Prioritizing the Agenda for Research for the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack: Why Evidence is Important, What We Know, and How to Learn More

Amy Kapit-Spitalny, New York University
Dana Burde, New York University

Introduction and Overview

The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) was launched in February 2010 to advocate for greater legal, institutional, and programmatic protection of education from violent attacks. It consists of a steering group of organizations involved in providing support to education in countries affected by conflict around the world [Council for Assisting Refugee Academics, Education Above All, Education International, Human Rights Watch, Save the Children International, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)]. As part of its efforts to both learn from and educate practitioners about this phenomenon as well as to advance advocacy on the subject, GCPEA, in partnership with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), organized a "Knowledge Roundtable" that took place in Phuket, Thailand from November 7-11, 2011. Participants included representatives from governments, local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international NGOs, and United Nations (UN) agencies from 14 countries affected by conflict around the world.

Research is integral to the work of GCPEA and its member organizations. In order to develop its research agenda, GCPEA asked us, two academics from New York University who study issues related to violence against education, to participate in its Knowledge Roundtable meeting. We were asked to collect data from presentations during the meeting about patterns of attacks on education: how participants and their organizations address these attacks, what they know about what works in their responses, and what they still need to know. Thus, we served as participant-observers during the Knowledge Roundtable.

This paper records the information we learned. It proceeds in the following way. The first two sections present a rationale for research and a survey of what we know to date from the available literature. The third section presents key information that we gathered from the participants in the meeting during their presentations, and additional information that we elicited from participants during our public presentation in response to two questions: (1) what do we know (about protecting education from attack), and (2) what do we still need to know. The fourth section relies on a research proposal from Jennifer Rowell, Head of Advocacy CARE, Afghanistan, to show how an NGO can initiate a research project. The fifth section illustrates the power of partnerships between NGOs and academics, using a research project on community-based schools in Afghanistan as an example (Burde and Linden, 2011). The final section concludes with observations about funding and frameworks for moving forward.

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Putting Research in Perspective

"Research" is a broad term that encompasses many different types of studies. It can inform programming in a variety of ways, such as, perhaps most apparently, through evaluation. Evaluations are a distinct type of research, which typically focus on a particular programmatic intervention with the goal of assessing whether it has been successful or unsuccessful in improving a situation. However, evaluations are only a subset of the broader category of research. The types of questions that evaluations ask are often limited to those about program process and performance or comparisons that look at "before versus after," or "intervention versus non-intervention". For example, is a school less frequently targeted for attack after a particular intervention than before it took place? Or is a school less frequently targeted for attack in this location, which has received an intervention, than this other location, which has not received the same intervention? In contrast, the full category of research asks a wider array of questions. These can include, but are not limited to, questions about the attributes of a phenomenon (e.g. what types of attacks on education occur in this location, and do they differ from the types of attacks that occur in another location), why a phenomenon occurs (e.g. what are the main motivations behind attacks on education), the intervening factors that may make a phenomenon more or less likely (e.g. what social, economic, cultural, or contextual factors make attacks on education more likely in one locale than in another), or the impact of a phenomenon on society (e.g. what is the impact of attacks on education on school attendance, retention, or outcomes, or socioeconomic indicators).

Research is important and can shape programming, even when not directly assessing it. Indeed, understanding the problem, or phenomenon of interest, including the external factors influencing it, is a crucial first step in collecting robust evidence for any research question or goal, including programmatic intervention. In order to prevent, respond to, or limit the impact of attacks on education, therefore, we first need to understand what the problem is and the many dimensions that may influence how best to address it. Among these dimensions, it is important to understand the kind of conflict that is creating the attacks. First, a conflict may be inter-state (international) or intra-state (civil), and it may have ethnic, linguistic, religious, ideological, or even criminal dimensions. Importantly these dimensions may be of varying degrees of significance even across a single conflict setting. Second, it is important to understand what kinds of attacks on education occur (e.g., arson targeting school buildings, assassinations targeting teachers) and how they can be categorized. Third, once attacks are categorized, they can be sorted systematically in order to determine which kind is the most common (prevalence), and what range of possible attacks exists (variation). Fourth, it is critical to understand and measure how attacks affect education.

Collecting evidence on these aspects of attacks and on how they vary across conflict settings or within a single conflict is critical for programming since these factors determine what kinds of responses work, for which kinds of attacks, and in what settings. For example, an organization may believe that the perpetrators of attacks on education in a particular setting are motivated by opposition to foreign forces on their soil, and, therefore, may address the problem by removing all traces of association between a school and a foreign government. However, it may actually be the case that attacks on education in that setting are motivated by criminal or economic purposes. In that case, the solution implemented would not address the problem, and attacks on education would continue. Similarly, it is important to gather data on how attacks affect education in order to design interventions that effectively address their impact.

Robust research, therefore, helps us collect evidence that guides program choices. It helps us (1) understand the problem (attacks on education) and (2) show how that problem can be addressed (e.g.

negotiations, alternative delivery, witnessing, etc.). And it allows us to (3) understand the impact of the problem and (4) show how that impact can be addressed. Research is also important to implementing organizations for other reasons. Organizations and funders increasingly seek evidence-based research in order to demonstrate program impact and effectiveness. Having this evidence can help secure funding and ensure the longevity and continued success of programs. Evidence and data on attacks can also be used to respond through advocacy, which may also help reduce the occurrence of attacks on education.

