Nigeria
Education in Emergencies
Working Group

ADVOCACY

# NEWSLETTER

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## SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION IN NIGERIA



## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

In the today's world, schools and universities have been bombed, destroyed or burned, and children, students, teachers and academics have been killed, maimed, abducted or arbitrarily detained.

Available evidence in Nigeria suggests that challenges to safety and security of schools and learners are peculiar natural and man-made factors that hinder access to education. These impact negatively on the safety and security of learners, teachers and education personnel. Some of these factors impacting on school safety and security in Nigeria include violent conflicts; robbery; fire, flood and other natural disasters, drug addiction and abuse; gender-based violence; physical and humiliating punishment. Others are bullying; child abuse and neglect; exploitation; trafficking; gang violence; cyber bullying; security forces' use of schools, civil unrest; abductions/kidnappings; recruitment of children as child soldiers; vehicular and other accidents; power shortages; hazardous materials in school environments; unsafe school facilities; etc. All of these have led to calls for creating a safe and protective learning environment for learners, teachers and education personnel.




## BACKGROUND ON SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION IN NIGERIA

The Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) is a global intergovernmental political commitment that provides countries with the opportunity to express support for protecting students, teachers, schools, and universities from attack during times of armed conflict; the importance of the continuation of education during armed conflict; and the implementation of concrete measures to deter the security forces' use of schools. Nigeria was part of the first group of 37 countries that endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) on May 29th 2015 and the Honourable Minister of Education signed a Letter of Endorsement on March 8th 2018. The Federal Executive Council (FEC) on 20th March 2019 approved the Memorandum on “Mainstreaming and Implementation of the SSD Laws and Policies in Nigeria” thus paving the way for the domestication of SSD. In December 2019, President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Safe Schools Declaration Ratification Document signalling the country's commitment to uphold the principles of the SSD.

## WHAT DO COUNTRIES THAT ENDORSE SSD AGREE TO DO?

By joining Nigeria to the Declaration, we commit to undertake several common sense steps to make it less likely that students, teachers, schools, and universities will be attacked, and to mitigate the negative consequences when such attacks occur.

## SSD OBJECTIVES




## SSD GOALS

**01**

To highlight the incidence and impact of attacks on education in conflict and insecurity among key actors and cultivate public support for safe education.

**02**

To promote better systems for monitoring and reporting attacks on education.

**03**

To promote effective programmes and policy to protect education from attack, including prevention and response.

**04**

To encourage adherence to existing international law protecting education and the strengthening of international norms and standards as needed

**05**

To fight impunity for attacks on education by promoting and supporting a range of accountability measures.

# GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTING SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES FROM MILITARY USE DURING ARMED CONFLICT

Parties to armed conflict are urged not to use schools and universities for any purpose in support of their military effort. While it is acknowledged that certain uses would not be contrary to the law of armed conflict, all parties should endeavour to avoid impinging on students' safety and education, using the following as a guide to responsible practice:

**GUIDELINE 1** Functioning schools and universities should not be used by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict in anyway in support of the military effort.

**GUIDELINE 2** Schools and universities that have been abandoned or evacuated because of the dangers presented by armed conflict should not be used by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict for any purpose in support of their military effort, except in extenuating circumstances when they are presented with no viable alternative, and only for as long as no choice is possible between such use of the school or university and another feasible method for obtaining a similar military advantage. Other buildings should be regarded as better options and used in preference to school and university buildings, even if they are not so conveniently placed or configured, except when such buildings are specially protected under International Humanitarian Law (e.g. hospitals), and keeping in mind that parties to armed conflict must always take all feasible precautions to protect all civilian objects from attack.

**GUIDELINE 3** Schools and universities must never be destroyed as a measure intended to deprive the opposing parties to the armed conflict of the ability to use them in the future. Schools and universities—be they in session, closed for the day or for holidays, evacuated or abandoned—are ordinarily civilian objects.

