SLE TOOLKIT

SAFER LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS

IP	Implementing Partners
FGD	focus group discussion
FGM/C	female genital mutilation/cutting
KII	key informant interview
RERA	Rapid Education and Risk Analysis
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SRGBV	school-related gender-based violence
SLE	safer learning environment
SLE WG	Safer Learning Environments Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID ECCN	USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY
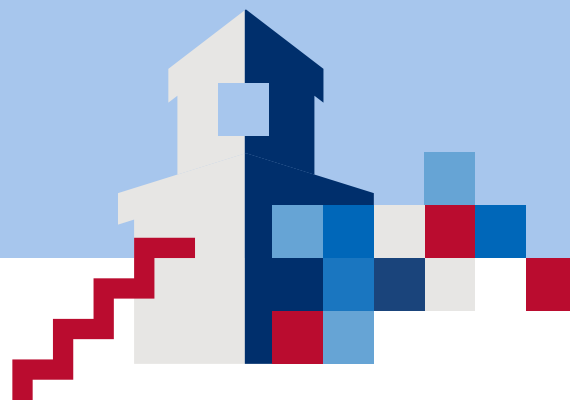
Through its Education Policy, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) committed to work with partners to ensure that children and youth, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, have increased access to quality education that is safe, relevant, and promotes social well-being. Of the 67 million primary school–age children around the world who do not attend school, 40 million live in countries affected by armed conflict. Millions more have had their education disrupted by natural disasters, crime, and violence.

Achieving results in these challenging environments calls for innovative approaches to the design, management, and evaluation of education programs. The USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) developed the *Safer Learning Environments Assessment Toolkit (SLE Toolkit)* to support Implementing Partners to better understand the situation of learners and school personnel in complex and volatile contexts. Everywhere USAID works, there is some degree of contextual risk—whether it is the possibility of conflict, gang violence, natural hazard impacts, gender-based violence, political instability, lawlessness, health emergencies, or food insecurity and famine.[i]

Recently adopted global policy frameworks[ii] have called on the development and humanitarian communities to transform how they work in these contexts. They have specifically highlighted the critical role of education in addressing the root causes of conflict and violence, enhancing equity, and reaching the most marginalized, thereby reducing disaster risk, building community resilience, and transcending the humanitarian-development divide. Given education's important role in these transformations, more systematic and rigorous analysis of the context within which education takes place is essential. To not do so increases the probability that education programs not only will fail to achieve results but will also exacerbate tensions and increase vulnerability.

Having data to assess the extent to which a learning environment is safe or unsafe—and what are the particular risks that are determining that extent— is critical for program design, adaptation, and implementation. Multiple types of data can serve specific purposes, and this toolkit allows users to conduct a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods exercise, depending on their particular needs. This *SLE Assessment Toolkit* replaces and significantly builds upon

the ECCN *SLE Qualitative Assessment Toolkit*[1] by providing guidance for both.

This toolkit stands out for the following reasons:

- It employs a "fit for purpose" structure and guides the user toward employing the methodology that makes the most sense given the desired outcomes of the assessment

- It is aligned with ECCN's conceptual framework of safety, which differentiates 16 types of internal, external, and environmental risks. The toolkit prescribes primary data collection only on the specific risks that have been identified as relevant to the context in question and lacking updated research about that risk in that specific area.

- It is highly prescriptive and employs relatively basic recommended methodologies, aimed toward users with little to no experience with qualitative and/or quantitative studies or analysis. At the same time, it will still be useful for more expert researchers who can utilize portions of the toolkit and adapt others.

- The quantitative instrument in the toolkit is built using sections of nine previously validated instruments pertaining to specific risks.

- The overall method aims to be as rapid as possible while taking into consideration both quality research and close attention to research ethics. The entire process (inception to report) can be completed in as little as five weeks. (A larger scope and/or dealing with particularly sensitive lines of inquiry with vulnerable populations may take more time.)

- It can be used at any stage during the program cycle to supplement monitoring and evaluation activities (M&E) and/or to inform program design

or adaptation, which is particularly important in dynamic conflict and crisis environments.

- Given the highly prescriptive nature of this document and the exercise itself, it can also be used as a capacity-building toolkit for research and/or programming teams interested in collecting and using data for program design or adaptation.

There are a few key considerations when using the toolkit:

- This is strictly a research toolkit – It will help users to uncover risks and assets related to safer learning, but it does not provide guidance on how to programmatically overcome those risks.

- This is a diagnostic toolkit – It will provide important but only broad or general information about the risks and assets to SLE, so it may be necessary to conduct additional follow-up research. Also, this toolkit may be used as a supplement to—not a replacement for—a project's M&E.

- This toolkit focuses on the safety of the learning environment only (which includes the space to and from the learning environment) – The toolkit does not aim to explore all areas that may impact a child's life and contribute to schooling experiences. For instance, if armed groups are recruiting children in neighborhoods, leading to them dropping out, this is clearly an issue related to access but not one directly related to school safety. If the recruitment takes place because children on their way to and from school walk past a place where recruiting occurs, then this would be within the scope of the assessment.

The toolkit utilizes a five-stage approach, which will be detailed in the pages that follow:

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1 The qualitative portion of this toolkit was piloted in six countries and released in early 2018. It was found that users would benefit from having a quantitative component as well, thus the creation of this consolidated toolkit. This version of the toolkit contains a version of the quantitative component that has not yet been piloted.

STEP 1	Desk research
STEP 2	SLE scoring rubric
STEP 3	Initial planning for field research
STEP 4	Finalizing tools, training, fieldwork
STEP 5	Data entry, analysis, and reporting
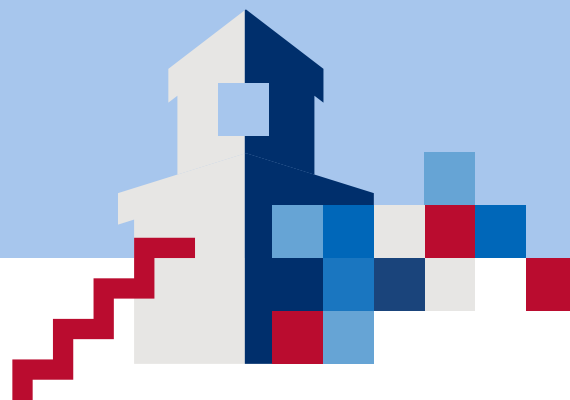
Additional supplementary materials are available on ECCN's website, including , but not limited to, the following:

- Training videos that go through the above steps
- Recommended agendas and presentations to use in training your own field team
- Excel database for organizing and analyzing all qualitative data collected
- Reports generated from the utilization of this toolkit

Relationship with the Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA) Tool

A common question from users relates to the difference between the *SLE Assessment Toolkit* and the Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA) tool, both developed by ECCN. The RERA allows USAID and Implementing Partners to obtain a snapshot of how education systems, learners, families, and their communities interact with a dynamic, multiple-risk environment. The RERA integrates key elements of conflict analysis, disaster risk analysis, and resilience analysis. It is distinct from the SLE Toolkit in that it explores a context much broader than the school environment itself. For this reason, RERA utilizes portions of the SLE Assessment Toolkit (i.e., the qualitative portion, the scoring rubric) as its primary data collection tool in school communities to inform its broader context analysis. The SLE toolkit on its own is limited to assessing only the specific program contexts to obtain a snapshot of the situation for the purposes of improving program design, implementation, adaptation, and M&E. As such, it can be completed more inexpensively and more quickly, and also by a more junior research and analysis team, than the RERA.

INTRODUCTION

Education continues to be an essential component to improved livelihoods and socioeconomic growth. Children and youth in crisis and conflict environments, however, face particular and complex challenges related to schooling, especially in terms of their ability to access a safe learning environment (SLE). Identifying the specific risks students face by being in a learning environment and going to or from one—and also the ways that they already try to or successfully overcome those risks—is critical for understanding how to create an effective program to help communities and schools overcome those risks. Without a clear vision of the learning environment, programs often do not achieve results, are unsustainable, and most significantly, may exacerbate the conflict and/or crisis, possibly harming the individuals they seek to benefit.[iii] Different risks to safety require different response interventions, but often the nature of those specific risks, and the assets that are already in place for overcoming those risks, are not known to programmers. To resolve this knowledge gap, this SLE Assessment Toolkit—which is adaptable depending upon the risks present in a given environment—provides users with qualitative and/or quantitative measures of the risks and assets present in and around a learning environment so that they may use that evidence to design, implement, and adapt education programs to be context specific and conflict sensitive.

DEFINITIONS

A **learning environment** is any space in which education is delivered. "Space" includes temporary structures, such as camps or community pop-up schools. "Education" includes both formal and non-formal (NFE) education, including skills training. This toolkit uses the terms "school" and "learning environment" interchangeably.

A **student** is any youth or adolescent who attends any type of learning environment, in any capacity, and includes boys, girls, male and female youth, and other gender identities as well as people with disabilities (PWD).

A risk to safe learning means an individual's or group's safety is currently being threatened or has a chance of being threatened in the near future.

As Figure 1 and Box 1 show, the Education in Crisis and Conflict Network's (ECCN's) concept of SLE identifies three categories of risk, which may overlap at times: (1) environmental, (2) internal, and (3) external. Similarly,

a school environment is any place where structured learning and/or training happens. This definition is sufficiently broad to accommodate many of the contexts in which education in crisis and conflict takes place. With this in mind, the toolkit applies to all learning contexts and learners. For convention's sake, the toolkit maintains use of the terms school and students, but implementers should note the flexibility of these terms and adapt the toolkit accordingly.

Figure 1: Conceptualization of risks to safe learning environments (SLE)

RISKS	SPECIFIC RISKS

Mapping Safe Learning Environments

Environmental Risks

Internal Risks from within school by:
Teachers/Staff
Student Peers (including those in violent groups)

External Risks (physical and psychosocial consequences by:
Community members/family violence
Gangs
Extremist Groups
Armed groups in conflict

Natural Hazards
(Earthquake, Tsunami, Flooding, Wind, Mudslides, Fires, Volcanoes, etc.)

Health Emergencies
(infectious disease, malnutrition, food insecurity)

School-Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV)
Corporal punishment, emotional, sexual and physical abuse, bullying

Crosscutting: Trauma

Gang Activity (Targeting students and teachers)

Individual attacks to/from school
(Sexual harassment, violence, theft)

Ideological Attacks
(Targeted towards learning environment and students/staff)

Caught in the Crossfire
(School used by armed groups; fighting between groups breaks out near school)

BOX 1: USAID STANDARDIZED CUSTOM INDICATOR FOR SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A safe learning environment is typically defined as a place where structured learning happens that is free from environmental, internal, and external risks to learners' and education personnel safety and well-being . . . where infrastructure of a learning environment and also to the people within a learning environment) is deemed safe. Environmental risks can include, but are not limited to, natural disasters and public health risks. Internal risks can include, but are not limited to, school-related gender-based violence (which includes rape, unwanted—including both physical and sexual—touching, unwanted sexual comments and abuse, corporal punishment, bullying, and verbal harassment), and gang activity/ recruitment within a school. External risks can include, but are not limited to, attacks on the way to/from school, ideological attacks on learning environments, armed/violent attacks on learning environments, and occupation of learning environment infrastructure by armed groups. Because the factors relevant to safe learning environments vary from context to context, the criteria used to define a safe learning environment should be determined in consultation with local stakeholders before school improvements are made.

—USAID Draft New Standard Indicators PIRS for SLE, January 2016

The SLE toolkit is a diagnostic toolkit that provides a snapshot of the situation and, as a general rule, can always be followed by a more in-depth analysis as needed and if feasible. It is important to emphasize the narrow scope of the assessment—it cannot explore all areas that may affect a child's life and contribute to schooling experiences. For example, if armed groups are recruiting children in neighborhoods, resulting in the children dropping out, this is clearly an issue related to access, but not one directly related to school safety. It is outside the scope of the assessment. However, if the recruitment takes place because children walk by a place where recruiting occurs, this would be within the scope of the assessment.

Additionally, the SLE toolkit will not necessarily provide a complete account of the causes, nature, and nuances behind the risks and assets present, nor will it necessarily provide recommendations for how a program should be delivered. Nonetheless, the school-based insights obtained from the assessment should contribute to a more comprehensive and systems-oriented view of the overall educational context within a country than a broader conflict assessment or analysis[iv] could produce. Table 1 provides a summary of the SLE toolkit's origin, scope, and purpose.

Table 1: The toolkit at-a-glance

What is the purpose of the toolkit?	• To identify the specific risks to safer learning in a geographical location through a desk review • To understand more about the extent of those risks—and any existing local strategies (assets) to overcome those risks—through primary field research with students and school personnel
What kind of data (qualitative or quantitative) will I get from using the toolkit?	• The toolkit is designed to be fit-for-purpose, meaning it will guide you toward methodologies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method) that will help you get the data that best meets your assessment objectives.
How was the toolkit developed and tested?	• Version 1 of the toolkit only contained qualitative methodologies (*SLE Qualitative Assessment Toolkit*). It was informed by piloting activities in six countries • Version 2 is this toolkit, which consolidates qualitative and quantitative methodologies (*SLE Assessment Toolkit*). It was piloted in two countries. • Piloting for both versions involved weekly or bi-weekly calls with teams implementing the toolkits. During the calls, technical support was provided, and questions were asked regarding the team's use of the toolkit. Questionnaires, ethical protocols, and reports were also reviewed. • For each pilot, an exit interview was held to obtain final recommendations from teams on how to improve the toolkit.
Why this toolkit instead of others?	• It provides more nuance to the concept of safety in learning environments, and helps users hone in on the specific risks to safety that are identified. • It is user-friendly and accessible to junior researchers: The toolkit is highly prescriptive though adaptable throughout to be user-friendly to junior or non-researchers. It can also be more significantly adapted by those with more experience. • It prescribes research that is as fast as possible while maintaining quality and attention to ethical research: The process (inception to report) can be completed in as few as five weeks (of active work).

Can I just use certain parts of the toolkit?	• Yes. The entire toolkit is composed of five steps, but each step (and respective section in this toolkit and individual tools) can stand alone as needed, provided the research team is adequately skilled and experienced to adapt appropriately. Otherwise, it should be used in full.
	
	• Teams may consider adaptions such as the following:
	   1. If program implementers are already well aware of the context of their programming and know which risks they wish to pursue with field research, then they can skip Steps 1 and 2.
	   2. If the aim is to conduct only a preliminary desk review, then Step 1 would stand alone.
	   3. If the aim is to help design data collection tools that will be used in a previously designed evaluation or assessment, the Toolkit Annexes can stand alone.
	
	• If all the steps are followed, they reinforce the systematic, rigorous, and objective nature of the exercise.

What is this toolkit's relationship to the RERA?	The Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA): • Allows USAID and Implementing Partners to obtain a snapshot of how education systems, learners, families, and their communities interact with a dynamic, multiple-risk environment. • Integrates key elements of conflict analysis, disaster risk analysis, and resilience analysis. • Is distinct from the *SLE Assessment Toolkit* in that it explores a context much broader than the school environment itself. For this reason, the RERA utilizes tools that are part of the SLE toolkit as its primary data collection tools in school communities to inform its broader context analysis. The SLE toolkit is designed to be used in project areas to inform specific projects.
Who needs to be involved to use this toolkit, and how do I set up the team?	• The *SLE Assessment Toolkit* is flexible, but it requires at least a five-person team of junior researchers or capable non-researchers who are in-country. (See Annex 3 for example team structures and Tool 5 for a sample SOW.) These can be project staff (M&E or implementation), consultants, or volunteers. • A team leader is necessary to centralize, drive, and be the technical lead for the entire process. This person can be anyone with knowledge of the program and/or geographical context, but intermediate computer, writing, and analysis skills are essential for the report writing phase. • The field team should have at least two women, and all should have knowledge of cultural context (and ideally, local languages, although interpreters can be considered in some cases). It can be made up of anyone who has respect for ethical research practice and good note-taking and speaking skills, and who is eager and willing to conduct field research in potentially uncomfortable environments. • Organization M&E staff can provide oversight and backstopping, as needed and if feasible, and data entry clerks can quicken the process.
When should this toolkit be used?	The SLE toolkit can be used: • At any stage during the program cycle to inform program design and/or adaptation • To supplement and/or inform M&E processes

What are the limitations and important things to consider about this toolkit?	The SLE Toolkit:
	
	• Is strictly a research toolkit. It will help the users uncover risks and assets related to safer learning, but it does not provide guidance on how to programmatically overcome those risks.
	