Thus, without evidence on the dimensions described above, practitioners are not able to respond, advocate, or fundraise as effectively as they would like to do. Yet, not all evidence is equal. Evidence carries different levels of authority depending on the way it is gathered. As is raised in the next sections, evidence may be anecdotal, case-based, or systematic and cross-contextual. The type of evidence and how it is gathered (e.g. qualitatively or quantitatively) has important implications for the robustness and generalizability of the data. The next section reviews the existing literature for what we know to date about how to protect education from attack, and the type of evidence that we have.

A Review of Existing Research on Programmatic Measures for Protecting Education from Attack

Perhaps because attention to the problem of attacks on education is relatively recent, there exists very little research on what types of programmatic interventions most effectively protect education in which settings, why and how. To date, the only study explicitly examining this issue has come from CARE (Glad, 2009; Rowell, 2011).

Existing Knowledge
In the absence of rigorous and empirical research on programs for protecting education, suggestions for program responses to protect education are predominantly based on one of the two following types of inquiry.

(1) Anecdotal evidence about measures that have prevented or mitigated attacks on education in particular circumstances: The most common source of information on programs that may protect education is anecdotal evidence drawn from case studies or examples of interventions that have been effective in specific settings. Indeed, Groneman (2010; 2011)'s desk studies of programmatic measures for protecting education draw primarily on anecdotal cases of protection mechanisms that have worked in different locations. One example of this type of work is Smith (2010), who examines in detail the "School as Zones of Peace" campaigns in Nepal, during which negotiations between community representatives and armed factions largely eliminated attacks on schools in that context.

(2) Hypotheses drawn from existing data about patterns of attacks in different locales: A second source of information regarding measures protecting education comes from empirically grounded, but hypothetical, arguments. Despite the identified need for additional research into the prevalence, nature, and reasons for attacks on education (UNESCO, 2010), there is existing data from various sources on the types of attacks that occur worldwide. These include, but are not limited to, UNESCO's global surveys of violence against schools, learners, and education personnel (O'Malley, 2007; 2010), INGO reports (e.g. Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2006; 2009; 2010a; 2010b; Jarecki & Kaisth, 2009), and data drawn from global reporting processes like the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against Children, which is active in conflict-affected countries. Based on these resources, as well as knowledge about the education and social effects of particular education interventions, some researchers have theorized how such programs might help protect education. A good example of this work is Burde (2010), who draws on data on violence directed towards education in Afghanistan and findings on

community-based schools to make conjectures about how and why these schools may be less likely to experience attack than other types of schools. She hypothesizes that community-based schools may help reduce attacks on education for several reasons: a lack of school-specific infrastructure provides less of a target; their location in the center of a village means that, in contrast to traditional government schools in Afghanistan, outsiders have more difficulty reaching a school to attack; a stronger sense of community ownership leads to increased community participation in protection; and the fact that students do not have to travel long distances to school reduces the risk that they will face attack.

Programmatic Interventions for Protecting Education
Among the programmatic interventions most commonly suggested for protecting education are: (1) community-based mechanisms and community engagement, (2) negotiations with armed groups, (3) physical protection, and (4) awareness raising and curricular measures. Below we examine the extent and quality of the existing evidence on how effective these programs are, and in what circumstances.

I.   Community-based Mechanisms and Community Engagement
Practitioners suggest a wide range of community-based mechanisms for protecting education. In their reviews of programmatic protective measures, Groneman (2010; 2011) and O'Malley (2010) list several that have been used in different settings. These include: community participation in educational planning and oversight through school management committees (SMCs) and parent-teacher associations (PTAs), community involvement in school/education defense, and children's clubs. Other proposed interventions are community-based schools (Glad, 2009; Burde, 2010) or teacher, parent, and community trainings in skills like first aid and emergency and disaster preparedness (UNESCO, 2011). Finally, communities may also have developed their own coping strategies that humanitarian actors may learn from and help cultivate (Groneman, 2011).

In general, these community-based mechanisms are the best researched of the commonly suggested interventions for protecting education. This is largely due to research previously produced and currently proposed by CARE. In 2009, CARE conducted a study of attack on education in Afghanistan and mechanisms for increasing educational protection (Glad, 2009). The study involved a review and analysis of Ministry of Education and UNICEF databases tracking attacks, interviews with education stakeholders, and a field study including Ministry of Education officials, police officers, education personnel, and parents. As the author points out, much of the research on mechanisms protecting education was based on interviews with local community members. As a result, the study was unable to objectively determine how different forms of community participation may prevent or mitigate attacks. Nevertheless, one of its key conclusions is that education may be better protected when its administration is decentralized, particularly since patterns of attacks tend to be localized. This conclusion was supported by interviewees, most of whom contended that protection of schooling is primarily the responsibility of the local community. Glad further explains, "Protecting schools using too centralized an approach could be not only an ineffective use of resources (for example, offering negotiation training in those communities where no contact with attackers exist), but in some cases even detrimental (putting a police station close to a school in an area where the police themselves are a chief target)" (p. 53).

