The Short Guide to Rapid Joint Education Needs Assessments

Global Education Cluster

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The Short Guide to Rapid Joint Education Needs Assessments is part of a larger toolkit produced by the Global Education Cluster in 2010 called *The Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit*. The Short Guide is a stand-alone reference tool to help you plan and conduct a rapid joint needs assessment as part of either a multi-cluster assessment or an education-specific needs assessment. The Short Guide consolidates and simplifies the critical information on needs assessments contained in the larger Toolkit. It also includes cross-references that you can follow up for further information. You can find more detailed information on any section of the Short Guide in the full Toolkit: http://oneresponse.info/GlobalClusters/Education

The purpose of this Guide is to help Education Clusters conduct rapid joint needs assessments. You can also use it in situations where there are no clusters and education is coordinated through a sector working group. The Guide uses the word 'cluster' to refer to both cluster-based and sector-based coordination.

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1

Responding to a sudden onset emergency: rapid joint assessments

Rapid assessments are ideally conducted in the first two weeks following a sudden onset emergency, but more typically may take place within the first month.[1] Sudden onset emergencies can include both natural disasters and conflict. In areas of chronic crisis, sudden onset emergencies are events that affect or change the status quo.

Joint assessments can include both multi-cluster assessments and individual cluster assessments. 'Joint' refers to work conducted with multiple partners, either across a number of clusters or within a single cluster, using one agreed methodology. See Figure 1 (overleaf) for suggested timing and sequencing of assessments.

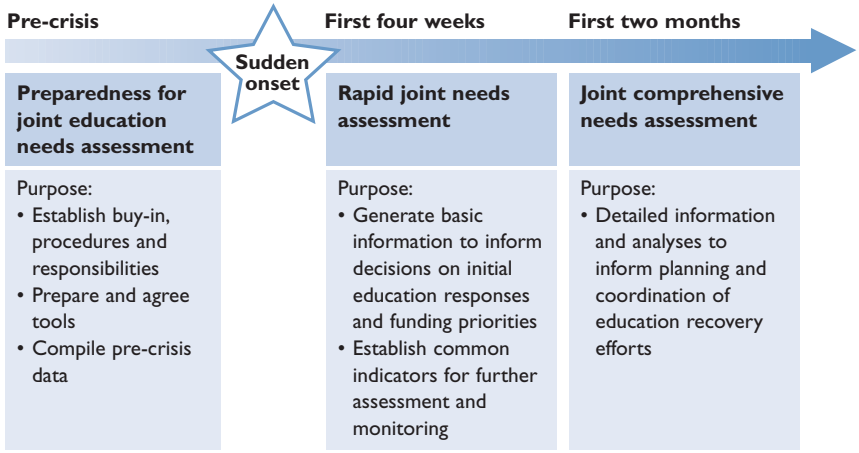
Rapid joint assessments provide a snapshot of education-related needs. They're not meant to be baseline studies or to provide background information. They're not school surveys, and they don't replace existing education data from sources such as Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). Instead, they're intended to be a first step in a lengthier process of gathering evidence and managing information about an emergency.

Rapid joint assessments provide a starting point for defining the education needs in an emergency. They also flag information gaps and emerging issues for consideration in a *comprehensive education assessment*. Comprehensive assessments can inform in-depth responses to identified needs and can serve as a baseline for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

[1] The IASC Needs Assessment Task Force uses these definitions:
- *Initial* assessments take place in the first three days of a sudden onset emergency.
- *Rapid* assessments take place in the first two weeks of the emergency.
- *In-depth* assessments take place in the first month of the emergency.

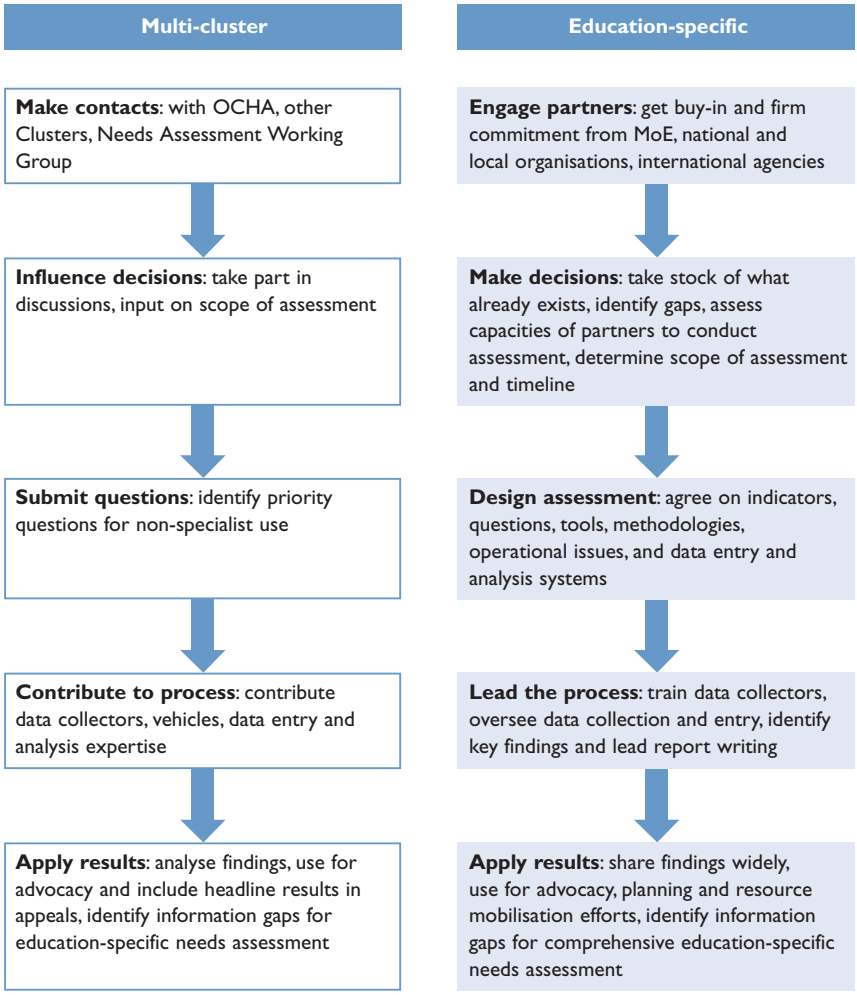
The Education Cluster uses these definitions:
- *Rapid* assessments take place in the first month of the emergency.
- *Comprehensive* assessments take place in the first two months of the emergency.

