TCG4:
Developing SDG thematic indicator 4.a.3

TCG4/18

Memo: Developing Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 34: *Number of attacks on students, personnel and institutions*

July 14, 2017

This document presents the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack's methodology for the *Education under Attack (EUA)* publication. We hope that it can serve as a starting point for developing Sustainable Development Goal 4, indicator 34 on the *Number of attacks on students, personnel and institutions*. There are several reports and databases that track attacks on schools, students, and education personnel, such as the UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, national Education Clusters, local monitoring groups, the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Data Base, and Scholars at Risk's Academic Freedom Monitor. Each focuses on specific contexts, uses different methodologies for data collection and verification, and may have varied approaches to categorizing attacks on education. Nonetheless, they are strong sources for data on attacks on education and can be used for developing indicator 34. *EUA* currently serves as a clearinghouse for compiling information from these sources, as well as the media.

GCPEA tracks several violations relevant to indicator 34, including attacks on schools; attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel; military use of schools and universities; child recruitment into armed parties that occurs at or en route to school; sexual violence by parties to the conflict that occurs at school or university or en route to school or university; and attacks on higher education. The paragraphs that follow define these categories, present the methodology used to collect data, and describe the research outputs that could contribute to indicator 34.

Definitions
GCPEA defines attacks on education as any threat of or actual use of force carried out against students, teachers, academics, education support and transport staff (e.g. janitors, bus drivers), and education officials as well as attacks on education buildings, resources, material, or facilities (including school buses). These actions are carried out by armed forces or non-state armed groups for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, or religious reasons.

- Attacks on schools are targeted violent attacks on preschool, kindergarten, primary, and secondary school buildings or infrastructure by state military forces or non-state armed groups in the form of arson; suicide, car, or other bombs aimed at a school; or artillery fire directed at a school. In addition, this category includes indiscriminate attacks that result in the damage or destruction of school infrastructure as well as explosions that occur in close proximity to a school.
- Attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel consist of killings, injuries, torture, abductions, forced disappearances, or threats of violence, including coercion or extortion involving violent threats directed towards students and education staff who work at the primary and secondary levels. Since it is sometimes difficult to identify why a teacher or school staff member is killed if the assassination occurs outside of school, this category also includes such attacks in cases where there is an established pattern of that kind of violence. The category of

attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel also includes cases where police or state security forces violently repress student protests, killing or injuring students or school staff.

- <u>Military use of schools and universities</u> includes cases in which armed forces or non-state armed groups take over schools or universities as bases, barracks and temporary shelters to house soldiers or fighters, fighting positions, weapons storage facilities, detention and interrogation centers, or for other military purposes. UN Security Council Resolution 1998 called for reporting on the military use of schools as an integral component of monitoring attacks on education, and GCPEA includes these activities in data collection. Military use of a school or university may trigger attack by opposing forces, risking the lives of students and instructors if they continue to attend, or destroying the school and preventing it from being used for educational purposes in the future.

- <u>Recruitment of children at schools or along school routes</u> occurs when armed forces or groups use schools or school routes as locales for recruiting children under the age of 18 into their fighting forces as fighters, spies, intelligence sources, to transport weapons or other materials, domestic work, or for any other purposes associated with the armed group. It should be noted that this violation is under-reported since information on where child recruitment occurs is difficult to collect.

- <u>Sexual violence by parties to the conflict</u> consists of sexual abuse and harassment perpetrated at schools or universities or along school routes. As in the case of child recruitment, this violation is under-reported because of more general sensitivities in reporting sexual abuse and the details of those incidents.

- <u>Attacks on higher education</u> include targeted violent attacks on universities in the form of bombings, airstrikes, arson, or other means, as well as targeted killings, abductions, or threats directed at university students, faculty, or staff. The category includes cases of violent repression of student protests, in which state security forces kill or seriously injure university students or staff, in situations related to education matters. It includes deliberate acts of coercion, intimidation, or threats of physical force that create a climate of fear and repression that undermines academic freedom and educational functions, but excludes infringements on academic freedom that do not consist of either physical violence or the threat of physical violence.

Methodology

GCPEA uses three approaches for collecting data on attacks on education. The first approach consists of a desk study of reports released by UN agencies, development and humanitarian NGOs, human rights organizations, government bodies, and think tanks. The second approach includes media searches conducted in English, as well as Arabic, French, or Spanish, where relevant, using 12 combinations of different key words to conduct a series of searches in Google News. In addition, the research team searches databases that rely on media reports, such as the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The third approach for collecting data involves outreach to staff members of international and national organizations working in the countries profiled in this study. Through this outreach, the research team gathers additional information to verify incidents already found and works to identify additional data sources.

This three-pronged approach results in a compilation of data that is subject to different levels of verification. For example, data included in the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on children and

armed conflict are required to adhere to UN standards of verification, which is based on the source of the information, triangulation or cross-checking, and analysis of contextual specialists. The GTD draws solely on media sources of attacks by non-state armed groups, and rates each source from "one" (poor validity or biased) to "three" (substantively independent), according to reliability. Only incidents that are based on at least one source that had a rating of "three" are included in their online database. In contrast, data gathered from media sources is often difficult to corroborate; GCPEA seeks to do so, but is not always able to. GCPEA includes all data in the *EUA* report, unless the data is clearly discredited, and indicates its level of verification and reliability.

Outputs and results
GCPEA's method for organizing the *EUA* data allows the research team to qualitatively assess each country as most affected (number of incidents of attack on education or people harmed by attacks on education (n)=800+), highly affected (n=500-799) or affected (n=20-499) by attacks on education.

The *EUA* research team enters data into a Microsoft Excel database that includes a spreadsheet dedicated to individual incidents and a spreadsheet dedicated to summary statistics (statistics in which the total number of attacks is provided by the source rather than individual incidents). Each line of the individual incident spreadsheet contains one attack on education, categorized into one of the categories listed above, along with a general description of the incident, its date, location, and number of educational institutions and individuals affected. These spreadsheets are carefully reviewed to prevent duplication of individual incidents. Based on this spreadsheet, GCPEA is able to present numbers of discrete incidents reported, numbers of students and education personnel affected, institutions damaged or destroyed, and institutions used for military purposes. Where possible, this information is disaggregated by gender.

The summary statistics spreadsheet is organized according to whether they are summary statistics of total number of attacks reported by the UN or by an NGO. Each entry includes information on the time-period of the report, the summary statistic reported, and the affected population or institution. Importantly, these summary statistics are not mutually exclusive and not directly comparable. Different sets of summary statistics may overlap, and agencies often have differing definitions of what constitutes an attack on education or a particular subset of attack.

The research team's assessment of the degree to which attacks on education affect each country draws on either the individual incident spreadsheet, the summary statistics spreadsheet, or a careful combination of the two, depending on the country in question. The decision about which statistic to report is based on the desire to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible while maximizing reliability and preventing duplication. This approach enables the EUA team to present an overall picture of attacks on education in the countries profiled in this report.

Frequency of reporting
To date, *EUA* has been published every three to four years. *EUA 2018* is covering the time-period from 2013 to 2017 and is expected to be released in April 2018. GCPEA may continue reporting with this frequency or may move to a more regular approach, releasing statistics every one or two years.

We hope that this summary has been useful as a starting point for discussions relating to developing indicator 34 and that further discussions will ensue.

GCPEA will be very keen to participate in the development process and contribute in any way that is helpful. For additional information, please contact GCPEA Director, Diya Nijhowne (dnijhowne@protectingeducation.org) or Education under Attack Program Officer, Amy Kapit (akapit@protectingeducation.org).