More specifically, different community-based interventions have been studied in terms of their potential for protecting education to varying degrees:

School Committees: There has been some research on the effectiveness of school committees, including parent-teacher associations, management committees, or school protection committees, set up to

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nonviolently prevent attacks or negotiate with potential attackers (negotiation with armed groups will be discussed in more detail below). Such committees are widely used in places like Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, and Somalia, and Burde (2010) suggests one way in that such committees may protect education: through what she calls the "witnessing effect." Increased participation in school planning and oversight may cause parents and other community members to feel a greater sense of ownership over the school, leading to a more protective environment. Additionally, there is evidence that these committees may reduce violence and have a positive impact on social outcomes in general. In Nepal, school management committees were found to result in greater transparency, improved governance, and conflict resolution in schools. In Somalia, Community Education Committees reportedly reduced the influence of one armed group in some schools (Groneman, 2011). Nevertheless, the findings on the success of such committees specifically in mitigating attacks on education are mixed. The 2009 CARE study found anecdotal cases where these groups had been successful in preventing attacks. However, the majority of respondents (87%) did not believe such committees had been effective. Although this evidence is largely anecdotal, in 2012, CARE will undertake further and more systematic research to identify how, when, and why school protection committees may protect education in Afghanistan (Rowell, 2011).

Community-based Schools: The evidence on the role of community-based schools in preventing attacks on education indicates that the effectiveness of this intervention is highly context-specific. For instance, findings from the CARE 2009 study suggest that, in Afghanistan community-based and NGO-run schools may be less susceptible to attack than other types of schools, such as those run by the government. Although CARE found that the datasets were incomplete, MOE and UNICEF data indicated that community-based schools are attacked less frequently. Glad suggests several possibilities for why: these schools are less visible, they are not run by the state (an important factor when that attackers' intent is to attack the government), and they have stronger and more proximate security mechanisms. Similarly, as mentioned above, Burde (2010) hypothesizes that community-based schools are less likely to come under attack because they tend to be more likely to have school management committees and tend to be located centrally within the community. However, in other contexts, such as in Nepal, community-based schools have been specifically targeted for attack (Smith, 2010). These conflicting findings indicate that the type of violence and the motivations of the attacks are important factors to determine whether community-based schools are sufficiently protective. Relatedly, who is supporting the school—and how public that support is—may matter. CARE's 2012 research in Afghanistan is addressing these questions more comprehensively. The new study will look at how external actors, including NGOs, affect attack rates and how protective government supported community-based education is compared to that which is NGO-run (Rowell, 2011).

Children's Clubs: No systematic research has been undertaken to examine whether and how children's clubs may help protect education. There are some examples of children's clubs confronting armed groups to prevent recruitment and ensure that schools and passage to schools remain protected (Groneman, 2010). However, it is unclear the extent to which these efforts have been successful.

Cooperation with Religious Leaders: In addition to cooperating with parents, some organizations have also reported increased levels of success for their interventions when they cooperate with religious leaders. For example, in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia, religious leaders have engaged in advocacy about the importance of education and school attendance (Groneman, 2011). There is no data, however, on the extent to which the involvement of these leaders has made a difference in protecting education, or whether the potential impact of religious leaders may differ in varied contexts.

Community Coping Mechanisms: In addition to programs provided by local and international organizations, communities may also develop their own mechanisms for coping with attacks on education. For instance, in Myanmar/Burma, where international actors have been limited in their ability to implement programming, local organizations and communities have developed systems for monitoring, negotiating with armed groups, and providing physical protection. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, student and community members formed their own committees to protect education (Groneman, 2011). Based on initial research, organizations could further develop the mechanisms local communities already have in place. For example, in Gaza, UNESCO has built on the activities of parents who would call teachers in the morning to ensure that the route to school was safe. UNESCO has now set up an SMS system for alerting parents, teachers, students, government officials, and responding organizations when an incident occurs (UNESCO, 2011). It is unclear, however, whether these community-initiated activities are more, less, or equally effective in comparison to those initiated by humanitarian organizations.

II.   Negotiations with Armed Groups
Negotiation with armed groups is a second commonly suggested programmatic intervention for protecting education. Such negotiations may be taken up by different actors, including in the central government, regional or district governments, or at the community level. Doing so may involve simple negotiations between individual communities and potential attackers, talks leading to painting schools with a particular symbol, or color, or the negotiation of codes of conduct surrounding schools and education (Groneman, 2010; O'Malley, 2010). As described below, most evidence on negotiations is case-based and/or anecdotal, rather than systematic and comparative.

Community Negotiations: There are several cases of communities reportedly successfully negotiating with armed groups to protect education, either individually or on a large scale. For instance, the CARE study found that, in Afghanistan, there were several instances of community leaders engaging in dialogue with potential attackers, although they found that interviewees' reported success was more likely when the community was familiar with the armed groups (Glad, 2009). On a more systemic scale, Smith (2010) gives case study evidence from the "Schools as Zones of Peace" initiative in Nepal, where the organization World Education engaged community partners, including civil society, NGOs, and community-based organizations to facilitate the negotiation of codes of conduct with Maoist groups who were attacking schools in Nepal. Importantly, World Education found that engaging at the community level was more effective in this case. When they first attempted to engage government officials in negotiations, they found that this created too much conflict and contention with the Maoists. In interviews, teachers and community members reported an increased sense of safety and security in schools (Smith, 2010).

Government Negotiations: There are also case examples of successful negotiations between different levels of government officials and armed groups. One interesting case, again, is Nepal. Smith (2010) writes that, following the 2006 Peace Accord, unrest in Terai district again began targeting schools. This time, a Schools as Zones of Peace campaign took place at the national and district levels. Whereas previously, during the insurgency, it had been impossible to engage government officials, this time, "When partners attempted to negotiate school level codes of conduct, local leaders would not sign until they had a clear commitment from the central and district levels," and district leaders would not sign until national leaders had (Smith, 2010, p. 273). There have also been negotiations between the state and armed groups in Afghanistan, where the Ministry of Education agreed to a more religious curriculum and the hiring of mullahs as teachers in exchange for the Taliban ending attacks on schools (Groomsman, 2010; O'Malley, 2010). However, it is unclear the extent to which these negotiations have

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been successful and there have been some questions about negative unintended consequences in terms of girls' education (Borger, 2011).

