

# SAVE THE CHILDREN - SAFE SCHOOLS COMMON APPROACH (SSCA)

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A short [project description is published](#) on the European School Education Platform.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND RELEVANCE OF THE MEASURE

### WHEN WAS THE MEASURE FIRST STARTED?

The Safe Schools Common Approach (SSCA) was developed in 2019. The SSCA was developed by drawing from both external evidence of good practices as well as Save the Children's own internal evidence of good practice, supporting and delivering three overarching areas of work:

- [Comprehensive School Safety](#) – a multi-agency and comprehensive approach to reducing all hazards to the education sector.
- [Schools as Zones of Peace](#) – programmes to protect children facing disruption in education due to conflict and attacks on education.
- Violence-Free Schools – programmes to prevent and respond to violence against children in and around schools that have been implemented across a range of contexts, both development and humanitarian.

An updated version of the Toolkit is currently being finalised and will be ready in April 2024.

### IS THE MEASURE STILL RUNNING? IF NOT, WHY?

Yes, the Safe Schools Common Approach is currently being implemented in full (implementation of all 4 core components) in 21 countries and partially (implementation of at least 2 core components) in 29 countries.

### WHICH NEEDS DOES THE MEASURE ADDRESS?

The Safe Schools Common Approach (SSCA) provides a toolkit of resources to keep children safe and protected as they learn. There are many types of hazards, risks, threats

and barriers to children and their education. In the Safe Schools Common Approach, we use an all-hazards approach which is aligned with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF), and which aims to address all potential hazards which may impact children's safety in and around school, which may be natural and/or climate-change-induced, technological or biological, health-related or related to conflict and violence.

By implementing the SSCA, we should expect to see all girls and boys and children with non-binary gender identities of school age safe and protected from these different types of hazards found in and around schools. This will be achieved by reducing or eliminating:

1. school disruption and closures due to conflict, climate change or health-induced hazards;
2. injuries and deaths of students and school staff in and/or on the way to school;
3. students staying away from school due to dangers, threats or fear;
4. children experiencing any type of violence in and around schools.

#### WHO WAS INVOLVED IN IDENTIFYING NEEDS, THE PLANNING AND THE DESIGN OF THE MEASURE?

The Safe Schools Common Approach (SSCA) was developed by a global team of experienced Safe Schools practitioners and advisors at Save the Children, who shared evidence-based approaches and resources to be considered for inclusion in the toolkit.

#### WHO IS/WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURE?

The SSCA has been developed for implementation by national and local staff (partners and authorities) who are planning and/or supporting a new Safe Schools programme. These staff may represent programming and/or advocacy staff from the different themes of Education, Child Protection, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience, School Health and Nutrition, Construction and Climate Change.

Other relevant staff linked to the design and implementation of a Safe Schools programme may also be involved; for example, other members of senior management, programme quality, operations and fundraising.

It is advised to also include Research and Learning representatives in Safe Schools planning to ensure the appropriate use of Action Pack 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation.

#### WHAT RESOURCES ARE/WERE INVOLVED (E.G. MATERIAL, SPACE, AMOUNT OF FUNDING)?

Internal Save the Children resources have funded the development of the toolkit, which builds on previous funding provided for initiatives on Schools as Zones of Peace (which received funds from ECHO and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Comprehensive School Safety (which has been funded by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand), for example. Funding for current implementation comes from a range of institutional, corporate and private donors, depending on the donor landscape in those countries of implementation.

#### HOW ARE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTATION BEING SUPPORTED (E.G. DO THEY RECEIVE SPECIFIC TRAINING)?

Save the Children country office staff and their local partners are supported in implementation, as necessary, by regional and global advisors with Safe Schools expertise.

Save the Children has an online overall 'Bronze'-level course available for all staff who may be involved in Safe Schools programming and a 'Silver'-level course for staff who will then support local teams and/or local partners to deliver the Safe Schools Common Approach toolkit.

## IMPACT OF THE MEASURE

### WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE MEASURE?

Save the Children is currently doing an Evidence Synthesis of the implementation of the Safe Schools Common Approach to date; this should be finalized in Q2 of 2024.

Individual country evaluations of the implementation of the Safe Schools Common Approach may be available on request.

### WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED MOST TO THE SUCCESS OF THE MEASURE?

We have identified three key factors to the success of the Safe Schools approach:

**Holistic:** An all-hazards approach – analysing all the risks to safety and protection in and around the schools.

**School community participation:** Promoting and implementing a 'whole school' approach where all members of the wider school community recognise their roles and responsibilities for enhancing the safety and protection of learners.

**Child participation:** Engaging children in Safe Schools activities – facilitating their voice in safe schools decision-making and providing them with a role in creating safer learning environments and protective behaviours, skills, and knowledge to be resilient to hazards.

**An integrated approach to systems strengthening:** Intentionally addressing challenges and gaps within both education and child protection systems to better protect children in and around school.

### HAVE THERE BEEN ANY OBSTACLES WHEN IMPLEMENTING THE MEASURE, AND HOW HAVE THEY BEEN ADDRESSED?

Integration of the different sub-thematic areas included in the Safe Schools Common Approach (i.e. education, child protection, disaster risk reduction) can be a local obstacle – this is addressed by bringing together teams (staff and local partners) representing these different areas from the beginning of planning any Safe Schools work and assigning roles and responsibility in integrated 'Safe Schools Teams'. This is also addressed by advocating at a global level for evidence that shows the link between improved integration of actions for better outcomes for children (who do not live in sub-thematic silos).

## EVIDENCE BASE

### IS THERE A MONITORING/EVALUATION SYSTEM IN PLACE? WHAT IS MONITORED, AND HOW IS IT DONE?

There is a specific component of the Safe Schools Common Approach (Action Pack 5) which contains guidance on Monitoring, Evaluation and Research, including all the tools required to measure and evaluate progress against all outcomes and outputs of the common approach.

#### ARE FURTHER EVALUATIONS PLANNED AND WHEN WILL THE RESULTS BE AVAILABLE (IF THEY PLAN TO BE PUBLISHED)?

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#### IS THERE ANY SPECIFIC THEORY OR RESEARCH/SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE THAT HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MEASURE?

The Safe Schools Common Approach is based on the lessons and results of decades of work supported by Save the Children (and others in this sector) in 3 areas: Violence-Free Schools, Schools as Zones of Peace, and Comprehensive School Safety. Specific to the resources on addressing violence against children in and around schools, an external evidence review was conducted by an academic team from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (UK) to assess those approaches which came with the most rigorously tested evidence to include in the toolkit.

#### CONTACT DETAILS

The Safe Schools Common Approach Leads at Save the Children are:

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