with the means, skills, and spaces necessary to contribute meaningfully to educational and decision-making processes through inclusive, risk-sensitive, and rights-centered education.

The CSSF provides a coherent and operational roadmap to address the complex challenges facing education systems, through an all-hazards, all-risk approach, which reflects the multi-sectoral reality and cumulative vulnerabilities of West and Central African countries. This approach makes the CSSF particularly relevant for responding to a wide range of disasters, whether natural, climate-related or human-induced, and for supporting governments in managing the cross-effects of multiple crises. Specifically, the CSSF is accompanied by recommendations, and the identification of roles and responsibilities relating to 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 behaviors to prepare for and respond to shocks and stresses.

These pillars are connected to existing education and DRR approaches through **Enabling Systems and Policies**, defined in the CSSF.

Joining the CSSF represents more than just a symbolic commitment. It reflects a clear political will to ensure safe and resilient schools, while catalyzing the policy, programmatic and financial changes needed to implement comprehensive school safety.

By endorsing the CSSF, governments are committing not only to protecting students, teachers and infrastructure, but also to laying the foundations for an inclusive, safe and sustainable learning environment for all. Governments in West and Central Africa are therefore encouraged to contact the R-EiE WG or UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa to receive technical support, resources, and strategic advice to:

- Obtain detailed information on the CSSF membership process and the benefits for national education systems.
- Participate in a virtual preparatory information session on the GPDRR to better understand the challenges related to school safety and the opportunities for regional and global engagement.
- Benefit from personalized technical support from a GADRRRES focal point, particularly to support the integration of the CSSF into existing education, risk management, and resilience policies and frameworks.

Contact the R-EiE WG at:

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