III.   *Physical Protection*
A variety of physical protection measures are commonly suggested for protecting education from attack. Among these, Groneman (2010) lists: reinforcing of school infrastructure, using materials like sandbags to catch ricocheting bullets, building fences or walls around schools, providing school guards, escorts for transportation or other protective presence by security forces or third parties, provision of school buses, arming of teachers, and construction of on-campus housing. Another commonly suggested protective measure is the provision of alternative school sites. In addition, one of the most commonly cited measures for responding to attacks on academics and other higher education personnel is physical relocation to another country (Jarecki & Kaisth, 2009). As in other cases, the evidence supporting the use of physical protection consists of anecdotal reports. Although physical protection interventions are often assumed to be useful in preventing attacks on education, these examples show inconclusive, and sometimes even unsuccessful, outcomes.

School Escorts or Armed Guards: School escorts or vehicles have been provided to protect teachers and students en route to school in Afghanistan, Columbia, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), and Thailand (Groneman, 2010; 2011). In Afghanistan and Columbia, there is no evidence on the impact of this intervention. In the oPt and Thailand, however, there is evidence that these interventions have been either ineffective or have had unintended consequences. In the oPt, there is case study evidence that military escorts have not prevented settler harassment of students, and, in some cases, have actually played a role in harassment themselves (CPT & Operation Dove, 2009). In Thailand, evidence shows that the presence of police or security force guards at schools and as escorts may just shift the target of violence. O'Malley (2010) points out that, after soldiers were posted at schools in 2007, the number of school arsons fell dramatically, but the number of students and teachers killed rose during the following year (see also HRW, 2010a). He writes, "This suggests that with schools better protected, insurgents concentrated more on attacking teachers individually or their security details" (p. 111). Similarly, although interventions like providing student or teacher housing or arming teachers with weapons or other resources occur in many countries, including Afghanistan, Columbia, Somalia, Thailand, and Zimbabwe, there is little conclusive and systematic evidence on their effectiveness.

Alternative School Sites/Distance Learning: In cases where the route or location of a school is considered too dangerous, an often-used intervention has been to relocate schools or provide distance learning. For example, in the Central African Republic, international organizations opened temporary schools in the bush after entire communities fled their villages. A similar intervention occurred in Myanmar/Burma, where schools were built in temporary facilities (Groneman, 2011). In addition, distance learning projects have been implemented in areas like the oPt (during the *intifadas* and when curfews are in place) and in Somalia, over the radio. Although such interventions clearly prevent students and teachers from being subject to attack in the original school location, it is unclear whether they are effective in other ways. For instance, it is not known whether temporary schools are later targeted for attack, or how the quality of education provided during these interventions may be affected.

IV.   *Awareness Raising, Curricular Measures, and Education Policy*
Awareness raising and peace-oriented curricula and psychosocial support are programmatic measures suggested for both preventing and mitigating the effects of attacks on education.

The 2009 CARE study provides some evidence that community acceptance of education helps protect schools, learners, and teachers. The researchers found that communities that had reportedly requested that a school be built in their area tended not to experience attacks on schools. In contrast, communities that had reportedly not requested that a school be built in their area tended to continue to experience school attacks. Based on this evidence, the author suggests that community awareness raising campaigns could have a protective effect on education. It is important to note that this evidence is based on perception and on a limited number of case studies; however, it may indicate a trend that could be researched more systematically, in order to determine the extent to which awareness raising is protective, and under what conditions. CARE is undertaking some research in this regard. Their upcoming 2012 study will examine why and how community acceptance of education may mitigate the number of attacks on education that occur (Rowell, 2011).

In a similar vein, Sinclair (2010) notes from anecdotal evidence from Sierra Leone that former students may attack education institutions because of anger regarding inequitable access to, or discriminatory content and delivery of education. She suggests that peace, human rights, and life skills education can be protective because of a positive effect on students' attitudes, as demonstrated for example in the evaluation of peace education in refugee camps in Kenya (Obura, 2002). She suggests that in the short term, these types of initiatives may reduce anger toward education among young people and decrease the numbers that join armed groups. In the medium term, they may help lessen the number of violent attacks that occur for similar reasons. And in the longer term, these measures might contribute to social cohesion and reduce conflict more generally. There is a substantial literature showing that education can be a driver of conflict, though this has rarely been related to the content of education as such or to attacks specifically on education. There is also a significant amount of research on the effectiveness of peace education generally (Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009), but there have not yet been any studies that look directly at the role that education policy reforms may have in reducing the number of attacks on education.

This literature review demonstrates that there is scant empirical, comparative, and rigorous research on how programmatic intervention can best protect education. The majority of evidence available is anecdotal, single case-based, and hypothetical. In the context of these significant gaps, we turn in the next section to what one group of practitioners—participants at GCPEA's 2011 Knowledge Roundtable—believe are the most critical research questions.