Figure 1: Timing and sequencing of assessments



Ideally, preparedness measures will be in place before the emergency occurs. If so, it should be possible to mobilise a rapid response. Whether this is the case or not, this Short Guide can help Education Clusters to rapidly organise an assessment and manage it from start to finish. See Figure 2 (opposite) for a brief overview of the complete rapid joint needs assessment process, for both multi-cluster and education-specific assessments. You'll find more detail on the various steps in the relevant sections of this Short Guide.

Figure 2: Process overview for rapid joint needs assessment



2
Education as part of multi-cluster assessments

Multi-sector/cluster needs assessments can be of two types. A rapid assessment focuses on priority areas to get a quick snapshot of the impact of the crisis. A more in-depth assessment takes a comprehensive look at the effect of the crisis on the population in order to identify recovery-orientated needs, capacities and gaps.

It's important for Education Clusters to be part of multi-cluster needs assessments whenever possible.

While often fairly general in scope, multi-cluster needs assessments at the onset of an emergency can:

- generate essential data that highlights a population's urgent education needs
- make data immediately available to donors, education agencies, local officials and communities
- identify pre-existing and available resources and services for use in education response strategies
- highlight key issues to be followed up in more detail through sector-specific assessments
- explore the links between clusters and gain an overall picture of the effect of the crisis.

Relevant multi-cluster assessments in which Education Clusters are encouraged to engage include:

- OCHA-led inter-cluster rapid needs assessments
- Initial Rapid Assessments (IRAs) conducted jointly by the WASH, Health and Nutrition Clusters
- Protection Cluster needs assessments, such as those of 'Protection of Conflict-Induced IDPs', which are by nature multi-sectoral
- Joint Assessment Missions (JAMs), typically organised by UNHCR and WFP to assess the food and non-food needs of refugees and other populations of concern to both organisations.

Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) or Early Recovery/Post-Conflict Needs Assessments (ER/PCNAs) take place at a later stage. These are typically

organised by the government of the crisis-affected country, the World Bank, the UN Development Group and the European Commission. UNDP, as cluster lead for Early Recovery, will often play a strong role in organising PDNAs and ER/PCNAs.

Multi-cluster assessments demand varying levels of effort and engagement, depending on the scale of the emergency, the strength of the cluster system, and other factors. In some cases you'll need to do little more than attend coordination meetings and submit education-related questions. Other assessments will require more detailed planning and coordination, and/or contributing staff and resources such as data collectors and transport.

Despite positive moves towards more coordinated assessments in emergencies, we cannot assume that education will automatically be included in multi-cluster assessments. Education Clusters may need to be proactive in order to find out what assessments are planned and advocate for education to be included. The following messages can be adapted and used to argue for the inclusion of education in multi-cluster assessments:

Key advocacy messages

- ✓ Children are entitled to education. *Education is a basic right*, even in an emergency.
- ✓ *Education is often a priority sector for communities* and should be considered from the first phase of an emergency response. 'To go back to school' is one of the first things children and their families ask for in an emergency.
- ✓ *Humanitarian assistance priorities should be ranked according to the needs that affected populations express*, not according to the international community's perception of priorities.
- ✓ *Education links with other key sectors*. Prioritising education in a multi-cluster needs assessment can provide entry points for other interventions, enabling a better overall humanitarian response.
- ✓ *Children and youth are an important group* in any population recovering from crisis. This is not just because of the negative impact that disasters have on children and youth, but also because of the potential children and youth have to contribute positively to response and recovery efforts.
- ✓ As a humanitarian community, we can only respond to the emergency needs if we have an *early opportunity to assess damage* to the education sector and plan our programmes accordingly.

Within a multi-cluster assessment, it's likely that *each sector will only be able to submit a limited number of questions* – generally between three and five questions in total. Education Clusters will need to think carefully about which questions are most important and appropriate for inclusion in multi-cluster assessment. See the matrix of indicators in section 5 below for suggestions.

Throughout the process of a multi-cluster needs assessment, the Cluster Coordinator (or whoever is acting as needs assessment focal point within the Cluster) will need to manage expectations within the Education Cluster – in particular regarding what is possible and what is not within such an assessment.

3
Education-specific assessments

Even before the multi-cluster assessment has been completed, you'll need to begin preparations for a rapid joint education needs assessment. This is an opportunity to gather more detailed information about the needs and to look into more technical issues that require educational expertise. As funding appeals, supply procurements and work plans are being drafted, they'll all require more detailed evidence. *A rapid joint needs assessment helps to establish a baseline regarding the impact of the emergency. It can also serve as a starting point for measuring how effective interventions are, and for early recovery planning.*

The *first step* in defining the information requirements for a joint education needs assessment is *finding out what information has already been collected*. You should quickly review secondary data, to avoid duplicating information already available from sources such as government records and needs assessments done by other agencies and clusters. Two types of secondary data are important:

1. Pre-crisis secondary data. This is basic information on the pre-existing educational context:

- population and demographic data, including school-age populations by age group
- basic features of the education system, including key education statistics, policies, curriculum and cultural practices affecting learning
- risk mapping, to determine the locations and populations that are most vulnerable to crises.

The *main sources* for pre-crisis secondary data on education are the national governments' EMIS, the national statistical bureaus, national and regional academic institutions, and national, regional or global databases (such as DevInfo, UNSTATS). Ideally, emergency preparedness efforts before the crisis will already have collected this information.

