

Ukraine Education Cluster

Monitoring, Reporting and Responding to Attacks on Education in Ukraine

Guidance Note for the Ukraine Education Cluster staff and partners

Ukraine Education Cluster
Last updated: 21 May 2019

1. Introduction

With the conflict in its fifth-year attacks on education are still common in the areas along the ‘contact line’ that divides Government controlled areas (GCA) and non-Government controlled areas (NGCA) in eastern Ukraine. During 2018 alone, the Ukraine Education Cluster has received reports regarding 16 conflict-related incidents resulting in physical damages to school¹ infrastructure, 50 education facilities that have been temporarily closed, 11 cases of military presence in close vicinity to the education facilities and 5 other incidents resulting in death, injuries or threat of death or injuries to students, education personnel or parents.

Attacks on schools and hospitals during conflict is one of the six grave violations identified and condemned by the UN Security Council. The six grave violations form the basis of the Council’s architecture to monitor, report and respond to abuses suffered by children in times of war via the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM).² At the moment there is no established MRM in Ukraine.

In the absence of MRM, the Ukraine Education Cluster engages in the monitoring of attacks on education in Ukraine to inform the response to the needs resulting from the attacks and support robust advocacy of the Ukraine Education Cluster partners.

2. Monitoring

2.1. Types of attacks with which the Ukraine Education Cluster engages

Attack on education is defined by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) as any intentional threat or use of force – carried out for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, religious, or criminal reasons – against students (of all ages), educators (school teachers, academics, other education personnel, members of teacher unions, and education aid workers), and education institutions (any site used for the purposes of education, including all levels of education and non-formal education facilities).³

Security Council Resolution 1998 Monitoring and Reporting Definitions refer to ‘Attacks on schools’ as an umbrella term in respect of both indiscriminate and direct attacks against schools that are civilian objects, resulting in their compromised functioning, partial damage or total destruction, as well as against related protected persons (teachers, students and other education personnel).⁴

The Ukraine Education Cluster engages with the following types of attacks on education which are common for the context in Ukraine and are within the scope of the above definitions:

1. Physical damages to school infrastructure

Incidents in this category vary from light damages to the school buildings (e.g. bullet holes in the windows or scratches from the shrapnel at the school walls) to the direct hits of shells that leave

¹ School in this document is used interchangeably with education facility and include all types of education facilities, specifically kindergartens, secondary schools, vocational schools, higher education facilities and afterschool education facilities.

² [Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict](#)

³ [Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack](#)

⁴ [OSRSG-CAAC, Protect Schools and Hospitals: Guidance Note on Security Council Resolution 1998, 2014.](#)

school completely or partially non-operational. Damages to school infrastructure other than the main school building are also reflected in this category (e.g. school playground, canteen, guard's office, etc.)

2. Temporarily school closures due to the conflict

This category reflects incidents that result in education facilities being temporarily closed due to conflict related reasons for at least 1 full school day (e.g. fighting in the proximity to the school or damages to electricity, water or gas supply systems). It also reflects cases when school switches to 'distance learning' modality due to conflict.

Temporarily school closures due to non-conflict related reasons (e.g. low temperatures or spike in respiratory infections) are not included in this category.

To avoid double counting and overreporting this category does not include schools that were temporarily closed due to sustained physical damages to school infrastructure. The assumption is that even light damages to school infrastructure result in disruptions to the education process at the school.

3. Military use of schools or close proximity to military sites

This includes cases of school occupation by the armed forces or non-state armed groups as well as cases when military presence in close proximity to the school results in one of the following:

- Regular interaction between military personnel and children at the school
- Risk of the school being targeted by the other party to the conflict due to close proximity to military sites or installations

Ukraine Education Cluster doesn't use distance as criteria for this category, however majority of cases reported by the Ukraine Education Cluster under this category include military presence within a few hundred meters from the school.

For this category Ukraine Education Cluster reports number of education facilities affected during the calendar year and not number of incidents.

4. Other incidents resulting in death, injuries or threat of death or injuries to students, education personnel or parents

This category includes incidents that cannot be included in the other three categories, but which result in death, injuries or threat of death or injuries to students, education personnel or parents. Examples of incidents from this category include evacuations of children to the bomb shelter or safe space due to shelling, UXOs related injuries sustained by children or school personnel within premises of the education facility or on the way they use to get to the school, etc.

2.2. Sources of information on attacks on education

The Ukraine Education Cluster receives information on attacks on education from a wide range of sources including partner reporting, media, Government, de-facto authorities and occasionally through the direct contact with the school representatives.