What We Still Need to Know about Protecting Education from Attack: Suggestions Elicited from Roundtable Participants

During the Roundtable, we collected information on what participants believe are priorities for further research on protecting education from attack in two ways. First, we listened to what they said during their presentations and group discussions. Second, we elicited direct feedback during our own presentation on "Prioritizing the Agenda for Research." We asked participants to tell us both what they believe they know and what they still need to know in terms of (1) attacks on education and their impact and (2) what works to prevent attacks on education. This section presents and discusses participants' responses.

I.   What do we know and still need to know about attacks on education and their impact?
Roundtable participants reported that they feel confident that they know the following information about attacks on education, including their characteristics, causes, and effects:

a. Characteristics of Attacks on Education
   i. Education is targeted in almost all countries affected by conflict, as well as in some post-conflict contexts.
   ii. Attacks on education take various forms, affecting structure and personnel. Attacks on education can also be less visible.
b. Causes of Attacks on Education
   i. Attacks on education can be symptoms of conflict, and they can also play a role in causing conflict.
   ii. In some contexts, gender-related issues may be linked to an increased number of attacks on education.
   iii. In places like Columbia, attacks on education may be related to forced recruitment into armed forces.
   iv. Economic disparity and inequitable access influence attacks on education.
   v. Natural disasters may increase the risk of conflict and may put pressure on the school system, increasing the risk of attacks on education.
c. Impacts of Attacks on Education
   i. Long-term military use of schools has negative consequences for educational access and quality.
   ii. Credible threats of attacks have serious consequences for education.
   iii. Attacks on higher education affect lower levels of schooling as well.

Participants listed the following questions as key unanswered questions and research priorities in terms of the characteristics, causes, and impacts of attacks on education:

a. Characteristics of Attacks on Education
   i. What is the scope of attacks on education globally and systematically?
   ii. Why do we have good data in some places and not others?
b. Causes of Attacks on Education
   iii. What is the link between the political and military use of schools and attacks on education?
c. Impacts of Attacks on Education
   iv. What is the global impact of attacks on education?
   v. Does military use of schools have long-term consequences, and if so, to what extent?
   vi. Do attacks stemming from some motives tend to have more severe consequences than attacks stemming from other motives?
   vii. What is the best way to measure the consequences of the indirect fear caused by attacks on education (i.e. the "chilling effect")?
   viii. Do attacks on education divert aid and money away from other development goals and to what extent? And what is the long-term impact of this?

The above feedback from by Roundtable participants during our Research Agenda session demonstrates their confidence that we do know general information about the characteristics, causes, and impacts of attacks on education. However, we know much less about their specific dynamics and about the associations between different factors in terms of their incidences, causes, and impacts. For example, we know generally that attacks on education occur worldwide in conflict-affected and unstable areas. However, we do not have more specific and systematic evidence on whether there are patterns in the types of attacks that occur in some locations as compared to others (e.g. are ideologically motivated

attacks on education more common in inter- or intra-state conflicts), or whether different tactics can be linked to particular motives (e.g. are school arsons more common when attacks are ideologically, criminally, ethnically, or religiously motivated). Similarly, we have reason to believe that factors such as gender, economic disparity, or natural disasters affect the likelihood of attacks on education, but we do not know the relative importance of each of these factors, or what other factors may also be influential in various settings. We also have some general evidence that attacks on education, and even the threat of attack, negatively impact the quality and access of education. However, we do not know how these impacts differ depending on the type of attack or the motives of the attack, or the longer-term or wider social consequences of attacks. More systematic, comparative, and cross-contextual research is necessary to answer these questions.

II.   *What do we know and still need to know about what works to prevent attacks on education?*
Participants reported that they were confident that they know the following information about what works to prevent attacks on education:

i.   Context matters: Attacks on education might look similar, but because context (including politics, economics, social dynamics) differs, interventions must be context-specific.
ii. The structure of a school matters: Community-based schools may work to protect education because they are situated in a home or community structure.
iii. The perpetrator of an attack influences the appropriate response: The response differs depending on whether the perpetrator is a state or non-state party.
iv. The motives behind an attack influence the appropriate response: For example, the response differs depending on whether the attack directly targets education or whether the damage to education is collateral.
v.   Community involvement is important, but limited: It can make schools more resilient to attacks. However, there are also limits to what individual communities can do to protect education, particularly when powerful states are involved.
vi. Strong school management and governance is important: They can make schools less vulnerable to outside political and military influence and to attack.

In contrast, participants cited the following questions as among those still unanswered:
i.   Do some interventions, such as alternative education sites, present unintended protection risks for children (e.g. could schooling in a home increase the incidence of unmonitored abuse)?
ii. How do interventions like alternative education models affect nation-building (and other longer term security issues) over time?
iii. What are the effects of interventions that rely on untrained teachers?
iv. What are the effects of interventions that relate to education content and process?
v.   How can we ensure that interventions intended to protect education are sustainable and of good quality?
vi. How can education provided in exile be used to promote education in the home country?
vii. What is the impact of monitoring and reporting on prevention, protection, and response?

Participant responses to the questions of what we know and still need to know about how to protect education from attack show that they feel relatively confident that we know what variables may influence a response, making it more or less effective in a particular setting. But we still do not have a strong and systematic understanding of how exactly these factors are influential, the patterns in the types of impacts that they might have, the relative advantage of one intervention in comparison to

another, and whether interventions may have negative side effects or unintended consequences. The Roundtable discussion highlighted in particular the awareness that context, structure, perpetrator, and motives may each influence the success of an intervention. For example, there was agreement that in negotiating codes of conduct with armed groups, it is important to consider the motives and structures of the negotiating partners, as well as their relationship with the international community or other third party actors. These may indicate how willing the factions are to engage in negotiations and follow the agreement. However, participants did not feel that they had strong evidence on how, systematically and comparatively, these factors might matter.