	• Is a diagnostic toolkit. It will provide important but broad or general information about the risks and assets to SLE, and therefore, it may be necessary to conduct additional follow-up research.
	
	• Can be used as a supplement to—but not a replacement for—a project's M&E.
	
	• Guides users interested in quantitative data collection to collect from a representative sample of the student population at 95% confidence with a +/-5% interval, which is commonly used in basic social science research. However, the relatively small sample size will not provide statistics with this same confidence interval when disaggregating data by gender, age, community, etc. It will also be difficult to observe slight changes (e.g., percent change of 5%). However, these are often permissible trade-offs for a rapid quantitative exercise. Also, the exercise may be expanded in scope to obtain more precise measures. As with any quantitative data, there is the risk of the numbers not telling the full story; it is advised that some component of qualitative research also be conducted.
	
	• May take much longer to implement when information that is particularly sensitive in nature is to be asked of students and others who may be vulnerable. Such a situation requires:
	
	  1. A more in-depth IRB process
	
	  2. An extended period of training for the data collectors in asking about such issues with young and vulnerable people (or identifying those who are already trained, such as social workers or counselors)
	
	  3. The establishment of ethical protocols to ensure respondents have resources to access in case they are upset by the questions asked

How much does it cost?	• The cost will vary depending upon context, scope of the exercise, and whether external consultants are hired instead of project staff. • Piloting teams remarked that it had excellent value-for-money, particularly when existing project staff were part of the team.

OVERVIEW
OF TOOLKIT

The *SLE Assessment Toolkit* is designed to lead program implementers with little research training and/or experience (e.g., junior local M&E staff) through a systematic process (see Figure 2) that assists in the prioritization of data collection and supports rapid analysis and reporting. The narrative of the toolkit is written for those who will commission and/or lead the assessment process, referred to henceforth as the team leader. Ideally, the team leader will be present in the field with the research field team, but it is possible for the team leader to oversee virtually, provided she or he (1) has excellent knowledge of the program and the geographical context that is being assessed and (2) is comfortable implementing virtual quality assurance mechanisms. A sample statement of work for a potential team leader is provided in Tool 5.

Figure 2: The SLE toolkit's systematic five-step process

STEP 0	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Adapt the scope of the toolkit for your purpose(s)	Desk research	Completion of risk scoring rubric to determine specific risks	Fieldwork Planning: Establishing ethical protocols; identifying suitable field team	Developing field tools, data collection administering FGDs/KIIs and/or questionnaires) in a sample of project schools	Data analysis and reporting findings, conclusions, recommendations

By following the processes outlined, the intention is that users will produce reliable findings that they can then utilize to inform or modify their program design and activities.

The *SLE Assessment Toolkit* outlines a five-step process:

1. Conduct preliminary remote **desk research** into the context of the location in which a program is ongoing or is planned.

2. Complete a rapid comprehensive **scoring rubric** that will assist in prioritizing the risk and asset categories.[2]

3. Conduct **initial planning for field research**, including establishing ethical protocols and identifying a suitable field team.

4. **Finalize the methodology, field team training, and primary data collection** – Conduct focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) in at least two school communities and/or administer a questionnaire with students and education personnel in a representative sample of project schools.

5. Analyze and report findings, conclusions, and recommendations – Follow a systematic and prescriptive process, designed for junior researchers, on how findings may be analyzed and presented in short and simple reports that are accessible to and actionable by practitioners.

Table 2 provides a toolkit summary that outlines the tools (in bold) and depicts their relationship to one another. The following sections detail each of the five steps.

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2 The risks and assets that the SLE toolkit investigates evolved from ECCN's conceptualization of the broad and specific risks to SLEs found in crisis and conflict environments. This conceptualization was based upon a comprehensive literature review of resources related to SLE conducted in mid-2015. The conceptualization was presented in an ECCN workshop focusing on themes related to SLE. These concepts were then expanded to incorporate a more dynamic resilience framework focused on risks and assets.

Table 2: Detailed SLE assessment 5-step process

	STEP 1: Desk Research	**STEP 2:** Complete Scoring Rubrics	**STEP 3:** Fieldwork Planning	**STEP 4:** Fieldwork	**STEP 5:** Analysis and Report Writing
OUTCOME	Outline of general contextual risks; research, evidence, knowledge gaps	Completion of scoring rubric of risks specific to SLE–Results will guide Step 3 additional research	Inception report with general method and ethical protocols established and permissions obtained; suitable Assessment Team members identified.	Final tools and methodology; trained field team; quantitative and/or qualitative data collected on risks identified in scoring rubric (Step 2)	Short, user-friendly and actionable report of findings, conclusions, and recommendations related to risks and assets to safer learning
PURPOSE AND METHOD	**PURPOSE:** Identify broad contextual risks to education **METHOD:** Literature review, key informant interviews (virtual), analysis of existing data	**PURPOSE:** Identify specific SLE risks; create short list of those requiring Step 4 research **METHOD:** Rapid scoring rubric summarizing risks	**PURPOSE:** Ensure adherence to research ethics and a suitable field team to conduct research to answer research questions **METHOD:** Review of documentation and consultation with stakeholders on appropriate ethical approach; submissions to IRB or other similar ethical board	**PURPOSE:** Develop tools and methodology that will answer research questions; conduct primary research to quantify and/or do a deeper dive into nature of and extent of risks and assets related to SLEs **METHOD:** Adaptation and contextualization of data collection tools; finalization of sample; field-based rapid qualitative and/or quantitative research	**PURPOSE:** Ensure practitioners are better able to program around the findings, conclusions, and recommendations related to risks in their project schools **METHOD:** Simple analysis of data to produce short report

	STEP 1: Desk Research	STEP 2: Complete Scoring Rubrics	STEP 3: Fieldwork Planning	STEP 4: Fieldwork	STEP 5: Analysis and Report Writing
TOOL(S) / GUIDE(S)	Desk Research Guiding Questions Tool 1: Desk Review Framework Tool	Tool 2: Scoring Rubric	Tool 4: SLE Assessment Activity Fieldwork Design Table Tool 5: Sample Scope of Work and Timeline For Team Leader Tool 7: Field Planning Checklist Tool 8: Example Forms for Conducting Ethical Research Annex 3: Examples of Team Structures	Tool 3.1a: SLE Student Questionnaire Tool 3.2a: School Personnel Questionnaire Tool 3b: FGD and KII Questions Matrix Tool 6: Field Team Training Agendas Tool 9: Field team Training Agenda Tool 10: Recommended Daily Field Team Debrief Questions Annex 4: Interview (FGD and KII) Protocols and Best Practices	Tool 11: Qualitative Database Entry Guide SLE Qualitative Database (Excel) E-Annex Annex 5: Example of Reporting Findings and Conclusions
DURATION	1–2 weeks (desk)	4 hours (desk)	1 week – Allow more time in case of particularly sensitive research and IRB requirements (desk)	2–6 weeks (field)	1–4 weeks (desk)

STEP ZERO: ADAPTING THE TOOLKIT

The *SLE Assessment Toolkit* provides implementers with a set of tools that can be used to better understand their operating environment. The methodology and tools presented in this toolkit should be considered the most simplistic version of what could be (as needed) a more in-depth exercise (and therefore a costlier and more time-consuming process).

Before going any further into the toolkit's five steps, the team leader, in collaboration with relevant colleagues in the organization, needs to identify (1) what the desired output is, (2) how that output will be used by the organization, and (3) who else may see or use the output. This will inform how Steps 1 to 5 are approached.

For example:

- What sort of data are required—quantitative, qualitative, or both?

- What is the desired scope of the exercise? For example:

  » Do quantitative data need to be representative of certain subgroups or just the broader population?

  » Do qualitative data need to be deeply nuanced or is a rapid diagnostic of the big issues sufficient?

- Will there be a final report that is only used internally to refine aspects of an ongoing program?

- Will there be a final report that is meant to be shared with local ministries to encourage participation and collaboration in a program?

- Will there be no final report, but instead a presentation and a summary brief of findings to be delivered at a country-wide event?

- If English is not understood by the field team, how much of the SLE Assessment Toolkit and annexes should be translated? (Each tool and annex provides an At a Glance cover page to facilitate this initial Step 0 review.)

Also at this stage, it is important to consider the skills and experience of those who will be involved with the research. In general, this toolkit is meant to be followed step by step and discourages significant adaptation of the toolkit's broader structure except by researchers with relatively high proficiency. Figure 3 provides additional guidance that may need to be revisited at each step.

It is essential that research questions, methods, and analysis are adapted to take into consideration any harmful social and gender norms. Defined as disparities, these are the result of biological, structural, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions, as well as stigma and discrimination—all of which impede individuals' access to resources, including education.

Figure 3: Determining the degree to which toolkit methodology should be adapted

IF: Team made of junior researchers; led by TL with fair to good knowledge of research	IF: Team led by TL with good to excellent level knowledge of research, no additional technical support on content areas	IF: Team led by TL with expert knowledge of research and also with multiple technical specialists to provide additional support on content areas
THEN: Follow toolkit methodology exactly, adapt and contextualize tools minimally and based on guidance on how to do so	THEN: Follow toolkit guidance broadly and revise methodology as needed; adapt and contextualize tools as is appropriate within TLs expertise	THEN: Pick and choose sections from toolkit as needed, including using only the questionnaires if that is all that is needed

With a clear objective and audience in mind, implementers are encouraged to adapt appropriate parts of the toolkit to their context and needs throughout the process (see Box 2).

BOX 2: ADAPTATIONS TO CONSIDER

Following are possible options for adapting the toolkit:

Overall:

- Expand the scope beyond the recommended minimum for a more wide-reaching or in-depth exercise (e.g., beyond SLE only).
- Adjust the team structure as appropriate (consultants, staff, volunteers, stakeholders).
- Execute qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods (both) primary research:
  » For quantitative: Determine how robust the data needs to be and the degree of disaggregation by certain groups that is required and from that, adjust the sample size and number of communities visited.
  » For qualitative: Determine how many communities need to be visited to have a "good enough" sample of the types of risks encountered across the project.
- Ensure questions, methods, and analysis take into account local social and gender norms.
- Tailor risk categories to the local context.
- Skip steps if sufficient information is already available or not needed. Each step stands alone.

Step 1:

- Produce desk review report for review or sharing vs. internal use only.

Step 2:

- Refine specific risks within the scoring rubric to fit local context (e.g., earth risks, but only earthquakes, not landslides) or consider new risks not already covered.

Step 3:

- Identify country-level and organization-level protocols for ethical research.

- Translate toolkit components for use by team and for fieldwork.

- Refine language of fieldwork questions to be appropriate for the context: Use understandable terms, age-appropriate phrasing, and culturally relevant and context-relevant terminology.

- Revise most appropriate response types for each question set.

- Select certain questions for certain groups and skip others.

Step 4:

- Take appropriate ethical action during fieldwork as needed (e.g., provide participants with referrals for follow-up (e.g. counselling, medical care), drop questions).

- Probe content areas that emerge as being critical to broader research questions.

Step 5:

- Expand recommended report structure to organization needs and capabilities.

- Utilize own qualitative and/or quantitative data analysis software instead of the provided SLE databases and e-annex files that are available on ECCN's website.

The following section provides detailed information on the five main steps of the SLE assessment process that may be followed once Step Zero is completed. Steps 3 and 4 each have two separate subsections that outline quantitative and qualitative methods separately. Also Step 5 has separate sections for analysis depending on whether it is quantitative or qualitative. As such, if it is determined that only quantitative fieldwork will be conducted, then the qualitative sections can be skipped and vice versa.

TOOLKIT STEPS
IN DETAIL

STEP 1: DESK RESEARCH

STEP 0	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Adapt the scope of the toolkit for your purpose(s)	Desk research	Completion of risk scoring rubric to determine specific risks	Fieldwork Planning: Establishing ethical protocols; identifying suitable field team	Developing field tools, data collection administering FGDs/KIIs and/or questionnaires) in a sample of project schools	Data analysis and reporting findings, conclusions, recommendations

OUTCOME: Exhaustive review of secondary data related to main risk(s) in geographical context

INPUT: Team Leader, 3 days

Overview of Step 1

The first step in the SLE Toolkit is a desk research process that draws upon existing information to answer one broad question: "What are the main risks and assets that are present in the schools where the program/project will be implemented?" Answering this question through the desk research process will produce a broad outline of the types of school-related risks already identified in the targeted country and region(s) of interest. Existing literature, secondary data analysis, and discussions with subject matter experts lay the foundation for the review. Information will be needed to describe the pre-crisis situation as well as the in-crisis situation (and in some cases, post-crisis situation). Supplementing the document analysis with discussions with experts will allow for a more updated account of present risks, given that a conflict and crisis environment is constantly changing. Such an overview will also provide insights into the variety between regions and/or schools within the program area. The information produced will be useful in the completion of the SLE Scoring Rubric (Step 2) and ultimately inform the planning of the upcoming field visit(s) (Steps 3 and 4). The focus of the desk research should be on the education sector while also considering relevant relationships to other sectors. Table 3 provides an overview of Step 1.

Table 3: Overview of Step 1

At a glance	• Desk research process that draws upon secondary data to inform subsequent steps • Data sources: Use relevant background documents and preliminary discussions with experts • Methodology: 2 full days spent searching for existing resources and conducting preliminary (virtual) interviews • Conceptual focus: Collect and review information related to the main risks to education and safe school communities
TEMPLATES included	Tool 1: Desk Review Framework Tool Annex 1: Selection of Websites and Databases for Finding Resources Annex 2: Search Protocols for Desk Review
Additional materials needed	• Computer with internet access • Telephone
Additional (optional) resources to consider	1. Literature Review on School-Related Gender-Based Violence: How it is Defined and Studied 2. What is a Gang? NIJ Definitions 3. UNICEF Child Friendly Schools Manual 4. GFDRR Roadmap for Safer Schools (focus on natural hazards) 5. GCPEA Education Under Attack 2018

Conducting Desk Research

The main research question that this toolkit aims to answer is: "What are the main risks and assets that are present in the schools where the program/project will be implemented?" The time period that the desk review should cover depends on the context; the key is that it should help the team to understand present and potential risks in the school environment.

If previous and historical information is useful for understanding present risks, then it is relevant and should be included. If other risks are of greater concern than historical risks, then more time should be spent uncovering present risks. The desk review process will begin uncovering information related to this broad question, but also in the process, a number of SLE-specific sub-questions will help focus the initial review. Some ideas for these are provided in Box 3.

BOX 3: DESK RESEARCH GUIDING QUESTIONS

General

What are the main risks in the country—conflict, natural disaster (rapid and slow onset), organized crime, and gang violence? And where?

What are the root causes of those risks?

Differences within a country/region

How do the risks differ throughout parts of the country? There may be obvious differences when it comes to certain geographical features (e.g., near oceans or fault lines) or ongoing conflicts. But also consider differences that may be present depending on whether the community is urban or rural, proximity to borders, proximity to extractive industries, and predominant ethnic or religious groups.