The Ukraine Education Cluster staff is responsible for monitoring the following publicly available sources that often provide information on recent incidents that may qualify for being reported by the Cluster as attacks on education:

1. [Daily and spot reports from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine](#)
2. Local media in Donetsk NGCA, e.g.:
 - <https://dan-news.info>
 - <http://dnr-news.com>
3. Local media in Luhanska NGCA:
 - <http://lug-info.com>
4. Media in GCA. Due to numerous sources available the most resource efficient method is proven to be Google Search with keywords: [“школа + обстрел”](#) and [“детский сад + обстрел”](#) and filtering search results by the “Past 24 hours” or “Past week”
5. UNDSS reports
6. Partners’ reports, assessments or messages which include information on attacks on education

Important! Many internet providers in GCA are blocking access to NGCA resources and vice versa. Depending on physical location of the staff member who is conducting monitoring of attacks on education it is suggested to use VPN services, [e.g. Opera Browser with inbuilt VPN](#).

With the intensity of the conflict as of February 2019 recommended periodicity of monitoring of the above sources of information is daily.

2.3. Verification of incidents

By default, all incidents reported to the Ukraine Education Cluster are classified as unverified incidents unless one of the following criteria is met:

- The incident was reported or verified by the credible and impartial organization with the mandate to gather information and report on the security situation and/or human rights violations (e.g. OSCE SMM, OHCHR);
- The incident was reported or verified by the Ukraine Education Cluster partner who has visited the incident site or have been in touch with the school representatives to verify the information.

In exceptional cases Ukraine Education Cluster staff can get in touch directly with the representatives of the school to verify the information.

2.4. Tools

Information regarding attacks on education is recorded in the Attacks on Education Database. It is the Excel file that is linked to the Ukraine Education Cluster School Database. [Template for the Attacks on Schools Database is available here.](#)

The following information is collected and stored in the database:

- Date of an attack (Date of event/info (DD/MM/YY);
- School identifier in the EMIS if available (ISUO_ID). School identifier is linked with the school database and allows to retrieve information on the school name and location;
- Number of children affected by the incident (N_Children);
- Type of the incident (Thematic Issue);
- Short description of the incident focusing on the impact it had on education and needs resulting from the incident (Data/Information);

- Source of the information (Source of information (Agency));
- Link to the source of information (Link/document location);
- Name of the Ukraine Education Cluster staff member who has entered the data (DATA_ENTERED_BY).

2.5. Confidentiality and Information Security

In case of incidents that were reported by the cluster partner the name of the partner can be recorded into the database only if the written consent from the partner was received or if this information is available in publicly available report that was published by the partner. Otherwise the partner name is never stored in the database and mentioned in Ukraine Education Cluster reports.

3. Reporting

Ukraine Education Cluster use the following tools and channels for attacks on education reporting:

- **Education Cluster Incident Reports**
Incident report is issued anytime when there is a need for the Ukraine Education Cluster partners to respond to the needs resulting from attack. The report focuses on the details of the incident, its impact on children, teachers and/or education facility infrastructure and on the needs, which need to be responded.
- **Education Cluster Periodic Summary Reports**
Summary reports provide an overview of all incidents over the latest reporting period. The summary reports is published monthly on the [HR.info](#).
- **Other publications with inputs from the Ukraine Education Cluster**
Ukraine Education Cluster provides information to the co-lead agencies, cluster partners and other national and global organizations engaged in the attacks on education and/or child rights monitoring.

4. Responding

In attacks on schools monitoring Ukraine Education Cluster focuses on identification of the needs resulting from the attacks. Whenever the needs are identified the information is shared with Cluster partners on the ground who may be able to respond.

Ukraine Education Cluster partners who are receiving information from the Cluster on attacks on education in Ukraine and are using it for planning the response are required to use regular coordination mechanisms of the Cluster to eliminate duplication of service delivery and address gaps.

5. Advocacy

Information on attacks on education in Ukraine is being used by the Cluster, co-lead agencies of the Cluster and Cluster partners for communication and advocacy with different stakeholders (Government at different level, donors etc.).

The fact that the Government of Ukraine (GoU) has not yet endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) points to the need for further campaigning and targeted advocacy to ensure implementation of International Humanitarian Law in Ukraine.

6. Additional Resources

1. [Monitoring, Reporting and Responding to Attacks on Education: An Annotated Reference Guide](#), Global Education Cluster, April 2016
2. [The role of the Education Cluster in monitoring, reporting and responding to attacks on education – mapping of perspectives and practices](#), Global Education Cluster, April 2016
3. [Field Manual: Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism \(MRM\) on Grave Violations against Children in situations of Armed Conflict](#) OSRSG-CAAC, UNICEF, DPKO, June 2014