Similarly, the discussion throughout the Roundtable showed that participants feel confident that community-based schools protect education. Participants can even suggest possible reasons why they might function in this way (e.g. location in a home; see also Glad, 2009; Burde, 2010). Nevertheless, there is no systematic evidence on how and why community-based schools are protective, and under what conditions. For instance, it is not yet known whether NGO-supported community-based schools are more, less, or equally protective as government-supported community-based schools—although CARE is taking up this research question in 2012 in Afghanistan (see below).

Finally, the Roundtable discussion reflected an awareness that some interventions to protect education may have unintended and negative social consequences or trade-offs. For instance, alternative education sites where education is moved into a more private setting could mean that it is more difficult to track children's social wellbeing during a time of conflict. Or reinforcing school infrastructure to insulate it from attack may make it more attractive for police or armed groups to use as a base (see HRW, 2011). There could also be trade-offs between positive short term and negative long term consequences, such as for the quality of education, or for nation or state building in cases where non-state actors provide education. Participants expressed the need to understand more systematically what these consequences and trade offs are.

Priorities for Future Research

Based on the Roundtable discussion, we outline below several priority areas for rigorous and empirical research. Given that the majority of knowledge on programmatic measures for protecting education is case-based and anecdotal, there is a substantial need for this type of study.

1. Cross-country/Cross-context Comparison: Despite the global reviews of attacks on education published by O'Malley (2007; 2010), the Roundtable discussion emphasized that there is a need for a stronger, more systematic, and comparative understanding of the dynamics of attacks on education as they occur in different settings and of the relative influence of different factors on their incidence, causes, and impacts.
2. The Impact of Context-specific Factors on Programmatic Interventions: Roundtable participants also emphasized that the relevance and effectiveness of interventions is largely dependent on context-specific factors, including the type of violence faced and motivations of armed groups perpetrating attacks. Research is needed into how and why interventions are successful or unsuccessful in particular contexts and to identify their key attributes in this regard.
3. Questions of Identity or "Affiliation": Another important issue raised throughout Roundtable discussions was the role of different actors affiliated both with attacks on education and different educational interventions (e.g. NGOs, school committees, armed forces, international donors). There is a need for further research on how different motives and affiliations on the

part of each of these actors may influence prevention. Importantly, as discussed below, CARE is undertaking some of this research in Afghanistan in 2012.

4. <u>Longitudinal Research and Long Term Impact of Interventions on Other Educational Indicators</u>: There is not yet any longitudinal research on programs protecting education. This is particularly important because there may be tradeoffs between short term gains from interventions and long term impacts. For example, what effect do community-based schools have on learning outcomes over the long term? Or, what is the impact of changes in policy to reduce bias in access to and content of education?

5. <u>Unintended Consequences of Interventions</u>: The Roundtable reflected a deep concern with potential negative consequences of programmatic interventions. Several of the interventions discussed above are associated with unintended and negative consequences (e.g. reinforcing schools may trigger additional attacks or occupation). Research is needed into the costs and benefits of different interventions in order to determine whether they are more helpful or more harmful.

Using Data Gathered during Research and Monitoring

The discussion during our Research Agenda session also highlighted that Roundtable participants feel that they need guidance from GCPEA in order to use the information collected during research and monitoring in ways that bolsters advocacy and furthers the protection of education. They posed questions about the best ways of collecting data, sharing it, and using it for advocacy purposes. More specifically, participants asked the following questions:

   i.   How can an "attack on education" be defined in a way that is inclusive yet not too broad?
   ii. While implementing programs in specific settings how can learning be effectively measured and documented?
   iii. What is the best way to monitor and collect data?
   iv. How can organizations gather tracking data that shows how well governments are implementing their policies regarding the protection of education?
   v.   How can this information be shared and disseminated?
   vi. How can communities effectively use this information?
   vii. How can program implementers share information horizontally across countries, and how can GCPEA facilitate this?
   viii. How can organizations brand the issue of attacks on education and "message" it to the public?
   ix. How can organizations use information gathered to show and convince perpetrators that attacks are bad for their "political careers"?

How to Initiate a Research Project

Given the research priorities developed at the Roundtable, we now turn to what program managers (or those in other management positions) can do to actually collect evidence to answer these and other questions of interest. There are several approaches for collecting data: qualitative methods which generalize to a theory, quantitative methods which generalize to a population (Maxwell 2004), or mixed methods which can do both. Qualitative methods typically rely on open-ended or semi-structured interviews and "purposeful sampling" to gather data (in other words, the researcher selects respondents to interview based on particular characteristics of interest). Quantitative methods typically use standardized interview instruments to survey a large, randomly selected sample of the population of interest. Mixed methods use some combination of the two approaches. The best type of data collection

to choose depends on the question of interest. For example, if you are interested in understanding questions of impact and effectiveness, often a mixed methods approach will provide the richest and most versatile data.

Although methods for data collection and analysis are evolving and improving all the time, there are many excellent resources to guide research project design and data collection. Some of our personal favorites for research design and data collection are the following:

- Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (Creswell, 2008)
- Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach (Maxwell, 2004)
- Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Yin, 2008)
- Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data (Rubin and Rubin, 2005), for qualitative data collection.
- Standardized Survey Interviewing: Minimizing Interviewer-Related Error (Fowler and Mangione, 1989), for training staff in standardized data collection.

