



## **Comprehensive School Safety 2030 - Climate, COVID-19, Conflict**

**The way forward for an All-Hazards Approach to plan for school safety, educational continuity, and child-protection**

**An Advocacy brief from GADRRRES for the Seventh Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

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**Global Alliance for  
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in the Education Sector**

## What is the current situation?

Disasters, emergencies, shocks, and stresses associated with natural, technological, and health hazards, climate change, conflict, and violence have destructive impacts and can prevent countries from reaching their development goals, impacting vital investments such as in the education sector<sup>i</sup>.

Only in 2021, UNICEF globally launched a record US\$9.4 billion emergency funding appeal to reach more than 327 million people - including 177 million children affected by conflict, the climate crisis, and COVID-19<sup>ii</sup>.

**Multiple hazard impacts:** During the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, over 7,000 disaster events claimed 1.23 million lives and affected more than 4 billion people globally<sup>iii</sup>. At least 26% of those impacted are children under the age of 15<sup>iv</sup>. Between 2000 and 2019 at least 60 major disasters affecting 30 countries disrupted education for over 11 million children. There were nearly 35,000 fatalities of children in schools in 16 events, and many more near-misses because schools were closed. Well over 30,000 schools were destroyed in these disasters, while close to 50,000 suffered significant damage<sup>v</sup>.

Annually there were more than 11,000 reports of attacks on education or military use of schools between 2015 and 2019, harming more than 22,000 students and adults. The impacts of conflicts and attacks on education were felt in more than 37 countries. These attacks often deliberately target girls' schools, girl students, and female teachers<sup>vi</sup>. Millions of children in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries were denied their right to education<sup>vii</sup>.

Each year, an estimate of 175 million children will be impacted by natural hazards alone<sup>viii</sup>. By 2020, there were more than 262 million out-of-school children of primary and secondary age<sup>ix</sup>. Prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic, 53% of learners

in low and middle-income countries could not read or understand a basic story by the age of 10, with this figure reaching 80% in poor countries<sup>x</sup>. Children in fragile and conflict-affected environments are the most impacted by this global learning crisis.

The multitude of hazards, whether originating from natural or health hazards, climate, or conflict, may lead to loss of life and livelihoods, severe disruption of essential services, and drive displacement, social tensions. Conflicts left 40 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in 2019 and natural hazards displaced 19 million more. In 2017, about 4 million school-aged refugees were out of school.

**Growing and compounding hazards:** The climate crisis is a child rights crisis, with approximately 1 billion children (nearly half) of the world's children living in extremely high-risk countries<sup>xi</sup>. The potential for educational disruption due to extreme temperatures and weather events, sea-level rise, and conflict over scarce resources can have devastating impacts on the well-being and future of children globally<sup>xii</sup>.

Existing challenges for education worsened greatly as a result of the **COVID-19 global pandemic**. At the peak of the disruption to education caused by the crisis, 1.6 billion learners from more than 190 countries were out of school<sup>xiii</sup>. Of these at least 4% will be children with disabilities who have diverse needs in relation to remote learning and types of support required. More than 168 million children had their schools closed for a full year or more<sup>xiv</sup>. As a result, the percentage of the world's children suffering from *learning poverty*<sup>xv</sup> increased from 53% to 63% with much higher rates expected in fragile settings<sup>xvi</sup>.

For many, the impacts of the pandemic worsened by additional crises such as earthquakes, cyclones, and flooding. In 2021, over half a million children<sup>xvii</sup> were affected by the earthquake that hit Haiti, and of the sixteen million affected people, an estimated 2.4 million people, including 912,00 children, needed assistance after Typhoon Rai in the Philippines<sup>xviii</sup>. Many children are at enormous risk of never returning to school, and are vulnerabl

labour, child marriage as well as violence, neglect, and abuse, especially the girls. Increasing numbers of children are trapped in cycles of poverty and violence. Due to changing weather patterns and continued human destruction of wildlife habitats, the anticipation is that there will be increased risks of infectious diseases around the world, beyond COVID 19<sup>xix</sup>.

customized education during prolonged crisis periods and use of school buildings as disaster shelters are some of the new issues that need to be supported by data and by research.



## What has changed? What have we learned?

**Children as Participants and Agents of Change:** Children and youth are the rights-holders and primary beneficiaries of all the work duty-bearers do for sustainable development, disaster, climate, and conflict risk reduction. However, far from being helpless victims, they are already active contributors to disaster risk reduction, peace-building, and climate action. Gender transformative, fully inclusive, and age-appropriate approaches anchor best practices in child-and youth-centred risk reduction and resilience. There is much more than can be done to engage them fully as participants in these processes<sup>xx</sup>.