2. In-crisis secondary data. This is collected after the onset of the emergency. It helps determine the most affected regions, populations and

the sites for the assessment. Some of this information should come from multi-cluster assessments. Key in-crisis secondary data includes:

- affected populations and locations, including total numbers, percentage of school-age population and schools/learning spaces affected
- logistical, security and access considerations, including road conditions to and in the affected area, presence of continued fighting or other risks, landmines, banditry, blockades, rioting and likely evolution of the emergency, eg, potential for recurrence of natural disaster or conflict.

Key sources of in-crisis secondary data on education will include:

- the Ministry of Education
- other clusters
- UN agencies (including OCHA and/or the humanitarian information centre/information management unit)
- international and local NGOs with staff on the ground in the affected areas.

4
Framing the assessment

Once you've identified what information you already have, the next step is to determine what more you need to know. Rapid joint needs assessments typically aim to answer the following questions:

- **What happened?** Describe the type of emergency or disaster.
- **Where did it happen?** Identify the geographic areas affected by the disaster and their environmental conditions.
- **Who/what was affected, and to what extent?** Identify the people and resources affected by the emergency or disaster. Who are the most vulnerable segments of the population, and which groups should be prioritised for assistance? How are they affected? What assets were affected? How were they affected?
- **What resources and capacities already exist?** What capacities are already present in the country? Which government capacities are functioning, and which organisations are present and operational? What resources are available in terms of functioning offices, vehicles, pre-positioned goods and materials, etc?
- **What are the humanitarian needs and gaps?** What humanitarian needs have not yet been met? What are the gaps? What are the priorities for humanitarian assistance?
- **What is the existing context and how might it develop?** Describe the security context, access to the zone and existing coordination of response actions. Highlight special concerns about how a situation is developing or emerging threats.
- **Should we intervene?** Define the objectives of the intervention, bearing in mind local preparedness measures and financial and human resource capacity.
- **How should we intervene?** Make recommendations that define and establish the priorities for action and resources necessary for the immediate response.

Answering these questions can shape the overall scope of the assessment. This leads to the next question: *what additional information needs to be collected?* When you're doing a rapid assessment, the challenge is often to narrow down the information requirements to a prioritised core list that's achievable within the tight timeframe of the assessment.

Criteria for determining what information to collect

Make sure you collect information that:

- ✓ *is relevant for decision-making* and other purposes of Education Clusters
- ✓ *matches standard measurements/indicators* used by government and humanitarian assistance agencies, where such standards exist
- ✓ *doesn't duplicate information* that has been (or will be) collected by others
- ✓ *a non-specialist can collect*, ie, it shouldn't include technical questions that cannot be easily asked or understood by someone who's not an education specialist
- ✓ *can be collected quickly*: work to a maximum of ten questions for a rapid joint education needs assessment
- ✓ *can be collected and reported at the level of community/site or school/learning space*: keep individual-level information to a minimum
- ✓ *can easily be compiled into summary findings*, either qualitative or quantitative.[2]

[2] Qualitative information is information expressed in non-numerical form. Quantitative information is the converse: data is described in terms of quantities, and numerical values are used.

Keep ethics in mind[3]

Assessments aren't neutral: they are 'interventions' in themselves and raise expectations that an intervention will happen. An ethical approach to conducting assessments demands:

- that *those affected by the crisis participate actively* in identifying their own needs and priorities.
- *good communication to ensure informed consent*: participants understand that they don't have to participate in the assessment if they prefer not to, and they understand the purpose of the assessment and its limitations.
- that *confidentiality* is assured for participants.
- *foresight regarding any potentially negative impact of the exercise*. Don't use methodologies that risk stigmatising children and youth, endangering them in any way, or increasing family separation. In extreme cases, assessments may even endanger the safety of respondents, eg, by labelling children or youth and attracting the attention of groups that prey on children and youth at risk.
- *a commitment to follow-up action*, if required.
- *that we refrain from taking over* and assuming leadership if communities or governments can cope, unless the community's response doesn't adequately ensure the basic rights of children and youth.
- *sustained communication*, so that we keep participants informed of how the information they provided is being used and what follow-up actions are being taken.

[3] Adapted from Uppard, S, protection notes for assessment.doc, and IASC, *Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action*, chapter on Gender and Participation in Humanitarian Action: http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/IASC/downloadDoc.aspx?docID=3632&type=pdf

5
Indicators and questions

Indicators

The framework for a joint education needs assessment is largely based on the domains and key thematic issues in the INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response and Recovery.[4] This helps us to ensure that we cover all the educational issues within a high-quality emergency response.

Core domains	Inter-cluster issues	Cross-cutting issues
• Access and learning environment • Teaching and learning • Teachers and other education personnel • Education policy * Foundational standards of participation, coordination and analysis are mainstreamed throughout	• Protection • Psychosocial support • Conflict mitigation • Disaster risk reduction • Early childhood development • Gender • HIV and AIDS • Human rights • Inclusive education • Youth	• Protection • Water, sanitation and hygiene • Health • Shelter • Camp coordination and camp management • Early recovery

This framework has been used to create a proposed list of core indicators for Education Clusters to include during rapid joint education or multi-cluster assessments that are conducted in the early phases of an emergency. These indicators – developed at the global level after an extensive consultation

[4] http://www.ineesite.org/standards

process – form part of a comprehensive multi-cluster database of indicators created by the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force.

Review these indicators to determine which are most relevant to the information-gathering you'll need to do (from either primary or secondary sources) during your assessment. *Adapt the indicators and add others as required to reflect the priority information needs in your context.*

Further suggested indicators, including a range focused on cross-cutting issues, are available in the full Toolkit. Whichever indicators you use, it's essential to compare current data with pre-crisis data so that you can determine the impact of the crisis on education. Make sure that all these indicators, expressed in proportions/percentages, have clear numerical values attached to them.

Education needs assessment indicators

1. Percentage of school-age children and youth not currently attending school/learning space.
2. Percentage of existing school buildings a) usable and b) unusable.
3. Percentage of schools/learning spaces with classes taking place in temporary facilities.
4. Number of school days disrupted or lost as a result of the emergency.
5. Percentage of schools/learning spaces with life skills-based education on crisis-related issues.
6. Percentage of schools/learning spaces that lost learning materials as a result of the emergency.
7. Percentage of schools/learning spaces offering psychosocial support for a) children and youth and b) teachers.
8. Percentage of teaching personnel unable to deliver classes as a result of the emergency.
9. Percentage of education authority officials not working as a result of the emergency.
10. Percentage of government education offices/facilities a) usable and b) unusable.