International agencies and NGOs increasingly value strong research skills. Many emphasize research skills in their on-the-job training for their current staff and in hiring decisions for new staff. In addition, in the past decade, a number of large international NGOs have modified the way they work, placing much more emphasis on the importance of data collection and research than they have in the past. For example, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has a large research unit staffed by trained researchers with doctorates in relevant fields who work closely with program staff and outside academics to evaluate program effectiveness (see, e.g., Fearon et al., 2009; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2009). Save the Children U.S. carries out research internships in partnership with universities [see Save the Children Save-University Partnerships for Education Research (SUPER) program: http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.6196513/]. These studies are typically initiated from staff working in the field.

An example of this type of work is that of CARE International in Afghanistan, which has identified research questions related to attacks on education that their staff consider essential to answer. The organization plans to conduct this research in 2012. To illustrate the way in which humanitarian organizations can initiate research projects, we draw on Jennifer Rowell's (2011) CARE research proposal here at length.

The research was prompted in part by CARE's concerns about the safety of education in Afghanistan after foreign troops withdraw in 2014. To support the best outcomes for education in the future, the organization has decided that it is crucial to gather data on the conflict related challenges that the education system faces in the present. In considering the state of attacks on education in Afghanistan, and the current information that they have on these attacks, CARE staff realized that they would need to gather evidence that does more than count and categorize the numbers and kinds of attacks on education. In addition to understanding the prevalence and range of attacks on education (descriptive data), therefore, CARE intends to gather information about what causes these attacks (explanatory data). This information will allow them to be better informed about how to support the education system in addressing them.

Thus, basing its current research design on its previous work discussed above (Glad, 2009), CARE proposes to examine several questions. First, they ask about the relationship between attacks and school affiliations: "Is there a difference in attack rates between schools which are visibly or publicly

affiliated with external actors versus schools built or run by the community?" (Rowell, 2011). Knowing the answer to this question will allow Afghans to identify whether any of these associations may affect Afghan children's right to education. In addition, this would help guide the Afghan Ministry of Education's policies to determine appropriate actors to "build, run, or be affiliated with schools during and after transition" (Rowell 2011). CARE plans to use quantitative analysis of its database as well as that of the government to study these questions systematically.

Second, CARE is interested in understanding how community involvement affects school safety. They would like to understand how community involvement may work to protect schools, identifying which strategies seem to be effective and why communities think these efforts are successful. Conversely, they are also interested in understanding if there are community strategies that do not seem to work, why this might be the case. To answer these questions about process and perception, they plan to carry out in-depth qualitative analysis. They believe that understanding these local interventions better will help them identify and support specific mechanisms to empower communities and provide them with additional resources to manage the security of their schools.

Third, in earlier work (Glad, 2009), CARE established a clear correlation between attacks on schools and using schools as polling sites during elections. They plan to conduct a quantitative review of existing databases "to better understand the nature of attacks against education undertaken during the 2009 and 2010 elections" (Rowell, 2011).

CARE is well on its way to carry out this research. Once they have these data collected and analyzed and once they produce a well-documented, well-organized, and well-written report, it will not only help them understand better how to protect education from attack in Afghanistan, but it will help them institutionalize these responses at all levels—community, national government, and with international organizations (NGOs, UN agencies, donors).

Power in Partnership for Practitioners and Academics

We have discussed why research on responses to attacks against education is important, what research exists currently, what we need to know more about, and how NGOs can initiate this kind of research. But initiating this research is different from actually carrying it out. How can organizations conduct rigorous research? Staff may not have the time, training, or resources to conduct significant and rigorous quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods studies.

Because the need for evidence-based research is great and widely recognized, partnerships between NGOs/international agencies and academics are on the rise. Academics are interested in conducting "applied research" – studies that require hands-on field experience for the collection of original data and that serve to answer questions of interest to policy makers and humanitarian aid workers. At the same time, practitioners increasingly need "evidence-based research" to support their programs both to improve program implementation and to strengthen advocacy. Practitioners recognize the importance of basing programmatic decisions on systematic, reliable evidence. At the same time, funders demand that practitioners provide evidence to show the effects of their work in order to win resources.

A study of community-based schools in Afghanistan illustrates an example of this kind of partnership and the effect it can have on program response, advocacy, and funding. Starting in 2005, one of the authors of this paper (Dana Burde) worked with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to study their community-based schools in Afghanistan. The research grew from a pilot study of CRS accelerated learning

programs in Panjshir Province, to a large-scale mixed methods randomized trial of CRS community-based schools in Ghor Province in 2007-2008. The study randomly assigned the community-based schools to 31 eligible villages (i.e., villages that had none previously), creating 13 "treatment" villages and 18 "control" villages (all received schools after one year). In addition, the researchers conducted 36 qualitative interviews with village leaders from 8 villages. After approximately one year, the researchers found that community-based schools have a dramatic effect on children's academic participation and performance and eliminate existing gender disparities in attendance in rural areas in Afghanistan(for a detailed discussion of the study see Burde, 2012; Burde and Linden, 2011).[1]

The study's findings are the result of a fruitful collaboration between academics and practitioners--neither one could have carried out this work without the other. Academics bring their skills in research design, methods, data collection, and analysis to the projects on which they work. However, they may lack deep contextual knowledge of a country or region, or strong local ties to communities. In addition, academics who are not involved in program design and implementation may not know what, precisely, the educational concerns of communities are, or what research questions practitioners have about program implementation. Practitioners, in contrast, are often embedded in the communities in which they work and understand local priorities in education. In countries affected by conflict, their strong ties to local populations allow them to continue their work even in the midst of conflict. In Afghanistan, CRS's deep local relationships, understanding of the educational needs and questions of the communities they worked with, and organizational infrastructure in the field made it possible for them to implement their program and for us to carry out our research. CRS staff in turn benefited from the research skills and training that we provided to carry out the study. Finally, because there was a high level of trust between the two—our research team and the CRS staff, the collaboration was successful. (For additional information about collaboration on field experiments among governments, NGOs, and academics, see Humphreys and Weinstein, 2009).