**All-of-society and adaptive governance:** “Disaster risk reduction is everyone’s business”, so risk reduction requires an “all of society” approach. To cope with the increasing uncertainty of risk scenarios, adaptive governance is needed all around - including by the education sector. Decision-making on closure or opening of schools, changing to online blended learning, reaching out to the vulnerable students,



GADRRRES will release the revised **Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) 2022-2030** for child rights and resilience in the education sector. The CSSF 2022-2030 integrates an all-hazards (including climate, COVID-19, and conflict) approach using risk-informed approaches to strengthen the resilience of education systems, communities, and individuals and promoting transformative actions through behaviour change to notably scaling up risk reduction and resilience interventions.

## Key Asks

The GADRRRES Members call every governments, partners, and donors to:

1. **Endorse** the CSS Framework 2022-2030 to accelerate an all-hazards, systems, and policy-driven approach to engage key actors in ensuring: safer school facilities, school safety and educational continuity management, risk reduction and resilience education.
2. **Make access** to quality education, school safety, and child protection a priority (including budget allocations) as that is central to furthering the goals of

sustainable development, risk reduction and resilience, climate action, conflict, violence prevention, and humanitarian response.

3. **Actively engage** in global, regional, and national multi-stakeholder platforms to promote inclusive and gender transformative quality education, school safety, and child protection and engage children and youth, in gender-equitable, disability, and socially-inclusive ways to advance child rights in the education sector.



## Contact Us and Get Involved

If you want to know more:

- **Contact** the GADRRRES Secretariat at: [gadrrres@gmail.com](mailto:gadrrres@gmail.com)
- **Access** the GADRRRES website: <https://gadrrres.net>
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## Endnotes

- <sup>i</sup> For example: “58% of deaths from natural-hazard related disasters occur in the top 30 most fragile states, and the numbers of people affected are often unreported or vastly under reported.” ODI (2018). [When disasters and conflict collide: uncovering the truth.](#)
- <sup>ii</sup> UNICEF (2021). [Press release.](#)
- <sup>iii</sup> CRED (2020). [The Human Cost of Natural Disasters: A Global Perspective.](#)
- <sup>iv</sup> The World Bank (2021). [Population ages 0-14 \(% of total population\) | Data.](#)
- <sup>v</sup> Save the Children (2019). *Intensive Disaster Impacts on Schools in the 21st C. Internal report.*
- <sup>vi</sup> Global Coalition to Protect Education Under Attack (2019). [“It is Very Painful to Talk About” Impact of Attacks on Education on Women and Girls.](#)
- <sup>vii</sup> Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (2020). [Education Under Attack 2020.](#)
- <sup>viii</sup> Save the Children (2007). [Legacy of disasters. The impact of climate change on children.](#) This estimate is based on data from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies World Disasters Report 2006.
- <sup>ix</sup> UNICEF (2019). [Data and Analytics, Every Child Learns: UNICEF Education Strategy 2019-2030.](#)
- <sup>x</sup> World Bank (2019). [Learning Poverty.](#)
- <sup>xi</sup> UNICEF (2021) [Children’s Climate Risk Index.](#)
- <sup>xii</sup> UNICEF (2021). [The Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children’s Climate Risk Index](#) and Save the Children (2021). [Born into the Climate Crisis: Why we must act now to secure children’s rights.](#)
- <sup>xiii</sup> UNICEF (2020). [COVID-19 and children - UNICEF data hub.](#)
- <sup>xiv</sup> United Nations (2021). [SDG Indicators.](#) Although distance learning solutions were provided in four out of five countries with school closures, at least 500 million children and youth were excluded from these options, as of early 2021.
- <sup>xv</sup> UNESCO UIS (2021). [Learning poverty.](#) Learning poverty means being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10.
- <sup>xvi</sup> The World Bank (2020). [Realizing the Future of Learning: From Learning Poverty to Learning for Everyone, Everywhere.](#)
- <sup>xvii</sup> UNICEF (2021). [Over half a million children affected by Haiti earthquake.](#)
- <sup>xviii</sup> UNICEF (2022). [UNICEF raises appeal for children affected by Typhoon Rai to US\\$39 million.](#)
- <sup>xix</sup> Boukerche, S. & Mohammed-Roberts, R. (2020). [Fighting infectious diseases: The connection to climate change, World Bank.](#)
- <sup>xx</sup> UNDRR (2020). [Words into Action guidelines: Engaging children and youth in disaster risk reduction and resilience building.](#)