Relationship to education

Who are the main stakeholders related with each risk at the community- and school-levels?

What is the impact of the risks at the school and community levels (policies, materials, school management, practices, etc.)? Who is most affected (schools, staff, learners, communities)?

What are the barriers to access to school, and how are they affected by various risks?

At both the school and relevant community level, what are the main sources of division?

Assets

At the school and relevant community level, which actors, capacities, and/or resources exist to assist students, teachers, school staff, parents, and others to deal with present risks?

At the school and school community levels, what are the main sources of social cohesion? What issues and events bring people together? What fosters collaboration?

Inclusivity / equity

What are some of the factors that contribute to or detract from inclusivity and equity (factors related to gender, disability, sexual, and gender orientation) as they relate to safety?

What are some of the prevailing gender and social norms that may impact safety?

What specific research protocols need to be considered given the gender and social norms?

The Desk Review Framework (Tool 1) can be used to help teams organize the literature and key messages by specific risk area identified (as aligned with the conceptual framework). In addition, it may be helpful for the Assessment Team to produce a brief report or documentation (e.g., bullet points under headings) on the desk review findings that will be helpful in sharing with partners, framing refinement of interview questions in Step 3, and helping contextualize findings when presented in the report in Step 4.

Many types of print resources are appropriate to include for the desk review, provided you can be confident that they are reliable (and if not, it is necessary to triangulate information with additional resources). These include the following:

- ❯ USAID guidelines
- ❯ USAID RERA report
- ❯ National policies

- ❯ Research studies
- ❯ Risk-related reports
- ❯ Secondary data reports (DHS surveys, census data, labor market assessments)
- ❯ News articles
- ❯ Program documents and reports
- ❯ Evaluations
- ❯ Scholarly journal articles

There are also a number of approaches to searching for appropriate resources. The Assessment Team should use whichever approach they are most experienced and comfortable with. Tool 1 includes examples of databases, search engines, and repositories that teams may consider. Tool 1 also provides a number of keywords and suggested search combinations that may be used if teams are struggling to find relevant resources.

Exploratory Interviews

Exploratory interviews are also a good way to gather information; these can be conducted in-person as is convenient (e.g., within your normal office setting) or virtually; detailed notes should be taken to document the conversation. The following key partners may be useful:

- Local field offices of organization
- Ministries of education, planning, and/or finance
- Local and regional governments
- Local and regional educational officials
- Local and regional law enforcement authorities
- National disaster management authorities
- International and local NGOs
- International and multilateral organizations (e.g., World Bank, UN, IMF, European Union)
- Other bilateral development partners

If time and resources allow, it may be prudent to travel to potential communities for Step 3 field research in order to conduct an initial assessment—interviews, observations, and informal conversations. This is especially useful in areas that are not well-documented or known about by individuals you have interviewed from the home base.

REMEMBER

The focus of your assessment is the safety of the learning environment specifically (in or on the way to and from). Other safety issues that impact schooling (e.g., recruitment into gangs around a student's home that then impact his or her retention), while important, are beyond the scope of this study.

Narrowing Focus in Preparation for Data Collection

Because it will be impossible to perform the SLE Assessment throughout all program sites and regions, during Step 1, program implementers should begin thinking about the areas they wish to prioritize as assessment sites for Steps 2 and 3. This determination will be made based on previous experience and knowledge of the program areas and especially upon the results of the desk research from Step 1. The level of risk will be a critical factor to selecting sites for additional fieldwork exploration. Similarly, it is likely that political considerations may also influence site choice. Finally, where there are significant data gaps and the degree of or type of risk is simply unknown, field research may be necessary.

As stated above, although resources and time will not allow for an in-depth investigation of all program areas, the SLE Toolkit offers the opportunity to learn more information about select current contexts in order to inform programming within the region(s) and/or school(s) researched.

STEP 2: COMPLETE THE SLE SCORING RUBRIC (TOOL 2)

STEP 0	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Adapt the scope of the toolkit for your purpose(s)	Desk research	Completion of risk scoring rubric to determine specific risks	Fieldwork Planning: Establishing ethical protocols; identifying suitable field team	Developing field tools, data collection administering FGDs/KIIs and/or questionnaires) in a sample of project schools	Data analysis and reporting findings, conclusions, recommendations

OUTCOME: Identification of most significant risk areas (of 16) in geographical region that require primary research in communities

INPUT: Team Leader + Assessment Team, half day

Overview of Step 2

The SLE Scoring Rubric accompanies the preliminary desk research process. It uses insights gleaned from the desk research of existent key resources and initial conversations with experts to provide a more systematic framework for assessing the main risks to school communities and safe learning. It helps identify those school communities and contextual risks that require additional investigation through limited fieldwork (Step 3). The scoring rubric helps inform the SLE Assessment Team, in consultation with other key stakeholders, about where to pursue limited primary data collection. The scoring rubric can also help the SLE Assessment Team refine its primary data collection methodology as the scoring rubric helps identify the key risks that will inform field data collection. Table 4 provides an overview of the steps.

Table 4: Overview of Step 2

At a glance	• Follow preliminary desk research
	• Produce an internal document that informs the SLE Assessment Team's decision about field data collection parameters and sites
	• Data sources: Use relevant background documents and preliminary discussions with experts
	• Methodology: Rapid completion of scoring rubric based on desk research
	• Conceptual focus: Understand and rank the main risks to education and safe school communities
Templates included	Tool 2: SLE Scoring Rubric
Additional materials needed	None

How to Use the SLE Scoring Rubric

The SLE Assessment Team can complete a scoring rubric for an identified region and/or school or for one or more specific subnational geographic territories. The SLE Assessment Team is encouraged to complete scoring rubrics for all of the regions and/or schools that they may be considering, as this analysis may help to establish priority areas.

The scoring rubric is divided into sections focused on possible specific risk categories in the country. These categories build upon the conceptual framework laid out in the above section: environmental, internal, and external risks to a safer learning environment. The categories also reflect consultations with the ECCN SLE Working Group and the RERA Reference Group. Each risk-specific section contains three questions that can be scored as follows: one (low risk), two (medium risk), or three (high risk) (see Figure 4).

The criteria and scale for ranking risks should be determined internally among the team members conducting the assessment.

Remember: While each individual score will be subjective, as long as you are consistent in applying the criteria across all risks, then the exercise will be, ultimately, objective.

Figure 4: Scoring rubric tallying

Score for each question item

LOW RISK	SCORE = 1
MEDIUM RISK	SCORE = 2
HIGH RISK	SCORE = 3

The scoring rubric is simply an orienting tool to discern next steps for data collection based on preliminary desk research evidence. It is not a quantitative assessment. As such, the SLE Assessment Team may wish to discuss various considerations and criteria for determining the risk ranking for this exercise. Recall that risk is the possibility of harm, and this in fact takes into account both the likelihood of harm (or an event) and the potential impact or severity of that harm (or event). The matrix in Figure 5 is a standard risk matrix used in risk management and can provide a simple framework for determining the level of risk in the scoring rubric.

Figure 5: Risk matrix

			LIKELIHOOD	
IMPACT	High	Low	Medium	High
	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
	Low	Low	Low	Low
		Low	Medium	High

Completing the SLE Scoring Rubric requires a great deal of discussion among the SLE Assessment Team. These discussions allow teams to arrive at a common understanding of terms, which provides greater validity to rubric results. Recall that the terms used in the toolkit are general, but they will have local meanings. For instance, the term "gang" may mean something different in different places. Teams will need to understand the meaning, document

that meaning for use in future field activities (e.g., defining terms to participants) and for report writing, and make adjustments in the checklist as needed. These revisions will serve as the foundation for later adaptations of the tool to ensure cultural relevancy and accuracy during the fieldwork phase.

Teams have several possible approaches for completing the scoring rubric:

- Hold a team meeting and complete the rubric collectively

- Complete the rubric individually and meet as a team to produce an average score

When completing the rubric, be sure to:

1. Allow enough time for a detailed discussion (2–3 hours).

2. Consider translating the rubric for a more engaging discussion. This may be done orally.

3. Clarify technical terms and document definitions based on local context.

4. Discuss how risks may or may not be present within the regions and/or schools identified for review. Make a special note of how risks are different, depending on the region/school, and complete a separate scoring rubric for each region and/or school in question.

5. Record the main points from these discussions and include them in the final report to clarify sampling decisions.

Moving from the Scoring Rubric to the Fieldwork Planning Phase

Once the SLE Assessment Team has met to review the scoring rubric, they need to make a decision as to the risks they will focus on during the fieldwork phase, along with any modifications to the original desired scope of the research (at Step 0) (e.g., quantitative and/or qualitative; robustness of data

collected; ability to generalize findings, and so forth). As described in Step 3, the fieldwork phase involves primary field research, which could be either or both: a) quantitative data collection: administration of questionnaires to a sample of students and school personnel; b) qualitative data collection: conducting focus group discussions and key informant interviews with a sample of students, school personnel, and other relevant stakeholders. With limited time and personnel, teams will need to prioritize the questions they wish to investigate with participants. In general, scoring rubric risk categories with higher total scores will be explored, and specific questions that delve more into that risk will be asked during the fieldwork.

Also, reviewing separate regional scoring rubrics may help the team determine which communities to include in their sample (e.g., those with the highest number of risks, or those with risks that are less well-documented).[v]

The SLE Assessment Team should discuss and agree upon the specific threshold for further investigation, taking into account other factors that will play a role in this decision: programming objectives, programming coverage, national priorities, operating environment, available resources, and so forth. Ultimately, the scoring rubric will not make the decision for the team, but it will provide a systematic method to help the team make an objective and well-informed decision.

STEP 3: INITIAL FIELD PLANNING

STEP 0	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Adapt the scope of the toolkit for your purpose(s)	Desk research	Completion of risk scoring rubric to determine specific risks	Fieldwork Planning: Establishing ethical protocols; identifying suitable field team	Developing field tools, data collection administering FGDs/KIIs and/or questionnaires) in a sample of project schools	Data analysis and reporting findings, conclusions, recommendations

At this stage, the SLE Assessment Team should have a clear idea about the literature available related to safer learning in the areas of interest as well as the risks that require follow-up research. The outcome of Step 3 will be a brief research design to share with others in the organization, including (1) anyone providing backstopping so that issues can be flagged early on and (2) the field team to help them remain focused and on the same page in terms of the intended utilization of the report and main research questions, which will then help finalize data collection tools, methodologies, and analysis that will occur in later steps. This research design process will not add a significant level of effort to the broader exercise, because it will serve as the methodology section of the assessment report. Table 5 provides an overview of Step 3.

Table 5: Overview of Step 3

At a glance	• Duration: I week. Allow for more time if particularly sensitive content and/or vulnerable populations will be participating, thereby requiring more in-depth training and IRB (or similar) application processes (including wait times).
	• Outcome: An inception report that outlines the following:
	  » Research questions
	  » Locations of interest
	  » Risk areas identified
	  » Profile of participants/respondents in research
	  » Methods to use (qualitative, quantitative, or both)
	  » Research ethics plan
	  » Criteria for field team readiness

Templates included	Tool 4: SLE Assessment Activity Fieldwork Design Table Tool 5: Sample Scope of Work for Team Leader Tool 7: Field Planning Checklist Tool 8: Example Forms for Conducting Ethical Research Annex 3: Examples of Team Structures
Additional materials needed	None
Additional resources to consider (optional)	• USAID ADS Chapter 200: Protection of Human Subjects in Research Supported by USAID • A Conflict-Sensitive Approach to Field Research • Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in Fragile and Violent Contexts

Determining Whether to Conduct Quantitative, Qualitative, or Mixed-Methods Research

By this stage of the assessment process, the Assessment Team should have a clear idea as to the data available, the data gaps, and, therefore, the type of data that may be needed to help inform the program. To put it simply:

• If a program desires numerical data to help understand the extent of something and how it may differ across and within groups, then **quantitative research** is best.

 If a program desires non-numerical data (e.g., transcripts or case studies) that will help uncover more nuance and detail around certain issues, then **qualitative research** is best.

 Mixed-methods research means doing both.

Table 6 provides additional information about each type of research to help teams determine which is most appropriate given the objectives of the assessment and the feasibility of the desired approach to meet those objectives.

Table 6: Features of qualitative and quantitative research

QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
Seeks to explore, explain and understand phenomena—What? Why?	Seeks to confirm a hypothesis about a phenomena–How many?
Data is provided as a narrative, pictures or objects	Data is in the form of numbers and statistical results
Methods less structured—Data is gathered through interviews, observations, content analysis, etc.	Highly structured methods—Data is gathered through the use of tools, equipment, questionnaires, etc.
Asks open-ended questions in an effort to explore	Asks closed-ended questions that give quantifiable answers
Research design has flexibility—it can emerge and evolve as study develops	Research design is highly structured—it is laid out in advance of the study
Results may be presented subjectively—They may reveal biases, values or experiences that impact how the results are interpreted	Results are documented using objective language

Source: Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, Online Module: When to use qualitative research

For Steps 4 and 5, the guidance will branch at each step into two subsections that separate the specific methods for qualitative and quantitative research. The remainder of this section is relevant whatever method is used.

Developing an Initial Research Ethics Plan

Overview

In every case, this research requires close attention to ethical guidelines as per USAID ADS Chapter 109 guidance, and this is especially critical for research with vulnerable populations, young people, and topics of a sensitive nature.

You must follow safeguards and protocols to ensure your research is ethical. Clearance through bodies such as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the organization or country conducting the research is required prior to any data collection.

The most basic rules of research ethics are that the benefits of the research must clearly outweigh any potential risks of harming participants, directly or indirectly, from the research, and that those potential risks are mitigated as much as possible. This section will detail the components necessary to consider in order to ensure ethical research.

Before moving forward with any field research, the team must have an ethics plan that details approaches to the following:

- Conflict sensitivity – All topics being pursued and people participating in the research must be considered in light of being conflict sensitive to the context.

- Informed consent – All participants must be fully informed about the purpose of the research, their role in the research, and the types of questions they will be asked (and that some will be of a sensitive nature and could be upsetting). They must also be fully aware that they are under no pressure to participate in the research.

- Using an appropriate field team – All team members interacting with participants must be adequately trained on how to conduct such research sensitively. Social workers and/or counselors may be necessary to join the team.

The team must ensure gender equity, such that girls can be interviewed by women.

- Referral mechanisms – In case a participant becomes upset as a result of the research, there must be protocols in place so they may receive support (e.g., counselling centers, support hotlines)

This initial ethics plan will need to be revised during Step 4 when questions and sampling are finalized.

Conflict Sensitivity

Conflict sensitivity in research includes the following[3]:

- Understanding the context in which one is operating, particularly inter-group relations

- Understanding the interactions between interventions and the context/group relations

- Acting upon the understanding of these interactions to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of a program or other intervention

Topics to consider that are related to conflict sensitivity will emerge during the desk review, and it is at this phase that the SLE Assessment Team should consider how the topics may be relevant for field research, including but not limited to (a) locations to visit, (b) people to talk to, and (c) questions to ask.

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3   USAID, 2013. Checkilst for conflict sensitivity in education programs. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USAID_Checklist_Conflict_Sensitivity_14FEB27_cm.pdf

Before moving forward with any research, the team must have an ethics plan that details approaches to:
- **Conflict sensitivity**
- **Informed consent**
- **Selecting and training data collectors on research ethics**
- **Referral mechanisms**

Informed Consent

If at any moment during the interview, a participant no longer wants to speak, the researcher must (a) notice it readily and (b) immediately allow the participant to end his/her participation. The participant must never be forced to participate in the survey nor "keep on answering." It is imperative that females conduct interviews and focus group discussions with females and that minors under 18 years receive consent to participate from a parent or guardian. (In some cases for in-school research, the school can provide consent for the minor.) Annex X provides templates to refer to for informed consent for minors and adults.