The Education Cluster advocates for WASH and Nutrition Clusters to include the indicators listed below in their respective core lists.

If WASH and Nutrition Clusters don't include these indicators, the Education Cluster should do so as part of rapid assessments, with more detailed technical follow-up by the appropriate Clusters to follow.

WASH
- Percentage of schools/learning spaces with access to safe drinking water.
- Percentage of schools/learning spaces with latrines.

Nutrition
- Percentage of schools/learning spaces providing meals or food for students/learners.

Questions

The questions in the assessment should generate data to inform the indicators. The matrix below shows how to use the sections – or domains – in the INEE Minimum Standards to generate indicators and questions, and how to decide which assessment tool to use for which purpose. This is only an illustrative list – it doesn't reflect the full range of information and questions that you might include in the assessment. For example, it only covers the core domains of the INEE Minimum Standards and doesn't touch on cross-cutting and inter-cluster issues: these may require their own indicators and questions.

The tools attached in Annexes 1–3 suggest additional questions and show how to write questions that you can include in simple reporting forms. You should adapt all questions to the particular context and add more contextually-relevant questions as necessary.

Bear in mind that normally you'll be using a number of different questions with a range of stakeholders to inform your indicators. This can look like repetition across assessment tools, but it will make your assessment results more reliable if you can *cross-check data by asking for the same information in different ways with different audiences*.

Summary of joint education needs assessment indicators and assessment questions matrix

Education domains	Indicators	Suggested assessment questions	Tool
Access and learning environment	Percentage of school-age children and youth not currently attending school/ learning space.	Since the emergency, how many children are attending schools in this site?	Key Informant Interview (KII)
	Percentage of existing school buildings a) usable and b) unusable.	What is the level of damage to the school as a result of the emergency?	Observation Checklist/KII
	Percentage of schools/learning spaces with classes taking place in temporary facilities.	Are any temporary structures needed?	KII
Teaching and learning	Number of school days disrupted or lost as a result of the emergency.	Did the school stop operating (close) for any amount of time as a result of the emergency? If so, for how long?	KII
	Percentage of schools/learning spaces with life skills-based education on crisis-related issues.	What topics have been introduced in schools in this community/site to help learners deal with the emergency?	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)/KII
	Percentage of schools/learning spaces that lost learning materials as a result of the emergency.	Has this school lost materials as a result of the emergency?	KII
	Percentage of schools/learning spaces offering psychosocial support for a) children and youth and b) teachers.	Is the school/learning space offering psychosocial support to children and youth? To teachers?	KII

continued overleaf

Summary of joint education needs assessment indicators and assessment questions matrix *continued*

Education domains	Indicators	Suggested assessment questions	Tool
Teachers and other education personnel	Percentage of teaching personnel unable to deliver classes as a result of the emergency.	Since the emergency, how many teachers are still able to work?	KII
Education policy	Percentage of education authority officials not working as a result of the emergency. Percentage of government education offices/facilities a) usable and b) unusable.	Since the emergency, how many education authority officials are still able to work? What is the level of damage to education offices/facilities as a result of the emergency? Since the emergency, have local education officials been able to reach and support this school?	KII/Capacity Mapping KII/Observation Checklist/ Capacity Mapping FGD/KII/ Capacity Mapping

6
Data collection

It's important to remember that while the quality of data is a concern, the rapid needs assessment is not intended to be a large-scale, nationally representative assessment. The information collected will not be the definitive findings on the state of the emergency – it's only one of many steps taken to help understand the impact of the emergency on the education sector, and it's a way of identifying and prioritising needs.

Focus on *establishing a clear process for data management* – this means adhering to good methods, efficient data collection techniques and simple data entry and analysis. Time is of the essence in rapid assessments – more sophisticated approaches will be used in the next assessment phase.

What is sampling?

Sampling is the process of collecting information from a subset of the affected population, so that you can gain an insight into the needs of the entire population in question. It's important to allow operational realities to guide sample size, as there's no point in coordinators planning to collect more data than can be analysed. Use clear criteria when you choose the number of sites for the assessment. Sites should be in affected areas and should be within the resource capacity of the cluster (eg, distance, language, security, costs). The biggest factor affecting sample size is likely to be the scale and impact of the emergency.

How do you do it?

In an emergency, typically access is limited, time is short and reliable information about populations is not available, so the most convenient approach for rapid needs assessments is *purposive sampling*. With this approach, you use the judgement of community representatives and the assessment team to select representative locations and/or informants. You should of course be careful to reduce bias. As far as possible, you should

prioritise and select sites that will provide an understanding of the situation in the affected area as a whole. The criteria you use to select sites will depend largely on the context of the emergency.

1. When time and resources are severely limited, use these practical criteria to prioritise locations:

- **Urgent need**. Prioritise sites where external sources of information indicate the situation is the most serious.
- **Accessibility**. Where overall needs are urgent, widespread and unmet, it's justifiable to focus on accessible areas.
- **Gaps in existing knowledge**. Cover locations about which little is known or where key information is lacking, especially where no relief agencies are working yet.

2. When moderate time and resources are available, use criteria that will capture the general situation for education, as well as the diverse effects of the emergency across locations and populations. Select sites that represent:

- **important differences between locations**, eg, urban/rural, type of livelihood activities, ethnic/language/religious groups, and residential status (ie, refugees, IDPs, immigrants)
- **worst/best case scenarios**, ie, sites that are 'of concern' (eg, heavily affected, according to initial reports) as well as those that are more 'typical of the situation' (eg, moderately affected).

In purposive sampling, you can adjust site selection during the assessment. For example, if it becomes clear during data collection that you've overlooked certain important areas, these can be added. *In all cases, the assessment report should document and justify the selection of sites visited and sites excluded*. This information is needed to help clarify to what extent the data collected can be generalised to reflect the overall situation.