**GUIDELINE 4** While the use of a school or university by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict in support of their military effort may, depending on the circumstances, have the effect of turning it into a military objective subject to attack, parties to armed conflict should consider all feasible alternative measures before attacking them, including, unless circumstances do not permit, warning the enemy in advance that an attack will be forthcoming unless it ceases its use.

**GUIDELINE 5** The fighting forces of parties to armed conflict should not be employed to provide security for schools and universities, except when alternative means of providing essential security are not available. If possible, appropriately trained civilian personnel should be used to provide security for schools and universities. If necessary, consideration should also be given to evacuating children, students and staff to a safer location.

**GUIDELINE 6** All parties to armed conflict should, as far as possible and as appropriate, incorporate these Guidelines into, for example, their doctrine, military manuals, rules of engagement, operational orders, and other means of dissemination, to encourage appropriate practice throughout the chain of command. Parties to armed conflict should determine the most appropriate method of doing this.



A block of renovated classrooms in Michika, Adamawa State by an INGO



EiEWGN members, National Human Rights Commission, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development on SSD advocacy visit to Borno Commissioner for Education, 10th May 2019



National Defence College (NDC) and EiEWGN organised a sensitization workshop on the Operationalization of SSD and the Guidelines in Security Agencies, 4th & 5th December 2019




Cross section of participants after the staff commanders training in May 2019

# SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION ACHIEVEMENTS TILL DATE

- Nigeria endorsed the SSD - May, 2015
- SSD Advocacy Engagement with Ministries of Education, Foreign Affairs & Defence – 2016
- Steering Committee to develop Education in Emergency (EiE) curriculum for Basic Education to be used in all schools across Nigeria – December, 2017
- SSD Letter of Endorsement signed by the Honourable Minister of Education – March, 2018
- Inception Workshop for the Review of Legal and Policy Framework on the Protection of Education from Attack –May, 2018
- Development of National Policy on Safety and Security in Schools NCE Approval - August, 2018
- SSD Plan of Action developed and endorsed by Federal Ministry of Education – October, 2018
- SSD Desk Officer appointed in the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) – October, 2018
- Review of Armed Forces Act (AFA) compliance for the operationalization of SSD in Nigeria - November, 2018
- Armed Forces Act Bill Amendment National Stakeholders Meeting to share the AFA Amendment Bill - December, 2018
- Education in Emergencies' (EiE) curriculum approved by National Council on Education- November 2019
- SSD Ratification Memo submitted to Federal Executive Council for Approval – January, 2019

- SSD Ratification Memo approved by FEC paving the way for domestication in Nigeria – March, 2019
- SSD and the Guidelines Sensitisation of Staff Commanders and Commander Nigerian Army 7th Division (Borno) – May, 2019
- Security Agencies' SSD and the Guidelines Sensitisation and Awareness Workshop – December, 2019
- President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Safe Schools Declaration Ratification Document – December, 2019
- Nigeria confirmed as co- host for the Fourth International Conference on Safe Schools in 2021 – March 2020
- Development of SSD Guidelines Reporting and Assessment Forms for Conflict-Affected Areas - July 2020

## ENGAGEMENT WITH SECURITY AGENCIES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SSD AND THE GUIDELINES

On the 3rd and 4th December 2019, the National Defence College (NDC) and the Education in Emergencies Working Group in Nigeria (EiEWGN) held a two-day sensitisation workshop with the various security agencies, protection and education organisations. The workshop took place at the NDC. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) also participated as facilitators during the training. Some of the topics covered focused on: 'The Impact of Conflict on Education (Nigeria), Responsibility to Protect Schools (R2P): The Role of Doctrine, Training, Operational Planning, Deployment and the Conduct of Operations, Introduction to SSD and the Guidelines, Good Practices from other Countries and Table-top Exercise on the Guidelines.