Appropriate Team

The SLE assessment should be led by a team leader with experience conducting such assessments, a clear understanding of the ethical requirements of field research, and demonstrated experience leading assessments that deal with sensitive issues. At a minimum, all field team members under the guidance of the team leader should undergo basic training in field research ethics that is customized to the types of research that they will be doing (participants, questions, context, and so forth). For research activities that are dealing with particularly sensitive issues and/or particularly vulnerable populations, the researchers involved in that component should have past experience and demonstrated capability to identify when participants are becoming triggered or traumatized during research. In some cases, seasoned researchers may be suitable. When there are no such

researchers available, the SLE Assessment Team may consider working with counselors and social workers who would accompany all field team members and oversee all research activities. Annex 3 provides sample team structures used in previous applications of SLE toolkits.

Referrals

Another issue that the SLE Assessment Team needs to address is how to handle sensitive information that requires follow-up, either because a question triggers a participant or because information is shared that requires reporting and/or a professional response. This may include a participant reporting incidents of abuse or illegal behavior. It will be necessary to prepare a comprehensive protocol for all possible scenarios and ensure all field team members understand how it is to be used. While an organization already working in-country will likely have protocols previously established, it may be necessary to reach out to other stakeholders or researchers who have done similar work in the country to find the best possible resources and protocols.

It may be the case that no resources are available and, indeed, that the organization commissioning the research may want to establish such resources, and research must first be done about the issues. In this case, it is advisable to consult with a local professional counsellor or social worker on best practices and to also bring one or more along with the team during fieldwork to provide support as needed.

It is imperative that women conduct KIIs and FGDs with women and that minors under 18 receive consent to participate from a parent or guardian (in some cases for in-school research, the school can provide consent for the minor).

Use Figure 6 to help decide what type of method to use with participants to ensure adherence to basic research ethics.

Figure 6: Ethical Protocols Decision Tree*

For example, in some contexts, it may be totally appropriate to ask students about experiences they have gone through related to risks during a nearby conflict while inside the school, while in others, such questions may run a high risk of re-traumatizing students. For another example, it some contexts it may be appropriate to ask young people about sexual abuse in school, while in others, it is a topic that would humiliate and/or traumatize them simply to be asked.
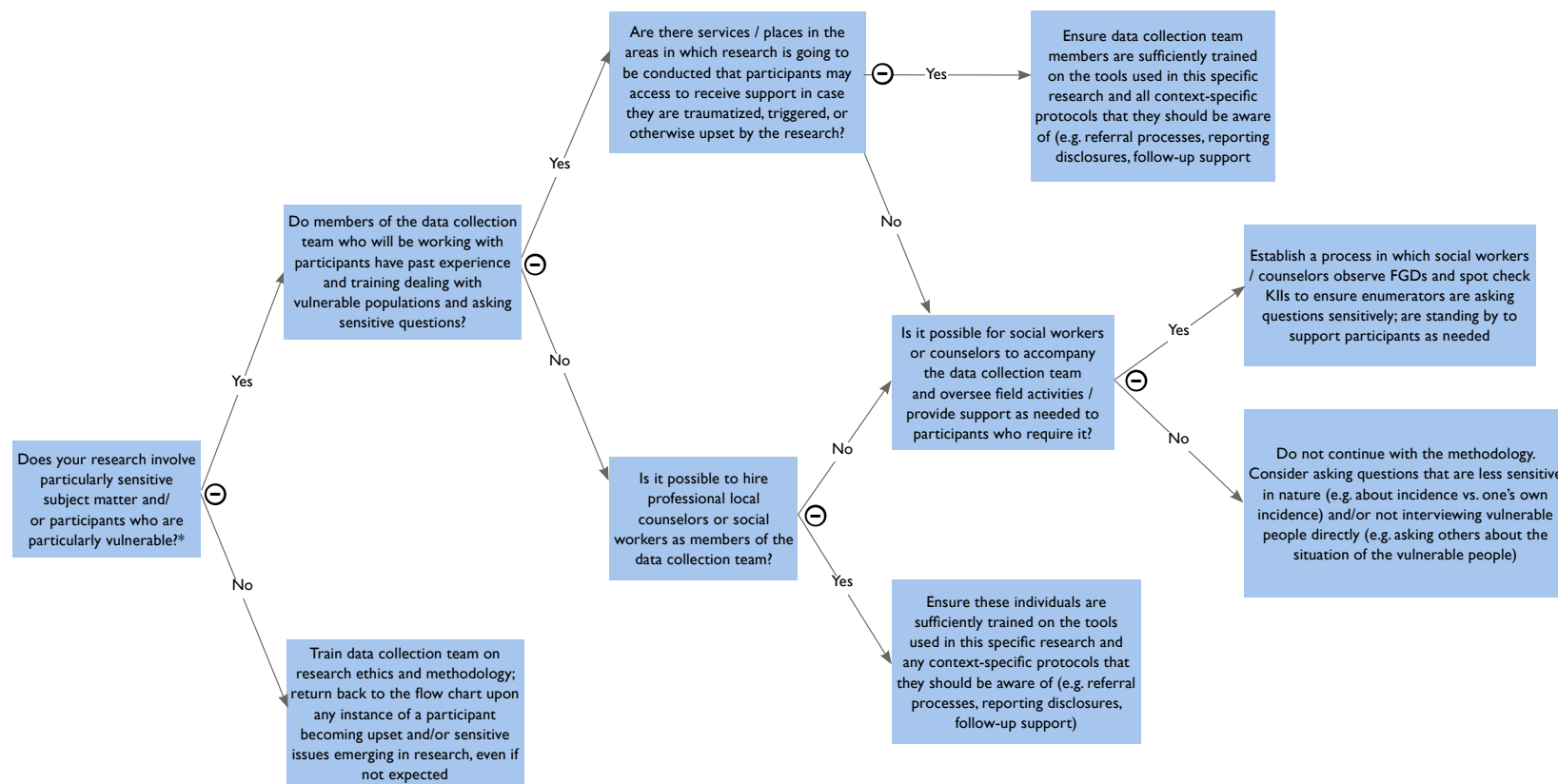
*It is up to the SLE Assessment Team, relevant stakeholders, and IRBs to determine what constitutes "particularly sensitive subject matter and/or participants who are particularly vulnerable."

Field Visit Initial Planning

Collaborative, advance site planning is vital in these sensitive environments. In some contexts, it may take weeks or more to obtain the necessary research permits to certain areas; some communities may prefer field visits during certain weeks or days; and some areas may have seasonal migration to consider. As such, it is best to reach out to relevant persons and institutions as early as possible (e.g., a letter of introduction to all schools that may be considered in the research). If possible, the SLE Assessment Team should conduct in-person planning discussions with regional education offices and other relevant stakeholders to adequately prepare for each data collection visit. As time allows, the SLE Assessment Team may wish to inform various entities about the visit, such as local government representatives (or the mayor, as warranted), local NGOs and CBOs, other USAID Implementing Partners with programs in the area, and religious leaders.

Advance planning with school communities can also optimize the data collection methodology (e.g., identifying potentially controversial questions), strengthen conflict sensitivity by revealing unforeseen sensitivities, and manage expectations of the school community itself about the exercise.

Field Planning Checklist (Tool 7)

Successful completion of the Field Planning Checklist will ensure that SLE Assessment Teams are as adequately prepared as possible before going into the detailed methodology and tool development (Step 4). It may be that certain aspects of Step 3, such as obtaining approvals from IRBs, require that the methodology and tools be finalized and submitted for review, in which case, Steps 3 and 4 may overlap. However, as much background work as possible must be done at this stage. It may be, for example, that local regulations do not allow asking certain types of questions, so it would be helpful to know this before delving into the detailed work of finalizing toolkits, which occurs during Step 4. Similarly, it may be that local researchers must be accompanied by local education officials in every interview. If this is the case, then the team may make different decisions about what sorts of questions to ask students in the presence of a government official.

STEP 4: FINALIZING METHOD, TRAINING THE TEAM, AND CONDUCTING FIELDWORK

STEP 0	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Adapt the scope of the toolkit for your purpose(s)	Desk research	Completion of risk scoring rubric to determine specific risks	Fieldwork Planning: Establishing ethical protocols; identifying suitable field team	Developing field tools, data collection administering FGDs/KIIs and/or questionnaires) in a sample of project schools	Data analysis and reporting findings, conclusions, recommendations

At this stage, all possible early-stage planning should have begun such that Tool 7: Field Planning Checklist is complete. From here and into Step 5, quantitative and qualitative fieldwork is dealt with separately, except for the following:

❯ Step 4 – Guidance is provided at the end of Step 4 regarding training the field team and conducting a field pilot.

❯ Step 5 – Guidance is provided at the end of Step 5 about how to synthesize both types of data in a mixed-methods exercise.

STEP 4A: QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The guidance in this section explains how to 1) determine appropriate sample size, 2) randomly select a representative sample group of people in a population and 3) administer a questionnaire to the selected group. The questionnaire tools 3.1a and 3.2a provide the recommended questions for the field team to ask randomly selected students and school personnel in the randomly selected communities. It is envisioned that this process requires input from a team leader and four team members (at least two of whom must be female) and will take approximately two weeks (for five communities), excluding any additional days needed if qualitative research is also being conducted. Alternatively, the team could be made up of more staff working at the same time, so the duration of the exercise would be shorter. In

summary, the team should allow around 30–60 field team person days for the work, including travel.

Data should be collected using electronic data entry devices (questionnaire template is provided). If this is not possible, paper forms and a data entry template (with additional guidance for data cleaning and management) are provided in the e-annex. The analysis should be conducted with the software that the team is most familiar with. An Excel database with built-in analysis features (e.g., pivot tables) is provided if the team prefers, but the tables are limited. It is strongly recommended that if a team does not have experience with other statistical software, then they should view Excel pivot table tutorials (widely available online) in order to maximize the use of the quantitative database provided. Table 7 details Step 4a.

Table 7: Overview of Step 4a - Quantitative

At a glance	• Duration: 2–3 days (training in office and field test) + 1–2 weeks (in the field)
	• Sample: 2-stage cluster sampling:
	   » Stage 1 – Communities
	   » Stage 2 – Students and school personnel
	   » Recommended total sample = 400 student respondents and 200 school personnel respondents across (roughly) five communities
	• Conceptual focus: Understand the dynamic, two-way interaction between school communities and contextual risks and the factors behind school community resilience to these risks.
	• Data collection approaches: Random selection of students and teachers who will be administered a questionnaire by a data collector
	• Methodology: Quantitative data collection

Templates included	Tool 3.1a: SLE Student Questionnaire Tool 3.2a: School Personnel Questionnaire Tool 6: Field Team Training Agendas Tool 9: Field Readiness Checklist Tool 10: Recommended Daily Field Team Debrief Questions

Additional materials needed	PowerPoint software, a computer, and a projector for training
	Data collection devices (e.g., smartphone, tablet)
	Car chargers/charging boxes for tablets
	Paper copies of questionnaire (for backup)
	Wireless router to connect tablets to internet while in the field
	KoboToolbox (free) subscription or other data collection software
Additional resources to consider (optional)	• USAID Conceptual Framework for Measuring SRGBV
	• RTI ACASI Method for Measuring SRGBV
	• National (U.S.) Gang Center Assessment Guide
	• Global Education Cluster Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit
	• CARE International Knowledge on Fire
	• GCPEA Preventing Military Use of Schools Checklist
	• RiskRed.org School Disaster Reduction and Readiness Checklist
	• WHO KAP Guidance for Oral Cholera Vaccine Stockpile Campaigns
	• Global Education Cluster Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit
	• National Center for PTSD: Brief Trauma Questionnaire

Fieldwork Preparation

Determining a Suitable Sample Size/Number of Communities to Visit

Sampling is a critical component of quantitative research. A sample will, if properly taken, generate statistics that are representative of the population. In other words, instead of asking every person in your population a series of questions in order to know what everyone thinks, you only need to take a sample of that population to be able to infer what the broader population thinks.

Figure 7: Clustering[4]

_____
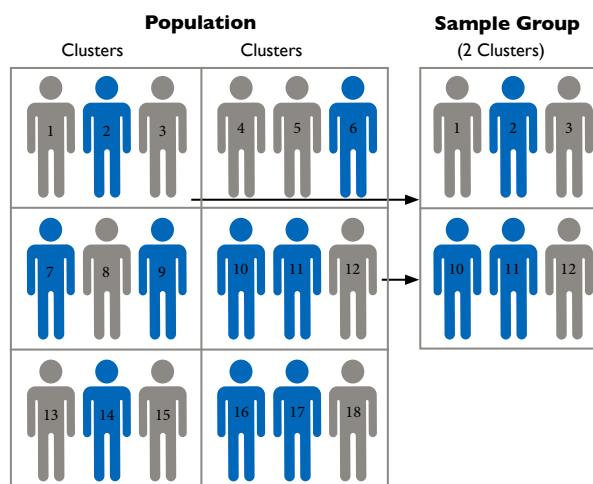
4   (Source: Research Methodology.net)

The sample size that you need in order to generate statistics that are representative of the population that you are interested in—for example, the beneficiaries in the program—depends on the size of that population and also the desired confidence level and margin of error. In general, a 95% confidence level with a +/-5% margin of error is sufficient for basic social science research. A smaller margin of error means that smaller changes will be detected with statistical significance; a higher confidence means that a higher proportion (e.g., 99%) of the responses are truly reflective of the population. Table 8 provides the required sample sizes given these factors. It is important to note that in addition to the required sample sizes, there should be slight oversampling in the event of the need to discard any data.

Another element of sampling is clustering, which means that the population is divided into groups—schools for example—and a random selection of those groups is taken. Then within that selection, a random selection of beneficiaries (see Figure 7) is taken.

Clustering is generally a more practical method of sampling when doing in-person field research, since it reduces the total number of locations (e.g., schools) that need to be visited. Without clustering, the entire population would be sampled randomly, which could lead to the necessity of visiting every school. For example, if there are 200 schools, and 400 students are randomly sampled from lists of all students in those schools, it may be the case that 1–3 students are randomly selected from each of the 200 schools. This would indeed be an arduous and costly task, but with the option of clustering, it is not wholly necessary. Clustering does reduce precision, but, again, it is often an acceptable option in social science research, provided a sufficient number of clusters are randomly selected. The number of clusters selected is often based on what is feasible as well as how different each of the clusters is from one another. As a general rule, the more clusters, the better, unless it is known that the clusters are similar. In some cases, it may be important to stratify the clusters (see Figure 7) in order to ensure that certain types of schools (e.g., in certain regions) or certain ethnic groups are included in the otherwise random selection.

Table 8: Sample sizes by population and confidence/interval

Population size	Confidence level = 95%			Confidence level = 99%		
	Margin of error			Margin of error		
	5%	2,5%	1%	5%	2,5%	1%
100	80	94	99	87	96	99
500	217	377	475	285	421	485
1.000	278	606	906	399	727	943
10.000	370	1.332	4.899	622	2.098	6.239
100.000	383	1.513	8.762	659	2.585	14.227
500.000	384	1.532	9.423	663	2.640	16.055
1.000.000	384	1.534	9.512	663	2.647	16.317

BOX 4: SELECTING A SAMPLE SIZE

Selecting a Sample Size—Example

Let us consider a program with roughly 15,000 student beneficiaries and 500 teacher beneficiaries, across 80 schools that are relatively geographically dispersed. Such a spread of schools would be too costly and time consuming to visit in the one month allowed for data collection. Given the budget and logistical possibilities, it is determined that, at most, 10 of the 80 schools can be visited. These are randomly selected from a list of all schools in the project. To achieve 95% confidence with a +/-5% interval, the sample size should be 370 students and 217 teachers. But we want to oversample in case of discarded data, so the total sample size should be increased to 400 students and 225 teachers. This means that we will randomly select 400/8 = 50 students and 225/8 = 29 (rounding up) teachers per school. Statistics generated from this sample will be representative of our entire student population and our entire teacher population within the project.