Assessment teams

Field teams are normally between two and four people. The number of field teams will vary according to the context. Within each team, one person should be appointed team leader and the others should share responsibility for collecting and recording data. While the composition of field teams will depend on a range of factors, not least the availability of staff, as far as possible teams should include a mix of skills and experience, as shown below.

Assessment team: skills, experience and composition

- ✓ Experience of assessments
- ✓ Good communication skills
- ✓ Local language skills
- ✓ General knowledge of the culture, traditions and practices
- ✓ Access to local networks
- ✓ Technical expertise
- ✓ Balance of institutional representation: government, UN, NGOs
- ✓ Balance of national and international staff
- ✓ Balance of male and female staff (female interviewers will often find it easier to get information from female respondents)

Training assessment teams

Make sure your assessment teams are briefed and trained before they begin collecting data. The training should cover the background to the assessment, orientation on the assessment tools they'll be using, roles and responsibilities of team members, reporting/debriefing requirements, and logistics for the data collection process.

For a rapid assessment, it's unlikely that you'll be able to dedicate more than one day to training. Even in such a short time, however, it's important to *allow assessment teams to practise using the data collection tools through role-play exercises*. Learning by doing, even in an artificial environment, can help the teams to understand the materials and pre-empt some errors that can commonly occur.

- **The way a question is asked is as important as the question itself.** For example, when conducting focus group discussions, data collectors should not read out the answer options as though they were asking multiple-choice questions. They should ask the question openly – the options are there to help them record the answers correctly. They can also

use those options as prompts when groups are not forthcoming with information, or when they don't appear to have understood the question.

- **The way that the information is recorded is also important.** Practise using the survey tools and share some examples of correctly and incorrectly completed forms. The example below is from a focus group discussion form. A group of seven children was asked, "How can we best help all children go to school?" Two of them answered "provide learning materials"; three suggested "sensitise parents" in their responses; and two more said that "providing separate latrines for girls and boys" would help. Data collectors should use numbers or tallies rather than simple ticks or crosses (see second example), so that data entry and analysis staff can calculate the most popular responses.

Correctly completed form

How can we best help all children go to school?	
	2 A. Provide learning materials
	_____ B. Create more learning spaces
	_____ C. Improve quality
	3 D. Sensitise parents
	_____ E. Provide uniforms
	2 F. Other (specify): provide separate latrines for girls and boys

Incorrectly completed form

How can we best help all children go to school?	
	X A. Provide learning materials
	_____ B. Create more learning spaces
	_____ C. Improve quality
	X D. Sensitise parents
	_____ E. Provide uniforms
	X F. Other (specify):

7
Data management

Data entry

Keep in mind the operational considerations for data management and maintenance – expertise, technological capacity and resource availability. Are computers available for data entry? Do partners have access to necessary software? Are power and Internet connections adequate for sharing data? Is translation required, and if so, at what stage of the data management process?

Data can be recorded by hand, using tally sheets and summary tables. However, computer programmes such as MS Excel or MS Access are better and will save time in the long run, as they can help you to organise and understand the data. Think about who will use the data beyond the Education Cluster and who is likely to build on the data during follow-up assessments and monitoring exercises. For example, if the government already uses MS Excel and can incorporate assessment findings into its own information management systems, MS Excel would be the most appropriate programme to use.

Interpreting data

Triangulating data is the process of comparing data collected from different sources and by different methods. By cross-checking the data collected during the assessment, teams can verify important findings and identify and reconcile any significant inconsistencies across:

- **sources**, eg, by comparing information from different respondents and comparing primary data with secondary information
- **methods**, eg, by comparing observations made in the field with information provided by key informants
- **data collectors**, eg, by discussing findings with members of other clusters who assessed the same sites, such as during multi-cluster coordination meetings or through one-to-one discussions.

Compare in-crisis data with any comparable pre-crisis data, so that you can distinguish the effects of the emergency from pre-existing conditions. Given the difficulties you'll face in obtaining reliable primary data within the first few days of an emergency, you're likely to have to rely heavily on information from secondary sources during rapid joint education needs assessments. This includes pre-crisis baseline data, which enables you to compare the post-emergency situation with the conditions that prevailed before it.

When the results have been compiled, determine the locations, population groups and domains of education that have been most severely affected by the emergency. Indicate the relative severity of the impacts on education. We recommend that you use the standard 'traffic light' ranking system shown below, as the colour codes enable quick interpretation of priorities.

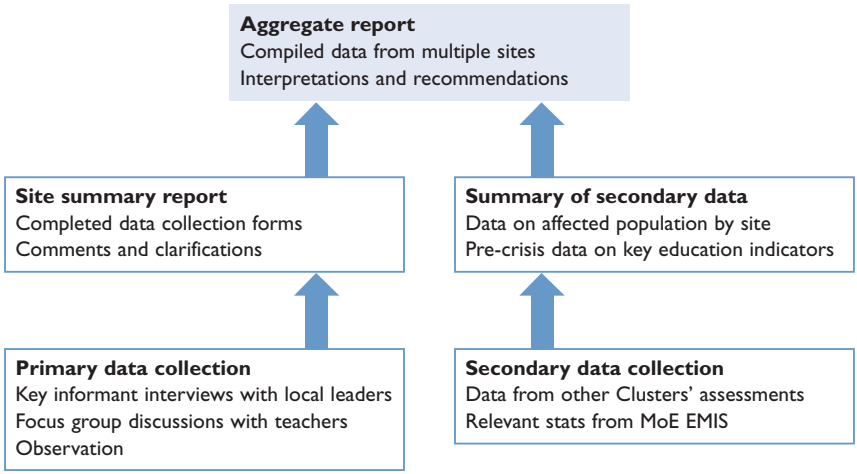
Severity ranking criteria for analysis

Red	Severe situation: urgent intervention required
Orange	Situation of concern: surveillance required
Yellow	Lack of data/unreliable data: further assessment required
Green	Relatively normal situation: local population can cope; no action required

8
Sharing and applying findings

To influence programming priorities and funding for education in emergencies responses, *key findings from rapid joint needs assessments must be documented in forms that can be easily understood and used* by decision-makers and other audiences. This requires synthesising information from the different sites and sources into an overall report.

