



ECCN | SAFER LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (SLE)

The SLE Assessment Toolkit

INTRODUCTION

Today, around the world, **40 million primary school-age children live in countries affected by armed conflict**. Millions more have had their education disrupted by natural disasters, crime, and violence. Contextual risk exists everywhere USAID works, whether it is the possibility of conflict, gang violence, natural hazard impacts, gender-based violence, political instability, lawlessness, health emergencies, or food insecurity and famine. **ECCN developed the Safer Learning Environments (SLE) Assessment Toolkit to learn more about and therefore work more effectively in these challenging environments.**

Having data that assesses the extent to which a learning environment is safe or unsafe — and understanding what the particular risks are — is critical for program design, adaptation, and implementation. This toolkit allows users to conduct a rapid quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods primary research exercise, depending on their needs.

WHY IS THE TOOLKIT NECESSARY?

Assessing safety within a learning environment provides critical information to help reduce programmatic, fiduciary, and institutional risks, particularly those in conflict and crisis environments. The toolkit assists users in understanding the risks to safe learning.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE TOOLKIT FROM OTHERS LIKE IT?

- **It employs a 'fit for purpose' structure** and guides the user toward methodology and questions specific to the context.
- **It is aligned with ECCN's conceptual framework of safety**, differentiating 16 types of internal, external, and environmental risks. (See other side).
- **It uses basic methodologies with clear guidance** for users who have little to no experience with qualitative or quantitative design and analysis, but remains useful for more expert researchers who can adapt the toolkit.
- The quantitative instrument uses parts of nine **previously validated instruments** pertaining to specific risks.
- It balances quality research with adherence to **rigorous ethical protocols**.
- The entire process, from inception to report, can be completed in **as few as five weeks**.
- The toolkit yields a report that is **user-friendly and actionable**.

WHEN CAN THE TOOLKIT BE USED?

It can be used at any stage during the program cycle, to supplement M&E or to inform program design or adaptation.

Resources

Safer Learning Environments website: <https://eccnetwork.net/safer-learning-environments/>

The qualitative toolkit can be downloaded at: <https://eccnetwork.net/resources/sle-qualitativetoolkit/>

For more information, email ECCN's Research Manager Gwen Heaner at gheaner@umass.edu

ECCN Safer Learning Environments Conceptual Framework