Remember: A sample will only represent the population as a whole. It will not (with the same margin of error) represent subgroups of that population (e.g., when disaggregating data by gender, age, community, and so forth) because the sample size, although large enough for the population, is not large enough for the subgroup. Each subgroup would need to be treated as its own population, and then a new sample size determined based on the population size (using the same method outlined previously).

BOX 5: DISAGGREGATING A SAMPLE

Disaggregating a Sample—Example

If we want to present data on the differences between boys and girls, using the example above of a school with 15,000 student beneficiaries and 500 teacher beneficiaries across 8 schools, where 200 of each are sampled, then the confidence for each subgroup (boys and girls) drops to 95% +/- 6.8% (assuming the population of boys and girls is equal at 7,500 each).

In another example, if we want to consider differences between students in each of the 8 schools, each with a sample of 50 students, then the confidence for each subgroup drops to 95% +/-11.8%, (assuming each school has 180 students). The figure +/-11.8% tells us that there is a larger margin of error as a result of the smaller sample size. So, if 50% of students in School A (25 of 50) prefer the color blue, and 60% of students (30 of 50) in Community B also prefer the color blue, then it would not be accurate to conclude that girl students in community B more often prefer the color blue compared to girl students in community A, because the margin of error is too high for that 10% difference to be statistically significant. Therefore, if a team desires a smaller margin of error, such that schools can be compared, then they would need to increase the sample size, both overall and in each school.

What to Do If You Cannot Possibly Reach the Sample Size Needed for a 5% Margin of Error

It may be that a sample size is logistically too difficult for the Assessment Team, particularly in crisis and conflict environments. In that case, certainly the sample size can be reduced, but as with the examples above, the increased margin of error must be appreciated when comparing groups or changes over time. It is strongly discouraged for a team to visit only one community to carry out quantitative research— unless there is good reason to believe the one community is representative of all other communities within the project's reach, a highly unlikely scenario. In order to calculate the margin of error associated with a smaller sample size, online calculators like this one are helpful. It will be critical to fully understand and make clear in the report the limitations of conducting a quantitative study with a small sample size. However, it may be a viable tradeoff to not doing any quantitative exercise at all—so long as the statistics are interpreted with caution.

Field Site Sampling

There are a few approaches for simple random sampling of field sites (e.g., schools, learning environments, communities), but basically, you want to ensure there is absolutely no bias in the selection. One method would be to write the name of each school community on a piece of paper, put the papers in a hat, and then select five of them. With this approach, every community has an equal chance of being selected. If one piece of paper were larger than another, though, then this method would be biased.

A more practical approach is to list each of the schools—school names may be available in EMIS or another project database—number them, and then, randomly select X numbers. There are dozens of random number generators online, or you can use the Excel =RANDBETWEEN(1,[highest number on list]) function. Box 6 provides additional guidance on random sampling methods that you may consider.

BOX 6: RANDOM SAMPLING

Systematic random sampling is similar to simple random sampling, except the selections are made based on selecting every nth individual from the population. The first step in this method is to calculate the interval (n), which is to simply take the total population divided by the total sample size desired. Then, every nth instance is selected from a list (or group of people). However, this method is only truly random if the list (or group) is not organized in any way that introduces bias.

Stratified random sampling is used to ensure that some relatively small segment of your population has an equal chance of being represented in the sample (i.e., when, taken from the whole population, the chance of inclusion would be relatively small). This method is often used when there are certain marginalized groups that you want to ensure are included.

To do this:

1. Separate the population into the groups based on the characteristic you are interested in (e.g., the communities in East Region and the communities in West Region).

2. Determine what proportion of each should make up the final sample—this ensures probability proportional to size.

3. Randomly sample the appropriate number (as determined in step 2 above) from within each group

To do this, you must know the total population of each region. If East Region has 50 communities and West Region has 200 communities (50:200 or simplified, 1:4), then a proportional sample would mean that you must arrive at 5 sampled communities: randomly select one community from East Region, and randomly select four communities from West Region. Had this population not been stratified, then there would have been only a 25% chance (50/200) that a community from East Region would have been included. Using stratified random sampling, there was a 100% chance.

Another example in which you'd want to consider using stratified random sampling is when you are selecting schools in an area that has mostly small schools with a few much larger schools. To ensure that students in the larger schools are represented in the study, you would treat that larger type of school as its own subgroup and sample randomly from it proportionally to how many students there are in the population as a whole.

Selecting Respondents – Students

In each school, an equal number of student respondents will be randomly selected from all grade levels that are judged to be capable of understanding and responding to the questionnaire[5] in the school (so, if your total desired sample size is 400, and the team is visiting five schools, then each school will have 400/5 = 80 students). In the event that it is suspected that one or more schools will not have 80 students across all targeted grades, then additional schools should be randomly selected, and the number of students per school recalculated, so that the total sample size is no less than 400 (and there is equal representation from each school). A quota should be set so that male and female students are equally represented. Sampling should be conducted under the guidance of the team leader before any interviews begin. Then, members of the field team will be assigned the list of students they are to interview (ensuring female team members interview girls). The method of selecting the students depends on what sampling frame (the source from which names will be selected, e.g., a list or room of people) is available. Table 9 summarizes the options, with the ideal approach appearing highest.

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5   Note that the student questionnaire provides recommended ages for those answering certain questions; some are only appropriate for those aged 12 and above (Tool 3a.1 A on sexual violence, for example). Additional adaptations may be required in case younger students are being interviewed and the questionnaires are not appropriate for that age group.

Table 9: Selecting student respondents at school

#	Available Sampling Frame(s)	Approach
1	If school rosters with gender are available in electronic format	1. Insert names into a blank Excel sheet (merge all names together if there are separate files for each class or grade) and assign each name a unique number starting at 1. 2. Use =RANDBETWEEN (1,[last number]) and drag down 80 rows. You will then have 80 random numbers; that is your sample. 3. Adjust (repeat random number generation) if more boys or girls are needed so that you have 40 of each. This method is particularly useful when you need to obtain permission from each of the student's parents before conducting the interview. The selection can be done well ahead of the visit and also arrangements can be made on the best day to visit with this advance planning (or if necessary, so a home visit can be conducted to collect the data from the student if he/she is unable to attend school for some reason).
2	If school rosters with gender are available on paper	1. Estimate the total number of students on the roster. 2. Calculate a sampling interval n = [total number of students in school]/[desired sample in school, e.g., 80 students]. 3. Begin at a random location, and select every nth student. 4. Repeat until you have 40 students of each gender. If paper rosters are only available for each class, then simply keep counting from one roster to the next. This is a useful method for the same reasons as above, provided someone can visit the school in person before the field team in order to conduct the sampling.
3	If there is no school roster but most students are present in school and you can identify that it is a typical day	1. Obtain an estimate of how many students are in the school and calculate n (see above). 2. During a time in which all students are in their classrooms (on a day where you can be sure attendance is typical of any other day), start at one classroom and count off every nth student. 3. Repeat until you have 40 students of each gender. The main limitation of this method is that it disrupts the classroom and misses students who are absent (which can introduce bias, e.g., students who fear SRGBV tend to avoid coming to school).
4	If there is no school roster and most students are not regularly present in school or there is no typical day of attendance, but there is an identifiable community where most students live	In this case, it is best to do random selection at the community level: 1. Calculate a sampling interval based on total number of houses in the community/80 2. Visit each house to see whether there is a student living in the home. 3. If there is more than one, randomly select one student (piece of paper with a number in a hat). If no student is present, go to the next house and the next house until one is identified. 4. Repeat until you have 40 students of each gender. Note that this method is time consuming and often impractical where students' residences are spread out and/or it is unlikely they will all be home at a certain point in time.

#	Available Sampling Frame(s)	Approach
5	If there is no school roster, no typical day of attendance, and no identifiable community	In this case, it is best to continue with Approach #3, but to acknowledge this limitation in your reporting.

In the Field: Selecting Respondents – School Personnel

A separate random sample of 10 school personnel will be taken within each school (providing a total sample size of 200 across all schools; if more than 5 schools are visited to achieve the student sample size of 400, then the number of school personnel sampled in each school should be adjusted accordingly). The procedure for selecting these respondents should be the same as that for students (as provided in Table 9). School personnel will be administered a separate questionnaire that takes into account their unique perspectives and insights on the school and school community.

Reviewing the SLE Quantitative Questionnaires (Tool 3a)

The SLE Student Questionnaire (Tool 3.1a) and School Personnel Questionnaire (Tool 3.2a) each contain questions that apply to every possible risk. The questions that you will ask each respondent in your fieldwork will be only those that you decided were sufficiently high enough, based on completion of the scoring rubric in Step 2. Beyond that, some revisions are necessary within each of the risks. The final questionnaires should be:

- **Conflict sensitive** – The choices of questions to use as well as the questions and response options themselves should be revised so that they acknowledge the complex political, cultural, and social contexts in which programs operate (which can include actors from government, donors, NGOs, religious institutions, unions, and many others) and ensure that questions are sensitively worded and selected so as to not disrupt any relationships with these actors.

- **Adapted** – The questionnaire that is finalized should be adapted from that provided in Tool 3.1a and 3.2a—not all questions from a single risk area are recommended to be asked in a single interview. Instead, the questions should be considered as a menu of question options to consider, and only those that are relevant to the research question(s) should be asked. Also, the total number of questions should be considered in terms of how long the questionnaire will take and what is appropriate in the context.

- **Contextualized** – The questions and response options should be phrased and translated (as needed) to be sufficiently clear to respondents but still obtain the same information being suggested in the original question text. It is important to maintain the nuance of the original question when doing this. For example, the team may need to distinguish the type of learning environment that is being assessed, especially if work is being done in a variety of types of learning environments. If the research is being done with one set of students in an informal education program in a refugee camp setting and another set of students in a permanent structure who are receiving formal education, the word school may not be appropriate to use in both cases.

Table 10 provides a summary of the question(s) adapted from existing (validated) questionnaires that measure one or more specific risks. The SLE Assessment Toolkit questionnaires that were developed based on these existing tools are provided in Tool 3a and also in the Excel e-annex.

Table 10: Summary of pre-validated tools utilized for quantitative questionnaire

Tool Code	Risk Type	Title of Tool/ Organization	Description	Target Group(s) for Survey	Key Pages (Tool)
A	SRGBV	USAID Conceptual Framework for Measuring SRGBV	Comprehensive tools (qualitative and quantitative) for measuring SRGBV, validated in SSA context. Tools on sexual violence for students aged 12–18; others (bullying, corporal punish-ment) for students aged 8–18.	School staff and students	102–122
B	Gangs	National (U.S.) Gang Center Assessment Guide	Detailed document on measuring gang activity (and membership) in the school setting; includes clear guidance, consent forms, and questionnaires to use.	School staff and students	60–68
C	School Climate	USAID Conceptual Framework for Measuring SRGBV	For students aged 8–18 years on school climate generally, validated in SSA context.	School staff and students	91–94

Tool Code	Risk Type	Title of Tool/ Organization	Description	Target Group(s) for Survey	Key Pages (Tool)
D	Education under Attack:	Global Education Cluster Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit	A gold standard for education in emergencies needs assessment—one questionnaire has multiple different questions related to this specific risk.	School staff	80–93
		CARE International Knowledge on Fire	Specific to Afghanistan and for school staff, but some questions are appropriate for students.	School staff and students	77–83
		GCPEA Preventing Mili-ary Use of Schools Checklist	A checklist specifically related to identifying whether schools are (or are at risk of) being used for military use in conflict areas, both state and non-state actors.	School staff	22–30
H	Environmental— Natural Hazard	RiskRed.org School Disaster Reduction and Readiness Checklist	A 2-page checklist for the local school safety committee, but also ap-propriate for use with any school personnel who are expected to know safety protocols; checklist divided into (a) assessment and planning, (b) physical and environ-mental protection, and (c) response capacity: supplies and skills.	School staff	1–2

Tool Code	Risk Type	Title of Tool/ Organization	Description	Target Group(s) for Survey	Key Pages (Tool)
M	Environmental/ Health	WHO KAP Guidance for Oral Cholera Vac-cine Stockpile Cam-paigns	This document outlines a uniform approach to conducting surveys re-garding the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (i.e., KAP surveys) of communities regarding diarrheal disease, cholera and cholera vaccines, water, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as health care access that can be adapted for the needs of each setting. It also has very good sampling guid-ance and methodology tips in general that may be helpful.	School staff and students	29–38
O	Trauma	Global Education Clus-ter Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit	A gold standard for edu-cation in emergencies needs assessment; one questionnaire has a few different questions relat-ed to this specific risk.	School staff	q.1.50–1.52
		National Center for PTSD: Brief Trauma Questionnaire	Tool for measuring PTSD from the National Center for PTSD; brief version, validated and used in many U.S.-based evaluations and pro-grams.	Students	2

Survey Administration Procedures

The questionnaire has guidance associated with each question. For example, it instructs the data collector not to read the answer choices, select the one that most closely resembles the respondent's answer, or select all that are mentioned. Beyond that, the data collector will complete the following tasks:

1. Provide an introduction to the respondent and obtain informed consent.

2. Open a new survey on the device.

3. Begin the survey questions.

4. End the survey questions.

5. Thank the respondent.

6. Save data from the device.

Electronic Data Collection

If devices are equipped with internet connectivity within the schools, then each interview should be uploaded as soon as it is completed. Otherwise, data should be saved to each device and then, at the end of each day, the team leader should collect the devices and either (a) upload data to a server if the internet is available or (b) if the internet is not available, back up all data onto a computer, then upload all data as soon as internet connectivity is available. The team should use whatever program they are most comfortable and experienced with. If the team has no experience with any program, then KoboToolbox is recommended, which is free, user friendly, and has a helpful online support portal.

STEP 4B: QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The next step in the SLE assessment process is to refine data collection tools and conduct the fieldwork. The purpose of the fieldwork is to do ethical and conflict-sensitive research to provide additional nuance to the previously identified risks. The FGD and KII Questions Matrix (Tool 3b) provides the recommended questions for the field team to ask across at least two selected school communities via in-person KIIs and FGDs with government officials, community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), students, teachers and school staff, parents, and other key stakeholders. It is envisioned that this process will require a team comprising a team leader and four team members (at least two of whom are female), and it will take approximately 2 weeks (for two communities).

Because this toolkit is designed to be diagnostic, the data and conclusions from this limited, purposive sample of school communities are not intended to be generalizable to all school communities in a country. However, the tool can offer crucial insights into the complex, dynamic relationships between existing contextual risks and select school communities—learners, teachers and staff, families, and surrounding communities—and complement secondary data findings. These insights can also warrant more comprehensive investigation. Table 11 provides an overview of Step 4b.