Inputs into a joint education needs assessment report



Organise meetings with key actors to present and discuss the assessment findings before finalising the report. This might include a meeting of Education Cluster partners, a roundtable of representatives from all relevant Clusters, a workshop with district education officials, and a feedback session with members of the affected communities where the assessment took place. Such meetings can be an effective way to:

- clarify key assessment findings
- build agreement on priority recommendations for inclusion in appeals

- identify actions required by individual agencies and other Clusters
- define key points for advocacy regarding the education response
- determine the information and knowledge gaps to explore through further assessments
- share assessment information with representatives of the affected communities.

Sample assessment report headings

Executive summary	One page summarising the main impact of the crisis on education and recommended responses
Emergency context	Summarising the type of emergency, main population groups affected, pre-crisis education situation, scenarios for what might happen next
Objectives and methods	Rationale behind the assessment, partner involvement, sampling and data collection methods used, limitations of the assessment
Major findings	Organised by thematic headings: access and learning environment, teaching and learning, etc
Conclusions and recommendations	Priority thematic areas for response, priority populations and locations, existing capacities to respond, additional resources required
Annexes	Tools used during the assessment, maps, reference documents, list of partners and team members

9
Planning and costing

Planning

Good planning has two essential aspects: technical and operational. Technical planning requires preparing tools, conducting training, and data management – all essentials elements of a good-quality assessment that have been covered in the preceding sections of this Guide. *Operational elements of assessments are equally important to success, but their importance is often under-estimated. Operational planning requires coordination, logistics management and financial capacity.* Mobilising the resources necessary to conduct a needs assessment requires strong commitments and follow-through from cluster partners. The emergency may have changed the normal procedures that partners engage in to acquire funds and may have restricted the availability of resources. It's essential that you are aware of operational challenges, to ensure that they don't obstruct or delay the assessment. The checklist of operational considerations overleaf should help you to ensure smooth implementation.

Cost considerations

Costs will vary a great deal according to the available resources and expertise, the scope of the assessment and the context of the emergency. Carefully consider how costs will shape your assessment efforts and planning. For instance, do road conditions or security concerns mean some affected areas are only accessible by helicopter or plane? This will have a big impact on both timing (availability of flights) and costs. You need to have a clear understanding of who will cover costs, and strong commitments. Encourage Cluster leads and other partners, including national and local authorities, to contribute data collectors, vehicles, technical expertise, etc.

Checklist of operational considerations

- ✓ Understand *safety and security concerns* and/or restrictions (eg, closed roads, heightened threats, composition of assessment team, travelling with cash, permissions to transport other partners).
- ✓ Establish *contact lists* to ensure the cluster has access to names and phone numbers of participating partners.
- ✓ Prepare only those *Memorandums of Understanding* or legal commitments that are absolutely necessary.
- ✓ Determine availability of *key resources* (eg, fuel, water, paper, vehicles, computers).
- ✓ Determine availability of *key services* (eg, catering, drivers, translation, printing, communications).
- ✓ Ensure that *cash* is available to cover immediate costs such as per diems.
- ✓ Identify *venues* that are accessible to all partners for meetings and trainings.
- ✓ Prepare for any necessary *protocol* or legal requirements (eg, travel permits, official letters).
- ✓ Locate and secure adequate *accommodation* where and when necessary.

Key cost considerations, in addition to staff time

- Contractor and *consultant fees* and expenses if external assistance is needed to conduct this phase of the needs assessment.
- *Printing costs* if partner agencies don't have adequate printing capacity.
- Securing a *venue for training* data collectors if partners don't have accessible space to donate.
- *Meals* and/or refreshments for training sessions and long meetings when appropriate.
- Allowable costs (such as *travel or per diem*) for partners, as formally agreed.
- *Data collection costs*, including vehicles, drivers, fuel, per diem, accommodation and other travel expenses.
- *Data management costs*, including purchasing software or computers or hiring technical experts.

10
Sample timeline

While this sample timeline needs to be adapted to the specific context, it provides a guide and a series of benchmarks for what should be done by when:

First 72 hours	• Define the problem • Engage OCHA (mapping, population displacement, etc) • Engage Ministry and other Education Cluster partners • Input into multi-cluster needs assessment
Week one	• Compile working group • Decide on timing and scope of Education Cluster rapid joint needs assessment • Define targeted population, choose appropriate methodology and determine sample size • Decide data management modalities (data compilation and analysis, reporting and distribution) • Adapt tools to the context and the specific emergency
Week two	• Mobilise operational support (finances, print tools, vehicles, etc) • Train data collectors • Collect data
Week three	• Complete data collection • Analyse and compile results • Draft report and share with relevant actors
Week four	• Draft recommendations • Think through next steps (preparedness, contingency planning, action plans) • Include funding in Education Cluster advocacy materials, appeals and Cluster work plan

Annex 1
Sample tool: Key informant interview

Below is a template for a key informant interview. You should use this with school personnel, preferably senior positions such as school director. Like all tools, the questions need to be adapted to the context.

Tool 1: Key informant interview form

General information
Assessment identification Date of assessment: ___/___/___ (dd/mm/yy) Name(s) of assessor(s): _____ Organisation(s): _____
Location of assessment Department _____ District _____ Name of school _____ GPS/P-code _____
Learning centre Type of learning centre: 1. Primary 2. Secondary 3. Other (specify type) Gender: 1. Male 2. Female 3. Co-ed Location: 1. Rural 2. Urban
Position of key informant: _____ Efforts should be made to speak with the most senior school authority available (school director, etc)

continued opposite

Informed consent

Insert context-specific text here as a guide for data collectors, to ensure they have informed consent from interviewees before beginning the interview. For example:

My name is _____ and I am working with _____. We are conducting an assessment of the situation for education in this area. We would like to ask you some questions about the schools and educational activities taking place here. The interview should only take 30 minutes to complete. Any information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shown to other people. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any or all of the questions. However, we hope that you will participate, since your views are important. Do you have any questions?