In addition, the research described here has had significant programmatic implications for education in Afghanistan, particularly for girls. In Afghanistan, the findings were presented to national and international NGOs, the Ministry of Education, to the European Ambassadors (at an EU meeting), to international bilateral donors, and to interested Afghan researchers and academics. The data show that if girls in Afghanistan need to walk almost any distance to school, most will not be able to attend. As a result, the Ministry of Education discussed changing its strategy of providing access to school for clusters of villages through one central school, to providing support to community-based schools in order to increase girls' attendance. A major bilateral donor—the U.S. Agency for International Development—designed its 2011 education strategy in Afghanistan based on these research findings, moving support for community-based schools "on budget" (personal communication, July 2011).

Although this study did not look directly at responses to attacks on education, community-based schools are often considered an alternative delivery mechanism for education in Afghanistan that would likely enhance its protection. The findings described here, in conjunction with CARE's earlier study mentioned above (Glad, 2009), were used to advocate for greater attention to the problem of attacks on education in Afghanistan (see for example, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/17/opinion/17burde.html). Thus,

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[1] This program was part of the Partnership for Advancing Community Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A). Leigh Linden, economist at University of Texas-Austin, was co-principal investigator of the randomized trial; the study was funded by the Columbia Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, the National Science Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the U.S. Institute of Peace, and the Weikart Family Foundation.

research partnerships between academics and practitioners can enhance practitioners' work in the field. In fact, increased collaboration can lead to improved programmatic response, better advocacy, and increased resources.

Funding Frameworks

There are many different ways to fund practitioner-academic collaborative research. Sometimes funds come from evaluation budgets related to programs, but there are other ways to support this kind of work. Public and private research foundations are interested in field experiments (like the one described above). These foundations (e.g., the National Science Foundation or the Spencer Foundation) only provide funding for research, not programs. Thus, there is no possibility that research funds will drain program support. One of the drawbacks to these types of academic research grant is that they operate on set funding cycles. Most foundations require long term preparation, only review grant applications once or twice a year, and maintain significant gaps between the deadline for proposal submission and grant-making decisions. Yet with the increasing number of applied studies carried out by academics in networks such as the Jamil Abdul Latif Poverty Action Lab (http://www.povertyactionlab.org/About%20J-PAL) and Innovations for Poverty Action (http://www.poverty-action.org/), this may be starting to change and funding cycles may become more conducive to practitioner-academic partnerships.

Although academic-practitioner partnerships are on the rise, it remains an emerging field. As a result, there are not yet many mechanisms for matching practitioners who need research studies completed with academics who would like to carry out that research. A few organizations, which have begun implementing these partnerships more regularly, take different approaches. As mentioned above, IRC has an in-house team of researchers who work both with practitioners within the organization as well as with academics from outside the agency. Save the Children has organized a team of affiliated academics with whom they announce and circulate interesting research projects (typically for advanced doctoral students) (see the SUPER program mentioned above).

Conclusion

The protection of education from attack is a relatively new and emerging field of programming, policy, advocacy, and research. As this paper shows, there has been little systematic and rigorous research on the patterns and dynamics of attacks against education and how to protect education effectively. Carrying out this research is essential for furthering the agenda of the Global Coalition. The first step in addressing a problem is understanding it. Only with a comprehensive understanding of the problem, such as of the factors or role of different actors in exacerbating or mitigating it, can programmatic interventions be most relevant. Research, furthermore, provides the evidence critical for successful advocacy and to secure funding.

The example from Afghanistan shows that systematic research can improve the implementation of safe quality education in times of conflict and insecurity. Especially where there is a major international investment in supporting education under such insecure conditions (typically linked to national and local social, economic, cultural and political tensions), it is imperative to have country-specific research to promote safe and effective program implementation. This type of research, examining educational opportunity at country level, will cumulatively build up a global portfolio of research findings that will help guide both future program development and the agenda for future research. It can also be

complemented by comparative research, to allow for a more complete understanding of how educational interventions may function differently in various settings, and why.

Based on discussions and feedback from participants at GCPEA's 2011 Knowledge Roundtable in Phuket, Thailand, we have suggested a research agenda that prioritizes answering the following sets of questions: (1) What are the dynamics of attacks on education in different settings? (2) What is the influence of different context-specific factors on the relevance and effectiveness of different interventions? (3) What is the role of different actors affiliated both with attacks on education and different educational interventions? (4) What is the long term impact of educational interventions and are there short term trade-offs? And (5) What are the costs and benefits of different interventions? Practitioner-academic partnerships can be fruitful for answering these questions: academics want to do this type of research that informs policy and practice and practitioners want systematic and reliable data to inform their programming.

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