Table 11: Overview of Step 4b

At a glance	• Duration: 2–3 days (training in office and field test) + 1–2 weeks (in the field). Allow 1 week per community visited, including travel and logistics, but visit no fewer than 2 communities. • Sample: Limited, purposive sample of school communities • Conceptual focus: Understand the dynamic, two-way interaction between school communities and contextual risks and the factors behind school community resilience to these risks • Data collection approaches: FGDs and KIIs • Methodology: Qualitative data collection
Tools included	Tool 3: FGD and KII Questions Matrix Tool 6: Field Team Training Agendas Tool 9: Field Readiness Checklist Tool 10: Recommended Daily Field Team Debrief Questions Annex 4: Interview (FGD and KII) Protocols and Best Practices
Additional materials needed	• Adapted Field Form Templates (1 for each question) • Flip chart paper • Markers • Easel and tape or tacks (for hanging paper)

Additional (optional) resources to consider	• Research ethics: USAID's Policy Brief: Ethics in Research and Evaluation in the Education Sector
	• Qualitative methods:
	  1. Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide (FHI360)
	  2. What We Know about Ethical Research Involving Children in Humanitarian Settings (UNICEF)
	• Additional data collection tools related to specific risks:
	  1. The Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit (Global Education Cluster)
	  2. Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit (YouthPower Learning)
	  3. Conceptual Framework for Measuring School-Related Gender-Based Violence (RTI for USAID)
	  4. A Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem (National Gang Center)
	  5. Knowledge on Fire Questionnaire (CARE International)
	  6. Implementing the Guidelines…for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict (GCPEA)
	  7. School Disaster Reduction and Readiness Checklist (RiskRed.org)
	  8. KAP Guidance for Oral Cholera Vaccine Stockpile Campaigns (WHO)
	  9. Global School-Based Student Health Survey (WHO)
	  10. National Center for PTSD: Brief Trauma Questionnaire

Field Site Selection

One of the first objectives of Step 4b is to confirm which communities (a minimum of two) will be visited for qualitative field research. "Community" should be clearly defined by the Assessment Team, but essentially "community" means the location of the school itself and also the area around it in which students and teachers may travel to and from their residence. The choice of school community sites for primary data collection is purposive (see Box 7) and guided by the preliminary desk research and consultations with key partners. During the desk research, the SLE Assessment Team should consider the following factors when deciding on the primary data collection sites:

❯ Gaps in knowledge about the dynamic interaction between contextual risks and school communities

❯ School communities that feature comparatively high levels of contextual risk and low levels of resilience

❯ School communities that have high levels of risk but many assets that help overcome and manage those risks

❯ School communities that are of particular importance or relevance for programming

❯ Views of key stakeholders and national partners (such as the Ministry of Education)

It is likely that the SLE Assessment Team will need to make compromises when deciding upon primary data collection sites. Factors such as distance between sites, non-permissive or high-risk operating environments, and political imperatives can arise and require the SLE Assessment Team to modify its selections.

At least two communities should be visited, purposefully selected to capture some degree of variety across all relevant school communities. If time and resources allow, visiting more school communities with distinct features will only enrich the data collected. Allow around one calendar week, including travel, for each additional community.

BOX 7: SAMPLING STRATEGIES

Representative/probability sampling/random sampling allows for generalizability (of the whole population in question), but it can be time consuming and may not be appropriate for all studies.

Purposive sampling (non-probability) uses the (informed) judgment of the analysis team to select locations and/or informants that may show the variety across the entire population. This strategy may also be referred to as "purposeful" sampling and allows for diverse perspectives but not generalizability.

Convenience sampling focuses on easily accessible locations or informants.

Reviewing FGD and KII Questions Matrix (Tool 3b)

The FGD and KII Questions Matrix (Tool 3b), serves as a template for data collection and provides options to the SLE Assessment Team. Structured according to the 16 specific risks, the matrix includes questions and response options particular to various respondent type(s). Each risk category has a corresponding letter and discussion question number, and these categories correspond to the risk categories used in the scoring rubric. The fieldwork design table described under Step 2 and provided in Tool 4 (SLE Assessment Activity Fieldwork Design Table) will help to plan which questions will be asked to which focus groups, noting the time limit for FGDs, and which questions are most appropriate for certain groups.

An illustrative excerpt of the questions matrix provided in Tool 3b is provided in Table 12. In addition to the main question (in bold), question blocks include instructions for the facilitator/note taker (in italics and brackets) and additional follow-up questions in plain text, which should be asked if the discussion has not already covered these points. Each of the questions also has a number of associated response types that may be anticipated (based on previous piloting of this tool), and which will become important to consider for the note taking and field coding processes (detailed in the Taking Notes section below).

It is imperative that women conduct KIIs and FGDs with women and that minors under 18 receive consent to participate from a parent or guardian (in some cases for in-school research, the school can provide consent for the minor).

Table 12: Excerpt from FGD/KII Questions Matrix

Q. Code	Risk Category	Question Set Includes guidance to facilitator(s) and note taker. Bold type indicates key question for coding. Italics indicate instructions to facilitator and note taker.	Response Option(s) For coding at field level. For FGDs, indicate relative distribution of response types.
A.1	**A. Internal: SRGBV:** These questions address issues within the school environment that are gender dependent. Boys and girls may experience these issues differently. While some of the items may be similar to later questions, the purpose of this question is to probe for gender-specific information.	**Of the following types of SRGBV, which occur at this school regularly?** Bullying between students? A student sexually abusing another student? Corporal punishment? Teachers abusing students (emotional, physical, sexual) or vice versa? *[Blind vote: Have group respond with heads down and hands up. Write answers on flip chart and invite participants to discuss their answers if they wish, but do not pressure them to do so.]*	a. Bullying between students (including cyber-bullying) b. Student sexually abusing another student c. Teachers using corporal punishment/ physically abusing students d. Teachers emotionally abusing students e. Teachers sexually abusing students f. Students abusing teachers in any way
A.2		**If you hear about a student victim of SRGBV, how do you report it (or, if you haven't ever heard of one, what would you do)?** Is the reporting mechanism different depending on the type of abuse or who is involved? What response is supposed to occur? What response actually occurs? What communication gaps might prevent resolution of this problem?	a. Don't report it b. Complaint box/anonymous reporting c. School management committee or similar d. Police e. Other
A.3		**What is the school doing to reduce the incidence of SRGBV?** Please be specific when talking about the types of SRGBV already discussed. Are these actions successful? What would it take for them to be more successful? How can others help? What communication gaps might prevent resolution of this problem?	a. Workshops/school-wide sensitization meetings, posters, etc. b. School codes of conduct c. Teacher/student/parent committees d. Safe spaces for girls (e.g., latrines) e. Internalizing positive gender attitudes and norms f. School is not doing anything

Adapting and Translating the Questions Matrix (Tool 3b)

As mentioned in the Adapting the Toolkit section earlier, the SLE Toolkit is intended to be adapted to context. Decisions for issues outlined in Table 13 should be made by the SLE Assessment Team. These decisions can be made before or during the training activity, depending on what is most practical and effective. Note that this process will take a lot of time during training, but it will be helpful to have as many voices as possible involved in making these decisions.

Table 13: Adapting Tool 3b: Questions Matrix

Risk categories	• Users can select the relevant risk categories and corresponding question sets and response options. • All, some, or none of the individual questions within risk categories can be chosen depending on the respondent type (e.g., teachers are asked all three questions in A., but students are only asked A-1 and A-2; parents are not asked any questions from A).
Question and response options— Sensitivity to context	The questions and response options should be adapted so that they acknowledge complex political, cultural, and social contexts in which programs operate (which can include actors from government, donors, NGOs, religious institutions, unions, and many others) and ensure that questions are sensitively worded. For example: • Sex as a topic may not be appropriate to bring up directly in a given context. The issue can be approached, however, by asking about "gender-based community roles." • Asking directly about "armed groups" may make facilitators and participants uncomfortable or bring unwanted attention from political actors. The issue may be addressed indirectly by asking about, "any security risks."
Questions and response options— Clarity	• The questions and response options should be adapted and translated (as needed) so they are sufficiently clear to respondents but still obtain the same general information being suggested in the original question text. • The team may need to distinguish the type of learning environment that is being assessed, especially if work is being done in a variety of types of learning environment. • If the research is being done with one set of students in a non-formal education/training program in a refugee camp setting and another set of students in a permanent structure who are receiving formal education, the term "school" may not be appropriate to use in both cases. In some cases, different words should be used (e.g., instead of "trauma" use "negative experience that makes you feel scared now").
Sequencing of questions	• The sequencing of questions may be reordered. • However, it is strongly suggested that the first "general" question be used as the lead question for all FGD and KIIs as it also serves as an ice-breaker.
Methodology	For researchers with qualitative expertise, more sophisticated methodologies may be considered, provided these methodologies still solicit the information suggested in this toolkit. For example: • Community mapping activities were used by one of the piloting teams. • Another piloting team employed voting using tokens during FGDs.

FGD and KII Procedures

Facilitation

An FGD will ideally have six to eight people and at least two members of the field team—one facilitator and one note taker (matching gender for single-gender groups where possible). The facilitator should make sure that the conversation continues until either (a) everyone has spoken (or in some way indicated their opinion, e.g., by nodding) or (b) there is not much variety in the responses, and everyone seems in broad agreement. After conversation on the main question has stopped, follow-up questions can be used. However, this measure is crucial: while we hope that all the information we need will emerge spontaneously, we want to make sure that we do not move on without talking about certain issues. It

is important to note that this is not simply a group interview; it should be an active conversation in which participants feel free to speak about the topic without too much encouragement from the facilitator. No identifiers will be noted. KII protocols are largely the same except of course the conversation will only occur with one individual. Additional guidance on facilitation techniques is provided in Annex 4 and in the training PPT e-annex available on the ECCN website.

Taking Notes

For both KIIs and FGDs, data collectors should use a field form that is tailored for each question (Figure 8). Each question uses one form (both front and back page), so, for example, 10 questions will result in 10 pages of field forms. Each form will also list the range of response types that are expected from answers to that particular question.

For coding, the data collectors employ field-based coding, which is distinct from other methods in which coding is done after data collection is completed and is based on frequency of key words and other methods (often requiring qualitative software). Instead, based on the responses provided, the note taker adds a tally mark next to the response type that most closely matches each respondent's answer (or for a KII, the one response). For some groups, a blind vote is taken. Therefore, if there are seven respondents in an FGD, then there should be seven tally marks across all response types. Figure 8 shows an example of a field form with one page prepared for a discussion of question A.2 (Internal Risks– SRGBV), which had seven female student participants in "East Community, DH School".

Additional guidance on good facilitation and note taking skills is provided in Annex 4.

> **The FGD protocols that are prescribed are more closely related to group interviews, which demand frequent facilitator intervention to keep the conversation alive. A true FGD would have the group engaging with one another, largely uninterrupted (but closely observed) by the facilitator. As a rule, the more free-form the discussion is, the better; however, this is not easy to achieve. FGD will be used to refer to the group interview, noting that the degree of facilitator engagement may vary depending on the expertise of the team and the willingness of the participants.**

Figure 8: Example of excellent field notes from an FGD

Consider audio-recording in addition to note taking so that you may refer back to the conversations in case notes taken were insufficient or need to be clarified, or in case, the raw data is of interest to other researchers or practitioners so that they may transcribe, code, and conduct their own analysis.

It is not recommended that you rely on audio-recordings only, though—transcription and translation of full conversations takes many hours.

In the Field: Selecting Participants for KII and FGD

At each school community site, the SLE Assessment Team should seek to identify participants relevant to the program and context; for example:

- Students and out-of-school youth
- Teachers and school staff
- Community and religious leaders
- Parents
- Local government officials
- Police
- Local CBOs
- NGOs
- Civic leaders
- Women's leaders
- Social workers

The SLE Assessment Team must ensure balanced gender representation in each of these respondent types and should also include persons with disabilities in the research activities.

KIIs help provide an overview of the situation and explore specific issues or themes in more depth. Purposive sampling should be used to reach respondents who hold particular knowledge and insights. The selected key informants should be diverse and representative (especially, as much as possible, in terms of gender) and capture divergent views. KIIs also support the identification of additional background documents and, ideally, the verification of findings from FGDs. See the sidebar for guidance on when to use an KII instead of an FGD.

FGDs help provide an in-depth understanding of a situation and can confirm findings from KIIs, and they provide the opportunity to gather multiple stakeholders together at the same time.

WHEN TO USE AN KII INSTEAD OF AN FGD

You are unable to find a sufficient number of participants (6–8).

An individual in an FGD is reluctant to speak in the group setting but appears to have something to say.

An individual in an FGD has a particularly interesting or relevant story and you need more detail.

It is not possible (e.g., unsafe or not logistically possible) to gather groups.

An individual is not in the student/parent/teacher group (e.g., community leader, NGO staff member).

Guidelines for FGDs include the following:

- Discussions should indicate shared as well as divergent views.
- Participants should be purposefully chosen so they are diverse and capture a wide variety of types of people. For example, in a female student group, efforts should be made to capture a range of ages, income levels, and ethnic groups (as appropriate). In a male parent group, efforts should be made to capture a range of education levels, job types, and religions (as appropriate).
- Young people participating in FGDs should be separated by sex, and the sex of SLE Assessment Team members who facilitate these FGDs should mirror the sex of that group.
- Sex separation and same-sex facilitators may also be necessary for adults in some cases.

- Particular attention to conflict sensitivity is also important when forming FGDs. Like groups (e.g., ethnic-group-specific or education-level-specific FGDs) may be necessary to avoid the discomfort or silencing of certain participants, while also ensuring all types of people are represented in the research.

These steps will help create trust, foster the most candid responses as possible, and elicit the differentiated experiences and perceptions of various groups.

STEP 4 (ALL): TRAINING, FIELD TESTING, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Field Team Training and Field Testing

Office Training

The field team should undergo a training exercise to familiarize themselves with the following:

1. First and foremost, the ethical guidelines for conducting field research: Any field team member who demonstrates any reservations about ethical conduct or is unable to fully understand the protocols should be replaced immediately.

2. The methodology of field research: Qualitative, quantitative, or both depending on what will be used.

3. The specifics of the questionnaires (for quantitative research) and/or the questions matrix (for qualitative research): Here, further adaptation of the questions may occur if field

ENSURE THE TEAM AND TOOLS ARE FIELD-READY

Regardless of the methodology employed (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods), all members of the field team must be adequately trained on ethics and methodology, and all teams must conduct one at least one field test such that it is determined that each field team member is field-ready, and the tools are sound. Revisions to tools, follow-up training, and/or repeat field tests should be completed as necessary. A field-readiness checklist is provided in Tool 9

In addition to providing an overview of the methodology and refining the questions, the office training should involve sufficient time conducting mock questionnaires and/or FGD/KII protocols (as relevant to your research) with members of your team. Allow time after each mock exercise to go over the questions to make sure they are understood by the team and appropriately worded.

team members think it is necessary. Alternatively, this may be the point at which the questions are initially reviewed so as to have as many voices as possible involved in the process of defining terms, adapting language, and choosing who should be asked what.

It is expected that a designated team leader or person leading the research activity will plan the training event, utilizing his or her team members as needed to ensure anyone who is expected to make contact with students, teachers, and other school community members is well-trained on methodology and research ethics. A recommended outline for a full day of in-office training is provided in Tool 6: Field Team Training Agendas along with a recommended PowerPoint slide templates (e-annex) for the training, including guidance on good interview techniques and protocols to ensure ethical research.

Field Testing

After the full day of in-office field team training, a field test **must** be conducted to ensure that (a) the members of the field team have a "live" experience of using the tools and (b) the questions are being asked in a way that makes sense to participants (in terms of translation, phrasing, and appropriateness) so that the information desired is the information obtained.

The participants of the field test should be roughly analogous to those who will be encountered in the field—young people and adults, male and female, and ideally some teachers and school staff. All protocols that will be followed in the primary field research should be followed during the field test, including adherence to research ethics. Please note that during the field test, it is important to tell participants that the data collected will not be used in any way except to help the field team prepare for the actual data collection.

Following the field test, the team should convene to review the experience and to make any necessary revisions to the field tools and/or the process. During this time, the team should review the question protocols for clarity and make necessary revisions. The team should also review all notes to see what has been learnt and to review key questions, including the following:

> Are data collected sufficient? Do data answer the questions?