Access and learning environment

1. Please provide current enrolment information about this school.

Primary	Male	Female	**Secondary**	Male	Female
Grade 1			Form 1		
Grade 2			Form 2		
TOTAL			TOTAL		

2. Since the emergency/crisis, around how many of the children are attending schools/learning spaces in this site?

Boys
A. None /only a few (0–25%)
B. Some (26–50%)
C. Many (51–75%)
D. Almost all/all (76–100%)

Girls
A. None /only a few (0–25%)
B. Some (26–50%)
C. Many (51–75%)
D. Almost all/all (76–100%)

continued overleaf

3. Please provide the number of internally displaced students in this school (where relevant).

Class	Number of boys	Number of girls	Total

4. What are the groups of children and young people that are least likely to participate in education activities in your community/area?

A. Children without a parent or guardian
B. Children with disabilities
C. Children working outside the home
D. Ethnic minorities
E. Other (please specify)

(Amend categories according to context. Only read the categories if the respondent does not answer spontaneously. Ask them to list the top three most excluded.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. What are the two most common reasons for not attending school?

(Select up to two answers each for boys and girls.)

Boys
A. Fees or costs
B. Illness
C. Early marriage
D. Distance to school
E. Leaving to work
F. Other (specify)

Girls
A. Fees or costs
B. Illness
C. Early marriage
D. Distance to school
E. Leaving to help at home
F. Lack of gendered facilities
G. Other (specify)

continued opposite

6. How can we better support *all* learners, including those who might normally be excluded (eg, those with disabilities, minority ethnic groups), at this school?

A. Training for teachers
B. Special curriculum or teaching materials
C. Sensitise community to allow participation
D. Assistance devices (eg, wheelchairs, ramps)
E. Other (specify)

7. What risks are present for learners and teachers while at school or travelling to/from school?

(Please choose all that apply.)

A. Health risks from unsanitary conditions
B. Landmines
C. Being abused or exploited
D. Schools are vulnerable to attack
E. Schools are a potential site for recruitment or abduction of children
F. Other (specify)

8. What is the level of damage to the school as a result of the recent emergency?

A. Totally destroyed/not usable (basic safety cannot be assured)
B. Occupied or looted and thus not usable
C. Damaged, but can be repaired (roofs, latrines or water supply points damaged, etc)
D. Limited damage, can easily be repaired (broken windows, etc)
E. No damage

Comments:

9. Are any temporary structures needed?

A. Large tents (provide dimensions)
B. Medium tents (provide dimensions)
C. Plastic sheeting
D. Wood, bamboo, other local materials
E. Other (please specify)

continued overleaf

10. Is the school/learning space offering psychosocial support to:

a) children and youth? A. Yes B. No

b) teachers? A. Yes B. No

11. What type of support for education is most essential right now in this community/site?

(Select one answer only.)

A. Repairing damaged school buildings or facilities
B. Establishing temporary spaces for learning
C. Ensuring safety of learners and teachers
D. Providing school materials
E. Providing teaching and learning resources
F. Providing psychosocial support to teachers and students
G. School feeding
H. Recruiting teaching staff
I. Other (specify)

12. What are the main WASH needs at this school?

A. Latrines
B. Water for drinking
C. Water for washing
D. Cleaning materials (soap for hand washing, etc)
E. Hygiene education
F. Other (specify)

Teaching and learning

13. Has this school lost the following materials as a result of the emergency?

(Choose all that apply.)

A. Official school documents
B. Teaching and learning materials (such as blackboards or books)
C. Furniture (ie, desks, chairs, benches)
D. Recreation supplies (such as sports equipment)
E. Water supply (hand-washing facilities, toilets, etc)
F. Other (specify)

continued opposite

14. What urgent messages or information are needed by children and youth in this site to protect them during this period?

A. Peace education and conflict mitigation
B. Natural disaster preparedness and risk reduction
C. Increased awareness of health, nutrition and hygiene issues
D. Protection against safety and security risks (landmines, armed conflict, etc)
E. Psychosocial activities and support
F. Other (specify)

15. Did learners miss instructional days as a result of the emergency?

A. Yes B. No

If yes, how many days? _____

Teachers and other education personnel

16. Since the emergency, around how many teachers are still able to work?

Men
A. None /only a few (0–25%)
B. Few (26–50%)
C. Some (51–75%)
D. Many (76–90%)
E. Almost all (91–100%)

Women
A. None /only a few (0–25%)
B. Few (26–50%)
C. Some (51–75%)
D. Many (76–90%)
E. Almost all (91–100%)

17. What kinds of teachers do you need most right now?

A. Have enough teachers
B. Female teachers
C. Male teachers
D. Certified teachers
E. Subject specific teachers (specify)
F. Teaching assistants
G. Other (specify)

18. What type of support for teachers is the most essential right now?

(Select one answer only.)

A. Psychological and social support
B. Provision of didactic materials
C. Training (specify type)
D. Other (specify)

continued overleaf

Education policy and coordination

19. Have local education officials been able to reach and support this school since the emergency?

A. Yes B. No

20. Are there currently any functioning groups present in this community that are supporting education?

(Select all that apply.)

A. Government education authorities
B. Community education committees (such as PTAs, SMCs)
C. Local NGOs or religious groups
D. International NGOs or UN agencies
E. Other (specify)

Community participation

21. If you have a community education committee, what is your evaluation of its level of activity?

A. Very active
B. Somewhat active
C. Limited activity
D. Existing but not active
E. Not existing

22. What actions has the school or local community already undertaken to address the crisis?

A. Repairing damaged school buildings or facilities
B. Establishing temporary spaces for learning
C. Ensuring safety of children and teachers
D. Providing school materials
E. Psychosocial support for teachers and students
F. School feeding
G. Other (specify)

Annex 2
Sample tool: Focus group discussion

Below is a template for a focus group discussion. You should use this with students in primary school, generally in grades 6 and 7, but it can be easily adapted for out-of-school youth too. Revise the questions to reflect whether or not schools are currently in session/open.