The three conclusions reached at the end of the workshop were:

1. Mainstreaming the SSD Guidelines into security agencies doctrines, training manuals and SOPs.
2. Engage more with the legal, policy, training and operations departments of the security agencies.
3. Education Services Department of the Ministry of Defence should coordinate the establishment of SSD Security Network across the Security Agencies with SSD Desk from Federal Ministry of Education as member.

The EiEWGN has commissioned a study to incorporate SSD and the Guidelines in the security agencies manuals. In addition, provisions have been made for training in various security agencies and human rights organisations. These activities are slated to end in December 2020.




*Nigerian Delegation at the Third International Conference on Safe Schools, 27-29 May, 2019 Palma de Mallorca, Spain.*

# NATIONAL POLICY ON SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY (NPSSS)

The policy is aimed at ensuring a comprehensive approach to safety and security in Nigerian schools. The Safe Schools Common Approach (SSCA) underpins the NPSSS as it uses an all hazards approach to keep learners safe in and around school from violence, natural and every day hazards and conflict.

**Violence:** Gender Based Violence (GBV), physical & humiliating punishment, bullying, child abuse, neglect, exploitation, trafficking, gang violence, exploitation, cyber bullying, peer to peer violence, corporal punishment, sexual & gender-based violence etc.

**Natural hazards:** Flood, wind storm, drought, wild fire, extreme cold or heat etc

**Conflict :** Security agencies' use of schools, armed attack on schools, civil unrest, unexploded ordnance, abduction/kidnapping, child recruitment.

**Everyday hazards:** Transportation accident, power shortages, hazardous materials, structural fire, health hazards (epidemics, pandemics, malaria, malnutrition) and other hazards such as drowning, playground accidents, dangerous materials.

**Safer School Facilities:** Schools must be planned, designed and constructed to protect students, teachers and educational staff. Further, that school facilities are sited in areas with as little hazard exposure as possible and that exposure to site specific hazards be reduced.
EiEWGN SSD Sub Committee

The main functions of the Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria SSD sub- committee at national level as contained in the Terms of Reference are to raise awareness, provide strategic direction, co-ordinate SSD activities and implementation in Nigeria.

## MEMBERS OF THE SSD SUB-COMMITTEE

- The members comprise of government and civil society.
- Government agencies (Education and Defence)
- Local and National NGOs2 INGOs
- EiEWGN Co-ordination Lead and Co-Leads

The Chair must be from a local or national organisation which is currently held by Abiola Sanusi (Education Adviser, Riplington Education Initiative). The SSD Desk Officer in the education ministry is the secretary to the sub-committee. However, at state level this may differ due to the particularities of each state. It is however critical that security agencies are members of the committee.

## DUTIES OF THE SSD SUB-COMMITTEE

1. To drive the execution of the Plan of Action (PoA) developed by Ministry of Education
2. To develop initiatives and policies that support the mainstreaming of SSD
3. To fundraise for mainstreaming and implementation of SSD
4. To support government, CSOs and the private sector in mainstreaming SSD
5. To interface with relevant government agencies, CSOs' and private sector

## SSD DESK OFFICER

### Roles and Responsibilities

As part of domesticating the SSD, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) in 2018 appointed a desk officer for effective coordination and implementation of the SSD in the country. Some of the functions of the SSD desk officer are listed below

- Preparing and collating reports of meetings/workshops
- Liaising with relevant organizations and partners
- Undertake SSD and the Guidelines administrative tasks
- Provide regular updates on the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines
- Facilitate the coordination & implementation of SSD and Guidelines to ensure adherence to the principles for school safety and security
- Work with all partners on key policy issues
- Organise seminars, workshops and conferences to discuss issues of school safety and security
- Identify policy gaps and share evidence
- Review policy gaps on school safety and security
- Engage with government and civil society on school safety and security
- Undertake sensitisation in schools and communities on school safety and security



*National Defence College (NDC) and EiEWGN organised a sensitization workshop in Abuja on the Operationalization of SSD and the Guidelines in Security Agencies 4th & 5th December 2019*

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