> Did respondents have any difficulty understanding the questions?

> Were response choices adequate?

> How long did the survey, FGD, and KII take? Was it too long? Is there room to add more questions?

If necessary, a second field test (after any necessary revisions to the field tools and additional training for the field team) should be conducted.

Obtaining Approval to Conduct Research

After finalizing the field tools, but before beginning field research, the SLE Assessment Team should revise the Research Ethics Plan that was developed during Step 3. This plan will be the foundational document used to obtain whatever approvals were found to be required during the Step 3 field planning phase. The approval process may be a formal application to a country or organization IRB or a more informal ad hoc review board in cases where IRBs or similar entities are not active. This step may take weeks or even months to complete and involve multiple rounds of revision, including potentially removing multiple questions or types of participants from the research.

Ensuring Quality Assurance during Fieldwork

While the research is being conducted, it is important to have quality assurance mechanisms built into the assessment process. This will ensure that all ethical protocols are being followed and that the methodology is being implemented correctly. Depending on the structure of the team, quality

assurance mechanisms may be best applied at the field level, by the team leader. They can be done in various ways:

- The team leader checks each data collector's work at the end of the day and provides feedback.

- The team leader shadows data collectors during the day to provide guidance on their approach

- The entire field team meets for an end-of-day debrief, so that everyone can share what they learned and the challenges they encountered in the fieldwork, as well as ask each other questions about approach.

In other cases, it may be helpful to have virtual quality assurance mechanisms in place, in which the team leader and/or field team members upload the data in real time (as internet availability allows) or at the end of each day (ensuring that the team's accommodation for the night is somewhere with reasonable internet accessibility). For quantitative data, uploading is easily accomplished with KoboToolbox and other similar data collection software. For qualitative data, images of handwritten notes can be sent via WhatsApp.

STEP 5: DATA ENTRY, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING

STEP 0	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Adapt the scope of the toolkit for your purpose(s)	Desk research	Completion of risk scoring rubric to determine specific risks	Fieldwork Planning: Establishing ethical protocols; identifying suitable field team	Developing field tools, data collection administering FGDs/KIIs and/or questionnaires) in a sample of project schools	Data analysis and reporting findings, conclusions, recommendations

Once fieldwork is completed, the data entry, analysis, and reporting phases begin. In this section, the guidance for analysis is specific to quantitative and qualitative data. As such, separate sections for each are provided below, followed by a recommended outline for the report that could be used for either method.

STEP 5A: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Overview of Step 5a

During Step 5a, all teams are invited to use the provided Excel quantitative database (e-annex) to record and analyze their data, but if they already have access to, familiarity with, and a preference for an existing quantitative data analysis software (SPSS, Stata, R), then they may use that instead. Table 14 provides an overview of Step 5a.

Table 14: Overview of Step 5a

At a glance	• Duration: 2 weeks • Team: Team leader • Methodology: Statistical analysis of data to produce descriptive statistics (at a minimum) • Conceptual focus: To produce a user-friendly and simple descriptive report that captures a moment in time, or, where relevant, shows change over time.
Template	E-Annex (Excel) Quantitative Database
Additional materials needed	• Data analysis software (if preferred over Excel file above) • Computer with Excel or another statistical analysis software that the user is comfortable with; internet connection not necessary
Additional resources to consider (optional)	Pivot Tables Tutorials (for Excel users): 1. Microsoft Excel Pivot Table Tutorial for Beginners 2. Why Learn Pivot Table in Microsoft Excel Quantitative Analysis and Reporting 1. Lumen Learning Course: Quantitative Analysis Descriptive Statistics 2. Cross Tabulation: How It Works and Why You Should Use It 3. Online Significant Difference Calculator

Quantitative Data Analysis

The most basic form of quantitative analysis is to produce descriptive statistics and cross tabulations. The SLE Assessment Toolkit provides guidance on using data analysis software to do this, but the data set would allow more sophisticated analysis techniques. Student data and school personnel data should be analyzed separately.

Participant Characteristics

It is important that you understand some key demographic features of your sample. At a minimum, you should report on the following:

❯ For students: Gender, age, level of education (current year in school), geographical features or location of where they live or go to school (e.g., urban, peri-urban, rural; Western Region or Eastern Region)

- For school personnel: Gender, age, level of education (highest level of completion), and geographical location of where they live or work (e.g., urban, peri-urban, rural; Western Region or Eastern Region)

Additional characteristics for students and/or school personnel include disability status, marital status, number of children, number of people in household eating out of "same pot," and household roof and floor type.

Analyzing and presenting participant characteristics serve a few purposes:

- To give yourself and the reader an idea of the people you are reporting on (an introduction to the data that comes later)

- To see where there are any statistically significant differences (see box below) between certain segments of your population (e.g., girls vs. boys; older students vs. younger students; Region A vs. Region B)

- To assess the extent to which your random sample truly represents the population as a whole (i.e., compare some participant characteristics in your sample to those in a broader recent survey that was done, such as a census or a Demographic and Health Survey)

- To make sure that your participants were comparable in terms of key demographic features when evaluating change over time with different samples

Statistically Significant Differences:

When comparing data between two groups or points in time, it is important to determine whether the difference is statistically significant. In some cases, for example, we may measure a 10% difference in people saying they feel safe at school at baseline vs. endline, or 10% of females vs. 20% of males answer a certain way.

But when taking into account our sample size and structure, these differences may not be big enough for us to be confident that they really represent the full populations and are not just due to chance. That is, we cannot safely conclude that these differences are statistically significant.

The simplest way to determine whether measured differences are statistically significant is to use an online calculator like the one here and plug in the relevant data.

Creating Indices

When there are multiple questions that are related to a single theme or construct, it is useful to create an index that is a composite of all those questions together into a single measure. For example, if there are nine questions around a parent's attitude toward gender equity in education, rather than presenting a table of the responses to each of those nine questions, score each individual question and report a composite score in one table. Table 15 provides an example of an index using questions from Tool 3a (Demographic information with data from one respondent). These eight questions tell us something about the individual's socioeconomic status, so instead of reporting on each individual measure, the index will give us a broader look at the status of this individual. The same process can be done for any selection of questions that inform the same construct.

Table 15: Creating an index from multiple questions

Q#	Question Text	Response Options	Example Scoring
35	Does your family have a radio?		1
36	Does your family have a television?		0
37	Does your family have a bicycle?		1
38	Does your family have a motor vehicle?	Yes (1)	0
39	Does your family have a kitchen inside the home?	No (0)	0
40	Does your family have a computer?	Don't know (blank)	0
41	Does your family have a refrigerator?		1
42	Does anyone in your family have a mobile telephone?		1
Mean Score (take average of all scores for yes or no responses)			**= 4/8 = 0.50**

In some cases, multiple questions may be related to the same construct, but a "yes" responses doesn't mean the same thing. For example, we may want to include more questions around socioeconomic status that are not only about possessions but of perception of struggle:

> Does your household have a mobile phone (Yes = 1)

> Does your household struggle to meet basic needs (Yes = 0)

In this case, the scores will need to be customized to each of the questions and the responses that measure the same type of thing.

For another example, if we are measuring the construct of gender equity in education, two questions may help inform us of this, but we can ask them in different ways to try to measure gender equity:

⊘ To what extent do you agree with the following statements (Agree, Neutral, Disagree)

  » It is important for girls to get an education (Agree = 2, Neutral = 1, Disagree = 0)

  » Boys should be prioritized in education in case parents have limited finances (Agree = 0, Neutral = 1, Disagree = 2).

It is up to the SLE Assessment Team to determine which questions to use in building indices based on their understanding of the context and which questions are of particular interest.

Cross Tabulations and Disaggregation

Cross tabulation is a basic statistical method to present data, typically by disaggregating one or more variables (e.g., into gender). Table 16 is an example of a basic table that you would produce in your report using cross tabulation with gender disaggregation.

Table 16: Responses to student question, "Have you been subjected to corporal punishment (CP) ever in the previous school term?"

	Male (n = 200)	Female (n = 200)	Total (n = 400)
Yes	60.0%	30.0%	45.0%
No	40.0%	69.0%	54.5%
No response	0%	1%	0.5%

Tables can also be prepared for additional variables to see similarities and differences (which may indicate some correlation or causation). Table 17 shows that among males who had two parents living at home, CP rates were lower than those who did not. For females, though, there was no difference in CP rates between those with both parents living at home and those without.

Table 17: Student exposure to CP vs. parents at home

	Has been subjected to corporal punishment (CP) in the last school term, ever (self-reported yes)		
	Male (n = 200)	Female (n = 200)	Total (n = 400)
Both parents living at home	40.0%	30.0%	35.0%
One or fewer parents living at home	80.0%	30.0%	55.0%

Change

For evaluations that look at change over time, you will present each period in time (e.g., baseline, midline, endline) as its own variable. Here you can also disaggregate by gender, age group, and so forth. In some cases, it is helpful to show the percent change within the table (or to produce a separate summary table that only captures the percent change). Table 18 provides an example of data collected for a three-wave evaluation, looking at corporal punishment incidence and disaggregated by gender. It shows that for boys, the rate of CP has decreased significantly, but for girls, it has remained the same (but began relatively lower). The result is that at endline, boys and girls have experienced similar rates of CP.

Table 18: Self-reported student exposure to CP in previous school term, by gender and baseline, midline, endline

	Male (n = 200)	Female (n = 200)	Total (n = 400)
Baseline	60.0%	30.0%	45.0%
Midline	55.0%	30.0%	42.5%
Endline	33.0%	30.0%	31.5%
% change	-27.0%	0%	-13.5%

Some of the data should be presented as an average (mean), rather than a percentage of persons answering a certain way. For example, Section D (Education under Attack) of the school personnel questionnaire asks the respondent to identify the number of students who were injured in an attack during a certain time period. In this case, since 10 different respondents are asked at the school, it is best to take the mean of those figures to come to the most accurate estimate. (The exception would be if there are any estimates that are significantly different. Those estimates should then be discarded if there is a good reason to believe they are not reliable, or if not, it may be prudent to report on the range of responses). Table 19 provides an example of how these types of statistics may be presented.

Table 19: Students injured in attack in previous school term, reported by school personnel (mean, min., max.) by community

School/Community	Number of Students in School in Previous Term	Mean Number of Student Injuries in Previous Term (n = 10 School Personnel per Community)	Min./Max. Reported (n = 10 School Personnel per Community)
East Community	215	3.4	3/4
North Community	45	0	0/0
South Community	150	9.2	3/20
West Community	90	1.6	1/2
Central Community	450	14.7	13/17
Total	950	5.8	0/20

STEP 5B: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Step 5b involves the following activities:

▶ Entering data, including response type tallies, from field forms. Note: This activity could be done at the same time as the fieldwork if a data entry clerk is on the team.

▶ Observing response distributions to notice trends and variations within and between communities/ schools, respondent type(s), genders, etc.

▶ Reviewing the notes taken for additional nuances around those response distributions.

▶ Preparing a report that summarizes the findings and makes conclusions.

The analysis process is facilitated by using the SLE Qualitative Database, an e-annex file available on the ECCN website. Table 20 provides an overview of Step 5b.

Table 20: Overview of Step 5b qualitative analysis

At a glance	• Duration: 2–4 weeks (but allow for possibly more time for translation) • Team: Team leader, data entry clerks, field team (to clarify any gaps in notes) • Methodology: Data entry of all field notes and response distributions into the Excel database; exploration and analysis of data using built-in pivot tables that summarize response type tendencies by FGD/KII type (e.g., male student, female teacher) and that link numerical data with the full field note transcript associated with that response • Conceptual focus: To produce a user-friendly and simple descriptive report on the findings from the field research that answer the research question(s), such that programming can be designed or adapted to account for those findings (with more complex analyses done as needed by analysts with more experience)
Tools included	Tool 11: Qualitative Database Entry Guide Annex 5: Example of Reporting Findings and Conclusions SLE Qualitative Database (Excel) E-Annex
Additional materials needed	• Computer with Excel software and database already downloaded • Internet connection not necessary
Additional (optional) resources to consider	Pivot Tables Tutorials: 1. Microsoft Excel Pivot Table Tutorial for Beginners 2. Why Learn Pivot Table in Microsoft Excel Qualitative Analysis and Reporting • NERA Education Slideshow on the broad approach to Qualitative Analysis (Billups) • A Step-by-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Analysis (O'Conner and Gibson) • Wolcott, H. Transforming Qualitative Data, chapter 2 • Galman, S. The Good, the Bad, and the Data: Shane the Lone Ethnographer's Basic Guide to Qualitative Data Analysis

Overview of the Qualitative Database

The database not only provides a way to store and organize data, but it also contains built-in pivot tables to analyze the coded responses and highlight trends. Remember that the tallies are not reliable quantitative measurements. Rather, they provide an idea of the general tone of the group and must be linked with the notes taken along with the tallies. Use of the database does require basic familiarity with the Excel software program and a period of learning to navigate the features, but piloting teams agreed that it was worth the effort in terms of ultimately producing an objective and detailed report. Teams are encouraged to use this database to analyze their data for these reasons. But if teams already have familiarity with and preference for an existing qualitative analysis software, then they may use that software. However, the SLE coding patterns must be followed (frequency of response types is calculated) to ensure that the same broad themes are explored, which will facilitate comparisons across different data sets. Also, the

numerical data must always be linked directly with the qualitative responses. For teams using their own qualitative software, they should skip to the section on Reporting.

Data Entry

The Excel database allows for up to 40 KIIs and FGDs. Following are the steps for data entry:

1. Open the database.

2. Select "Enable Macros" when prompted.

3. Navigate to "Risk Worksheet" tab.

4. On the Risk worksheet, enter "yes" wherever you had identified a risk in Step 2: The SLE Scoring Rubric.

5. Click "Go." This will automatically prepare the data entry template and analysis tabs that are relevant to the team's particular research.

6. Enter the data into the "FGD and KII Template" tab. A screenshot of this tab is provided in Figure 9. Details on the column labels are provided in Tool 11 (Qualitative Database Entry Guide).

7. When data entry is completed, navigate to any of the analysis tabs, right click, and select "refresh."

The data entry step can be very time consuming, especially if it also involves any translation. It is good practice to try to keep up with the data entry while in the field (e.g., do in the evenings or designate one team member to enter data during the day while the others are conducting interviews). However, if this is not possible, note that it is essential that all data are entered before any meaningful analysis and reporting are conducted (preliminary analysis of course can be conducted along the way, but making any broad conclusions is not advised).

DATA ENTRY

Allow adequate time for entering all field notes.

Consider identifying data entry clerks who are not with you in the field who can type notes during the fieldwork portion–you can send photos of each page of notes using messaging apps, such as WhatsApp.

Early data entry also enables you to do some preliminary analysis!

It may help to practice typing one page of sample notes into the database to get a sense of how long it takes, then, plan accordingly!

TRANSLATION

You may wish to translate all your notes into another language before analysis. Note: This can take a long time—many weeks depending on the volume of notes—and it can also be costly.

It is generally better to conduct the analysis in the language of the data collected, if the Team Leader understands that language.

Any translation that is needed for the purpose of a report can be conducted after the report is finalized.

Data Analysis

Figures 9 and 10 provide an example of the types of data that can be reported by using the qualitative database analysis table for SRGBV (A) questions. The numbers correspond with individual responses based on approximate field coding. Recall that this information only provides a snapshot of the tone and tendencies of the various groups. It should **not** be considered quantitative data.

