

Global Education Cluster Climate Crisis Roadmap: Integrating climate crisis considerations across education cluster coordination for more pro-active Education in Emergencies response

Background

The Global Education Cluster (GEC) is committed to ensuring that the climate crisis informs all aspects of its work. This paper serves as a 'roadmap' for how the GEC plans to do this by outlining the problem statement, presenting a theory of change, and defining approaches and processes to pursue this priority in 2025.

Problem statement

The climate crisis is exacerbating humanitarian needs across the world. By driving new crises and intensifying existing ones, it acts as a threat multiplier. The increase in both the amplitude and frequencies of hazards is deepening their impact, especially on vulnerable communities whose resilience is already strained due to compounded humanitarian emergencies.

The climate crisis is projected to challenge the humanitarian system in two fundamental ways. Firstly, it will greatly increase the scale of need, further stretching a humanitarian system that already struggles to keep up with the current pace of disasters and conflicts. Secondly, it is also expected to change the nature of crises, as less familiar natural hazards like heat waves become more common, while others, such as typhoons, begin acting in new and less predictable ways. This means that education clusters will have to reinforce preparedness and response to address these increasing needs. Given that most climate-related hazards such as flooding, hurricanes, storms and drought are forecastable, education clusters, like the entire humanitarian system, need to shift from the current approach more primarily geared towards a reactive response, to more proactive risk informed approach. It also means addressing the long-standing division between humanitarian and development approaches and entities - the climate crisis has further underscored the need for synergy and linkages to effectively address multifaceted needs that span both humanitarian and development sectors. While response after a disaster falls squarely in the humanitarian realm, it's still debated what role humanitarians have when it comes to mitigating the impacts of climate related disasters or to work on the longer term approaches that would help communities better cope the next time.

Leveraging coordination is critical to ensuring the education sector is able to effectively and proactively respond to the challenges of the climate crisis to meet the needs of boys and girls, their caregivers, and communities. Education clusters and working group ensure a predictable, holistic, equitable and well-coordinated response. Coordination is at the heart of a quality, consultative, and holistic integration of climate considerations in humanitarian action. As platforms that set standards and bring together more than 850 partners worldwide together collectively identified needs and priorities, education clusters play a pivotal role in ensuring that education in emergencies (EiE) preparedness and response is informed by the climate crisis.

Theory of change

If

Education clusters effectively integrate and operationalize climate crisis considerations into all their work, structured around their core functions (6+1) and HPC

Then

The impact of climate-induced hazards on education can be mitigated, reduced or prevented so that crises-affected girls and boys can continue to be protected, learn and thrive, through enhanced coordination of preparedness, anticipatory action (AA) and response for the education sector.

Because

- Needs assessments and analysis will generate evidence on possible impact of climate risks for EiE and information management will have mapped the available AA and response capacities for ensuring access to safe and inclusive quality education – before, during and after a natural hazard strikes
- Sector response plans and education cluster strategies will use the evidence retrieved through needs assessments and analysis to propose education interventions that are risk informed, linked to preparedness, risk reduction and AA and are (a) relevant for child education and protection in acute emergencies and (b) identifies longer-term education-relevant interventions to contribute to climate change adaptation-, mitigation and resilience.
- Resource mobilization and advocacy will influence donors on how to best leverage education responses to deliver a bigger bang for the buck by integrating climate crisis-informed EiE responses that deliver child protection, education and well being of children.
- Implementation and Monitoring will build education cluster partner staff- and institutional capacities for climate change-relevant programming, implementation and monitoring
- Operational Peer Review and Peer Evaluation will allow stakeholders to analyze lessons learned for improved preparation of responses to future climate change hazards.

Principles/considerations at the heart of GEC's roadmap

- As the climate crisis has several dimensions and can be broadly approached from a variety of perspectives, it is pivotal to clearly define the *value add* of the education cluster and GEC's support. Given the mandate and purpose of the cluster system, which is a temporary mechanism to address humanitarian risks and needs during emergencies which national authorities are unable or unwilling to respond to, the GEC will focus its approach to the climate crisis issue as follows:
 - Our *primary focus* will be to integrate the climate crisis dimensions into our work centered on *preparedness, AA and response* to make this more effective to deal with the issues identified in the problem statement and theory of change. Our key objective will be to shift the timing of education cluster action to before a crisis happens. In short, we need to be more proactive and less reactive. This will necessitate more emphasis on risk-informed processes, data, and action while at the same time responding to needs.

- Our *secondary focus* will be to identify the linkages between climate-informed EIE preparedness and response and *longer term adaptation, mitigation and resilience*, by leveraging partnerships with development and climate entities and frameworks, especially through the nexus approach.
- The GEC will aim to integrate climate crisis considerations across the four global functions of our work as it is critical to not approach the climate crisis as a separate objective or pillar given its complexity: 1) technical support (2) capacity strengthening (3) guidance (4) global leadership
- Partnerships globally and locally are pivotal. Globally, we will work with both like minded sector partners and key allies in other sectors (WASH, Nutrition, CP, Food Security and others). We will also deepen partnerships with climate-focused entities. Humanitarian interventions must empower local responses and local actors. The importance of the local impact of climate change and disasters must be recognized, as well as the importance of engaging with local actors in efforts related to climate action Building on the GEC's localization work, we will deepen our collaboration with local actors, both to strengthen preparedness, AA, and response, but also, increasingly, around resilience and adaptation.
- The GEC itself will commit to greening its work in line with the push by the humanitarian sector to reduce its own environmental footprint.

How will GEC implement this roadmap?

- In 2025
 1. Ensure strong participation and inputs in the GCCS-led planned consultancy to develop a common approach and guidance for how clusters can integrate climate considerations throughout the HPC and 6+1 functions.
 2. Building on the aforementioned guidance, develop education cluster specific practical guidance on how to integrated climate-informed EiE actions across the HPC, informed by the initial mapping and draft developed by the GEC in 2023.
 3. Work through GCCG to map how clusters are approaching the climate topic and learn from other sectors.
 4. Ensure representation on the IASC Task Force to influence policy and the application of normative frameworks so that the GEC effort is informed by and informs greater inter-sector efforts.
 5. Scale up technical support to countries along the Preparedness-AA-Rapid EiE continuum, using approaches, tools and guidance developed and rolled out in 2022-2024.
 6. Incorporate a climate crisis lens in the new GEC strategy 2026-2029, ensuring it's embedded throughout the new strategy.
- In 2026-2029
 1. By implementing GEC 2026-29 strategy, transform how education clusters understand, talk about and include climate considerations throughout their work
 2. Identify new funding opportunities, referring to this [research conducted by GEC](#) in fall of 2023 as a starting point.
 3. Deepen operational collaboration with WASH, Nutrition, CP as well as other key clusters such as Food Security to align our climate work.

4. Work closely with existing education partners such as ECW and GPE as well the Global EiE Hub, and GADRSS.
5. Deepen partnerships with climate entities, as well as UNDRR, Anticipation Hub and other entities focused on disaster risk reduction, preparedness and AA.