The checklist column on the form is a recording tool and a prompt, not a series of questions. Results should be recorded as numbers not ticks.

Tool 2: Focus group discussion with primary school students

General information		
Assessment identification		
Date of assessment: ___/___/___ (dd/mm/yy)		
Name(s) of assessor(s): _____ Organisation(s): _____		
Location of assessment		
Department _____ District _____		
Name of school _____		
GPS/P-code _____		
Type of group		
Gender:	1. Number of males:	2. Number of females:
Location:	1. Rural	2. Urban
Grade level:	1. Number in Grade 6 (example): 3. Number (other) (specify):	2. Number in Grade 7 (example):

continued overleaf

General information *continued*

Informed consent

Our names are _____ and we are working with _____. We are conducting an assessment of the situation for education in this area. We would like to ask you some questions about the schools and educational activities taking place here. Anything you say will be kept strictly confidential. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any or all of the questions.

(To be adapted depending on the situation and the age of the children or young people participating in the discussion.)

No.	Questions	Checklist	Other responses or comments
1.	**Are you and other children or youth you know able to go to school every day? If not, why?**	___ A. Cannot pay school fees ___ B. Don't have materials (eg, uniform, books) ___ C. Responsibilities at home (eg, younger siblings, domestic chores, marriage, etc) ___ D. Worried about safety/security ___ E. Working to earn income ___ F. Other (specify)	
2.	**What do you eat before you go to school?**	___ A. Nothing ___ B. Dairy products (cheese, milk) ___ C. Proteins (eggs, beans, meat) ___ D. Grains (bread, porridge) ___ E. Other (specify)	

continued opposite

No.	Questions	Checklist	Other responses or comments
3.	**Do you have clean water to drink at school?**	A. ____ Yes B. ____ No	
4.	**Do you feel comfortable using the latrines or toilets at school?**	A. ____ Yes B. ____ No	
5.	**Do you feel safe at school?**	A. ____ Yes B. ____ No	
6.	**Is there anything that makes you afraid when you are at your school?**	___ A. Corporal punishment (physical abuse) ___ B. Emotional abuse (yelling, insulting, etc) by adults ___ C. Exploitation (unauthorised fees, corruption, etc) ___ D. Fear of school being targeted or attacked ___ E. Fear of being recruited or abducted ___ F. Bullying or harassment by other students ___ G. Other (specify)	

continued overleaf

No.	Questions	Checklist	Other responses or comments
7.	**Who would you tell if you saw or heard of a learner being hurt (examples from question 6)?**	___ A. Teacher or headteacher ___ B. Male teacher only ___ C. Female teacher only ___ D. Parents ___ E. Police ___ F. Friend ___ G. Would not tell ___ H. Other (specify)	
8.	**How can we best help all children and youth go to school?**	___ A. Provide learning materials ___ B. Create more learning spaces ___ C. Improve quality of education ___ D. Sensitise parents ___ E. Provide uniforms ___ F. Other (specify)	
9.	**What is the best thing about school?**	___ A. Seeing friends ___ B. Teachers ___ C. Recreation activities ___ D. Learning/classes ___ E. Other (specify)	
10.	**What one thing would make your school better right now?**	___ A. Additional structures (temporary or permanent) ___ B. Better teaching ___ C. Replace school materials ___ D. School feeding programmes ___ E. Other (specify)	
Additional comments or observations:			

Annex 3
Sample tool: Observation checklist

Below is a template for an observation checklist. Data collectors should complete this at school sites. Revise the questions to reflect whether or not the school is currently functioning. You can also adapt the list to assess non-formal learning spaces.

Tool 3: Observation checklist form

General information
Assessment identification Date of assessment: ___/___/___ (dd/mm/yy) Name(s) of assessor(s): _____ Organisation(s): _____
Location of assessment Department _____ District _____ Name of school _____ GPS/P-code _____
Any additional comments or observations

continued overleaf

Checklist

Questions	Yes	No	Comments
1. Is the school accessible by vehicle?			
2. Does the school show signs of being normally open and operational?			
3. Are lessons being supervised by teachers at the time of the visit?			
4. What is the level of damage to school buildings?			
A. Totally destroyed/not usable (basic safety cannot be assured)			
B. Occupied or looted and not usable			
C. Damaged, but can be repaired (roof and doors broken, etc)			
D. Limited damage, can be easily repaired (broken windows, etc)			
E. No damage			
5. Are school materials and furniture in the classrooms damaged or missing?			
6. Are teaching and learning materials damaged or missing?			
7. Is there damage to WASH facilities (latrines, toilets, water supply points, etc)?			
8. Are there separate latrines/toilets for girls and boys?			
9. Is water available at the school (piped, water tanks, well water, other)?			

continued opposite

Checklist *continued*

Questions	Yes	No	Comments
10. Is there a school canteen or somewhere nearby to purchase food?			
11. Is there access to the school for learners with disabilities?			
12. Are there recreational facilities/spaces at the school where learners can play?			

Further explanation of any of the above questions:

The Short Guide to Rapid Joint Education Needs Assessments

Education is a basic right, even in an emergency. Rapid joint assessments provide a starting point for groups working to ensure children receive schooling during an emergency. This guide will help Education Clusters to plan and conduct assessments.

Topics covered include:

- participating in multi-cluster assessments
- planning and leading an Education Cluster needs assessment
- defining indicators and designing survey tools for the assessment
- methods of data collection and data management
- operational and cost considerations
- sharing and applying assessment findings.

This Short Guide is part of *The Joint Education Needs Assessment Toolkit* produced by the Global Education Cluster in 2010. It can be used as a stand-alone reference tool for planning and conducting a rapid joint needs assessment, or as an introduction to the larger toolkit. It is an easy-to-read, practical resource with tips and tools targeted at the non-specialist reader.

http://oneresponse.info/GlobalClusters/Education

unicef

Save the Children