Figure 9: Example of numerical portion of analysis table for FGD student response coding of SRGBV (A) Questions

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2	Community Name	(Multiple Items)							
3									
4		Column Labels							
5		Teacher		Male Student		Female Student		Total #	Total %
6	Row Labels	#	%	#	%	#	%		
7	▼ A.1								
8	a) Bullying between students	4	57%	9	60%	2	13%	15	39%
9	b) Student sexually abusing another student	0	0%	1	7%	4	25%	5	13%
10	c) Teachers using corporal punishment/physically abusing students	2	29%	4	27%	0	0%	6	16%
11	d) Teachers emotionally abusing students	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
12	e) Teachers sexually abusing students	1	14%	1	7%	9	56%	11	29%
13	f) Students abusing teachers in any way	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	1	3%
14	▼ A.2								
15	a) Don't report it	2	29%	7	47%	10	67%	19	51%
16	b) Complaint box / anonymous reporting	1	14%	5	33%	5	33%	11	30%
17	c) School management committee	4	57%	3	20%	0	0%	7	19%
18	d) Police	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
19	e) Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
20	▼ A.3								
21	a) Workshops / school-wide sensitization meetings, posters, etc.	4	57%	10	67%	9	60%	23	62%
22	b) School codes of conduct	2	29%	1	7%	3	20%	6	16%
23	c) Teachers / Student / Parent Committees	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
24	d) Safe spaces for girls (e.g., latrines)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
25	e) Internalizing positive gender attitudes and norms	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
26	f) They are doing nothing at all or nothing effectively	1	14%	4	27%	3	20%	8	22%
27									
28									

The data can also be filtered by community using the drop-down option in cells A2/B2 in Figure 9. It is important to note that the labels in row 5 in Figure 9 vary depending on those that you have assigned to your FGDs and KIIs in the data entry process (see notes about column C of the data entry tab in Tool 11). It is important to reiterate again that the numerical data presented in Figure 9 is not to be treated as quantitative data. Box 8 provides clear examples of how it should (check mark) and should not (X) be treated.

BOX 8: APPROPRIATE INTERPRETATION OF CODING FROM RESPONSE TYPES

You are not dealing with quantitative data! Be careful in how you explain the response distributions!

"In the project, 39% of beneficiaries believe that bullying is the most important risk, which was 16% more than those saying sexual abuse from teachers was the most important. This shows that bullying is the most important issue in the project areas, and sexual abuse is not that big of a concern relatively speaking."

"Nearly half (15 people) of those who participated in the FGDs indicated that bullying was the most important risk; fewer (5) said that teacher sexual abuse was also an issue, but their explanations suggest that it is very serious nonetheless. One female student in Community B explained 'people don't talk too much about it, but I know it [sexual abuse] happens to the girls here. I have heard of a teacher who will offer to help them with studies after school, and then have his way', to which others in the FGD nodded in agreement. Male students, however, had different ideas, as one in Community A said 'I've never heard or seen anything about teachers abusing girls. But I see and have personally faced bullying here. The kids who don't have the clean clothes or the good shoes, they are picked on for being poor. Boys especially". There was one person across all groups, though, with quite a distinct opinion: "The problem here is that the students are out of control. I know one group of boys who are always threatening one teacher. I think it is something gang related, I don't really know, but the teacher is afraid to discipline as a result'."

Figure 10 illustrates how the qualitative notes will be presented by interacting with the analysis table. To display the notes, go to the analysis table:

1. Double click the cell in which the desired data intersects. For example, if you want to see all notes corresponding with FGD discussion question A.2 responses coded as "a) Don't report it," then double-click the cell that intersects "a) Don't report it" and "Total#" (I-15 in Figure 9).

2. A new tab will open that will contain all the available notes in column I. (Note: Blank cells where notes were not recorded will also show up. You can filter out blank cells or sort by "ascending," which will put the cells containing notes at the top of the spreadsheet).

Figure 10: Example of summary of notes (quotations) pulled from database for the same question set (A-2) for all respondents and response "a) don't report it"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
						F3	fx	If you hear about a student victim of SRGBV, how do you report it (or if you haven't ever heard about it, what would you do	

	Community Name	Date of Interview	FGD or KII Type (e.g Male Student, Female Parent)	Q. Code	Risk Cat	Question Text	Response option(s)	# Chose response	Notes
1									
2	West Community	10/26/17	Teacher	A.2		If you hear about a	a) Don't report it	0	
3	East Community	10/23/17	Teacher	A.2		If you hear about a	a) Don't report it	2	Honestly, we don't have a good system set up. There is no way for students to report anonymously, and then for the complaint to be elevated. We need a reporting system and a school board to receive and follow up on the complaints. We just don't have the resources or time to set this up, and we don't really know how to do it. I've heard of complaint boxes before, but I dont understand how that could work - who reads the complaint? Then what?
4	West Community	10/26/17	Male Student	A.2		If you hear about a	a) Don't report it	5	There's no reason to report it, nothing will happen or if anything will happen, there will be repurcussions (x4) - I stand up for myself, I am responsible for myself and nobody else.
5	East Community	10/23/17	Male Student	A.2		If you hear about a	a) Don't report it	2	I worry about repurcussions if I report such a thing. People can talk here and then if someone hears I reported a fellow student, they might want to hurt me further. Here it is usually not acceptable to speak out so others are in trouble (x2)
6	West Community	10/26/17	Female Student	A.2		If you hear about a	a) Don't report it	3	Even the complaint box is insufficient, because teachers know our handwriting and they will identify us if we complain about them. Then we'll be beat or get poor grades, so we just remain silent.
7	East Community	10/23/17	Female Student	A.2		If you hear about a	a) Don't report it	7	We don't report it - how would we report it? There are some female teachers but they would just have to tell the other teachers. We fear repurcissions from this, so we just deal with it.
8									
9									

By examining the data by type of FGD/KII, community, gender, etc., you will be able to better see trends and outliers and then report on them. It is important you spend a good amount of time simply looking through the analysis tabs (in particular noting community differences and differences across gender, student, parent, teacher, and any other groups you had determined as relevant during the inception phase) and reading through all the notes. You can take notes at the same time to help you identify any trends that are emerging or to remind yourself of some of the outliers (just because a response option is rare doesn't mean it is unimportant).

Reporting

Sharing the findings and conclusions from fieldwork is the last step in the SLE assessment process. Reporting—which is another way of representing data based on the analysis—may take multiple forms. A fieldwork report is an important outcome of the research, but it may also be prudent for implementers to share findings and conclusions with stakeholders (via the report, a presentation, or an event).

Fieldwork Report

The fieldwork report is designed to be simple and will include certain components, depending on whether you conducted quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research:

- **Qualitative** – Report on the trends observed in the qualitative database alongside with quotations from the detailed notes that serve to enrich the findings.

- **Quantitative** – Report on basic descriptive statistics that provide an indication of the extent of risks and assets in the project area (and how they differ by gender, location, and so forth) and (as relevant) any statistically significant changes since the previous assessment(s). Indicate where there may be correlation between two variables (See Box 9).

- **Mixed methods** – Present both qualitative and quantitative data alongside one another.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FINDING AND A CONCLUSION

Finding: Fact based, direct report of data, does not include an interpretation

Conclusion: Developed from findings, interpretation of findings, typically bigger-picture items

Qualitative data can be used to clarify, explain, and enrich quantitative findings; quantitative data can be used to provide a more robust and objective measure of something and to systematically compare groups, regions, and so forth.

BOX 9: REPORTING QUANTITATIVE DATA, CORRELATION VS. CAUSATION

When reporting statistics, it is sometimes tempting to attribute a cause and effect relationship. However, it is critical to understand the difference between correlation and causation. As a rule, note that the methodology prescribed in this toolkit *will not enable you to attribute causality at any point*.

Correlation tells us when two variables are related, for example, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) scores (Y) and having been subjected to corporal punishment (CP) in the previous school term (X).

Causation means that one variable causes another variable, for example, improved EGRA scores (Y) are caused by reduced fear of CP in school (X).

If your data analysis shows that higher EGRA scores (Y) are correlated with not being subjected to CP, you **cannot conclude** that non-exposure to CP *caused* the higher scores. On the one hand, you may consider the possibility that higher achievement led to reduced CP. Also, there may be a third (or fourth, or fifth) variable (e.g., teachers who have undergone training) that is actually the cause of the improved EGRA scores and not the absence of CP. The only way you can demonstrate causality is with experimental research, and this toolkit is not prescribing experimental research.

However, you may infer that avoiding CP could enhance the learning experience, and therefore improve EGRA scores, or you may infer that better students tend to experience CP less (because they are better students). Either way, a non-experimental research design will not help you show this statistically. You can, however, use qualitative data to make a case for either of those arguments (or even another argument)—as long as you are not suggesting that there is a causal linkage. (However, you may say that it is compelling enough to demand experimental study.

The graphic about germs provides another way to think about this:

- Bad smells do not produce disease.
- Disease does not produce bad smells.
- Rather, germs are the cause for both of these related things.

Source: Amplitude Analytics
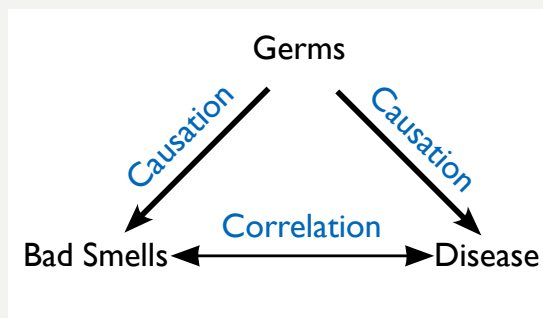
The intention of this report is to be largely descriptive—a presentation of the findings—and one that can be easily written and easily read and/or acted upon by a variety of individuals, including non-researchers. It should be in narrative format, although bullet points may make certain sections (e.g., the recommendations) more concise, and it should also be sufficiently short (around 10 pages) to maximize readability. Ultimately, though, it is up to the organization that is commissioning the assessment to determine the type of report that would be most useful, and the team should keep this in mind throughout the entire assessment process. Box 10 provides a recommended outline for the report, and Annex 6 shows how to report findings and conclusions.

BOX 10: REPORT OUTLINE TEMPLATE

Introduction (2 pages)

- Brief country context, project description, and summary of risks identified (via desk review)

Methodology (1 page)

- Describe communities visited, tools utilized in each, respondent counts (by type and gender)
- Limitations and challenges with fieldwork

Participant characteristics

- Include one section that details basic demographic information for the respondents (age, grade, school, and others as relevant).

Findings (2 pages per risk area)

- Include one section per specific risk category.
- For each subsection, include:
    » A relevant summary table of statistics by relevant subgroups (quantitative)
    » Response distributions and key quotations (qualitative)
- Scope of risk
- Assets

Conclusions and Recommendations (3 pages)

- The main or most critical risks observed
- How risks relate to project as a whole
- How the project might address the observed risks, and in particular, how the project might take advantage of the assets observed
- Anticipated challenges to addressing the observed risks
- Any recommended modifications to the project as a result of findings

It is envisioned that a field team leader with limited experience doing qualitative and/or quantitative analyses and reporting would be able to author this basic report, provided the analysis steps have been followed thoroughly, and the report is understood to be largely a presentation of findings. In this case, it may be prudent to work on conclusions and recommendations with others working on implementing the program. Still, with so much rich data collected and contained in the databases, the report can be longer and go into deeper analyses to produce more findings and more nuanced and in-depth conclusions and recommendations, depending on the needs and capacities of the implementing organization. However, this will require the author to have a reasonable level of experience in authoring research reports.

Information-Sharing Meetings with Stakeholders

In addition to developing a written report, the SLE Assessment Team may wish to identify a mechanism for returning to key stakeholders with findings. These discussions foster continued stakeholder engagement and may allow for even greater collaboration among concerned parties. Moreover, such meetings may promote open dialogue about key issues facing the learning communities visited during the SLE assessment process. Following are possible methods for sharing findings and conclusions with stakeholders:

- Newsletters, bulletins, briefs, blogs, and brochures: Developing short communication pieces to share particular findings

- Conference: Convening a large number of people to present and discuss findings

- PowerPoint: Presenting findings and analysis using digital slides

- Verbal briefings: Providing specific information to an audience of interested participants and discussing during a question and answer session.

Defining key stakeholder interests, developing objectives for the feedback session, and determining processes for incorporating comments from the discussion into the final report and subsequent programming are important steps for a successful sharing session.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the risks to safety in learning environments along with existing (local) strategies to overcome those risks is imperative for education programming in crisis and conflict environments. While an extensive and highly rigorous research exercise may be ideal, this toolkit takes into account that time, funding, capacity, and access to communities may be limited. As such, this rapid and relatively simple toolkit allows implementing organizations and researchers to conduct exploratory and diagnostic research that helps them to take a first step to learning more, either to design or adapt a program to be better or to determine where more-in depth research is needed before any actions are taken. It is envisioned that the findings and conclusions will not only help those who implement the toolkit, but also that they will become public knowledge so others can benefit. ECCN has therefore provided online space for users of this toolkit to upload their reports, as well as discussion boards for toolkit users and reports so users can engage with one another to learn more and share beyond the life of ECCN. We encourage you, as a user of this toolkit, to become an active participant.

ENDNOTES

i   For more information on the nature and level of multiple contextual risks in countries around the world, see the INFORM Index for Risk Management, a collaborative project of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the European Commission, found at http://www.inform-index.org.

ii   These include the UN Sustainable Development Goals; UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants; World Humanitarian Summit Commitments to Action; Paris Agreement on Climate Change; Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security; and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

iii   In the literature, (lack of) safety in learning environments is often explored in reference to specific risks to demonstrate how it negatively impacts access to quality education and/or can make people less safe. For example related to SRGBV risks, see RTI International. (2016). *Literature review on school-related gender-based violence: How it is defined and studied.* Washington, DC, USAID; Pereznieto, P., Harper, C., Clench, B., & Coarasa, J. (2010). *The economic impact of school violence.* London, UK: Plan International and ODI. For gang violence risks, see Guerra, N. G., Dierkhising, C. B., & Payne, P. R. (2013). *How should we identify and intervene with youth at risk of joining gangs? A developmental approach for children ages 0–12.* In T. R. Simon, N. M. Ritter, & R. R. Mahendra (Eds.), Changing course: Preventing gang membership. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Howell, J. C. (2013). Chapter 1. Why is gang membership prevention important? In T. R. Simon, N. M. Ritter, & R. R. Mahendra (Eds.), *Changing course: Preventing gang membership* (pp. 75–88). Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For natural hazard risks, see World Bank and GFDRR. (2016). *Roadmap for safer schools: Guidance note;* Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. (2015b). *Safe access to learning, during and after the Ebola crisis* [Joint advocacy brief]. For education under attack risks, see Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. (2014a). *Education under attack 2014.* New York, NY: Author; Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. (2014b). *The role of communities in protecting education from attack: Lessons learned;* UNESCO. (2011). *The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and Education: Education for All Global Monitoring Report.* For trauma, see Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. (2015). Education in Emergencies. Retrieved from http://www.ineesite.org/en/education-in-emergencies; Affolter, F. W. (2003, January 1). *Development discourse for socio-emotional well-being* [Doctoral dissertation]. *Available from Proquest.* (Paper AAI3078666); Winthrop, R., & Kirk, J. (2008). Learning for a bright future: Schooling, armed conflict, and children's well-being. *Comparative Education Review, 52*(4), 639–661.

iv   For example, USAID's Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA) is intended to provide USAID program planners and managers with a fast and "good enough" situation analysis of the interactions between education and the multiple risks that may exist in any given crisis and/or conflict-affected environment in order to inform Mission policy and programming.

v   Note that the scoring rubric is simply a tool to support decision-making by the SLE Assessment Team. It should not be considered a quantitative data analysis tool or a definitive assessment of risk that would determine a decision.

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