



IMPACT STUDY OF ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENT

CAPITALIZATION OF THE SAFE SCHOOL DECLARATION STEERING COMMITTEE SET IN PLACE IN BURKINA FASO

August-September, 2023

Photo: Image of children during a consultation session in Dori, Burkina Faso, June 2023.
Photographer name: Nadinga Tiabrimani, Save the Children
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Save the Children

The background to our SSD advocacy work

Alongside our 2022-2024 CSP, the Burkina Faso CO set up advocacy and campaigns milestones, one of which referring to the full implementation of the Safe School Declaration (SSD). « By the end of 2024, the Ministry of Education will have set in place a Safe School Declaration steering committee with an action plan and clear mandate of ensuring that the SSD and its guidelines are fully implemented. ». This is the continuity of previous work and ambition started since 2021. This process has been crowned on August 14, 2023 with the minister in charge of education signing, alongside others, the joint ministerial decree setting in place the SSD steering committee in Burkina Faso.

Our contribution to this process: Save the Children played a leading role, alongside other organizations, particularly UNICEF, in advocating for the creation of this steering committee. We took the lead in developing the drafts of technical note and ministerial decree, which have been used as reference document leading to the final decision on the decree. Furthermore, in December 2021, we were asked by the Ministry to lead, for the first time, a national training workshop on the SSD, which was the starting point for advocacy. Navigating through different approaches including capacity building, lobbying and close follow-up, we played a key role in this achievement.

Next steps: Now that we've pushed for the creation of this committee, we'll need the resources to make it functional, including the development of an action plan and the holding of regular quarterly sessions. The PDQ team, our education experts and ACCM staffs are being asked to integrate this into future proposal opportunities. That's how we'll maintain our leadership on this issue and maintain our status as a key player in the eyes of the Ministry.

The expected impact of this achievement

With the signing of this decree, the issue of attacks on schools is now included and anchored in the agenda of the ministries concerned. This can address the issue more holistically and effectively, to promote safe schools and allow students to learn in a safe environment. This committee provides a conducive framework to promote SSD guidelines, effectively monitor attacks on schools, and above all sensitize stakeholders to the conflict to protect schools, learners and teachers, and thus ensure the continuity of education for children.

Statistics show that, [as for May 31th, 2023, 6,149 schools \(representing 23.48% of the nation's educational system\)](#) have been shut down due to the conflict, **depriving more than one million children their right to an education**. If the committee can work effectively and achieve the desired results, thousands of children will be able to return to a safe learning environment and as many schools will no longer be targeted. And education will be protected and safe.

Child participation to the process

Children played a key role in achieving this milestone. Indeed, in October 2021, we trained children who were given the necessary skills to conduct research on attacks on schools. A total of 12 "child researchers" were trained and were able to gather information from other children about their views on school closures. The children's consultation gathered evidence and developed [an advocacy briefing note for access to safe schools](#). Children strongly called for the full implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration, which the steering committee creation contributes to.

Children from Burkina Faso also took part in the SSD 4th International Conference, held from 25 to 27 October 2021 in Abuja, Nigeria, making their voices and grievances heard [through a manifesto with powerful messages and videos](#). Their main ask was also the implementation of the SSD by duties bearers.

COMPLEXITY OF THE PROCESS, USE OF MULTIPLE ADVOCACY APPROACHES

Bringing together several ministries and make them commit to invest in making sure schools are safe in Burkina Faso has been a real challenge. The process required a mix use of different approaches. Each of them brought a huge contribution to make this change happened.

1. Celebrities and public influencers engagement

As part of the International Day for the Protection of Education from Attack, 9 September 2021, Save the Children launched a [video clip entitled "Je veux retourner à l'école / I want to go back to school"](#). The music video features three famous artists from Burkina Faso (Alif Naaba), Mali (Vieux Farka Touré) and Niger (Safiath), who have combined their voices with those of children deprived of education due to school closures due to conflict, in order to draw public attention to the situation of the thousands of children who no longer have access to school. They also called for the full implementation of the SSD.

One year later (2022), the text (lyrics) of this song has been chosen to assess candidates to the Baccalaureate exam. This clearly indicates that by using music channel, Save the Children succeeded in reaching and in inciting the authorities of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger not to forget the issue of education (especially emergency education). Following this choice, our goodwill ambassador, [Alif Naaba, has been invited to a TV media interview. It was an opportunity to amplify message](#) for the implementation of the Safe School Declaration.

2. Advocacy and lobbying have been part of this success

Private advocacy has been strongly used to directly engagement the decisions makers on the SSD. On June 22, 2022, following the launch of the GCPEA 2022 report, Save the Children Burkina Faso sent an advocacy letter to the head of Government (Prime Minister) with ampliation to all ministries involved in tackling the issue of education in emergency and safe schools. The purpose was to urge them to maximize efforts and investments to stop attacks on schools and allow children to continue to enjoy their right to education. On July 6, the Prime Minister himself responded to the letter, acknowledging Save the Children's demand regarding education and reassuring that the government is working daily to stop the attacks on education.

In addition, we remained permanently, strongly and closely engaged [alongside the Technical Secretary for Education in Emergency who led the SSD process](#). Through private meeting to distance conversations, we succeeded in building confidence and credibility toward this department, leading to the positive result we got.

3. Media strategic engagement

- ✓ To raise more awareness, we commissioned a media report on the issue of schools under attack in Burkina Faso, particularly in the most affected areas such as the Sahel, the North and the East regions. This initiative enabled BF1, the private TV channel (with the largest audience in Burkina Faso), to collect testimonies from children and teachers whose schools were closed following attacks by armed groups. [This content was broadcast during the TV news](#) (of June 16, starting at 15:30) during which the Director of Advocacy and Campaigns, Hubert OUEDRAOGO, was invited [to highlight the main recommendations of the GCPEA new 2022 report](#). The main key message conveyed is that stakeholders in the conflict must stop attacks on education by ensuring the effective implementation of the Declaration on Safe Schools (SSD) and its guidelines. In addition, [another interview with BurkinaInfo](#) (of June 16, from 1:30), another private TV channel, gave the opportunity to call for urgent actions to protect education from attacks and make school safe for children living in Burkina Faso.

- ✓ On November 2022, when the Ministry in charge of education released a situational report on the number of schools closed due to attacks, Save the Children Burkina took on this opportunity to quickly engage the media to draw attention to the impact of conflict on children, amplify our messages and bring the voices of children to policy makers. This quick engagement meant SC was able to secure quality coverage with different media outlets including [RFI](#), [Euronews](#), [Le Monde](#), [La Presse](#), [Agence Anadolu](#), etc. This quick responsive media engagement clearly demonstrated SCI's credibility and positioning on the issue of education in emergencies, particularly calling for the effective implementation of the SSD.






4. Our programs contributed also to facilitate this achievement

Our field programs have been strategically aligned to our advocacy priorities regarding the SSD, as we successfully engaged the Minister of Education in [a public event to hand over 12,512 school kits](#) consisting of textbooks and educational materials for internally displaced students in the North-Central, North, Hauts-Bassins and Sahel regions. [The school kits were handed over](#) on February 3, 2023, in the presence of the Minister of National Education, Mr. André Joseph Ouédraogo, who appreciated the [contribution of Save the Children to enable children who have dropped out of school to return to school](#). The Minister himself [posted his own moving testimony on his social media, mentioning Save the Children by name](#): "57 years ago, I was crossing the Centre-Nord governorate to get to my school. What a thrill to find myself in this same square, and even more so, in front of internally displaced students! I see myself in the face of each of these children. I am convinced that ministers and valiant servants of the State will emerge from their ranks. For that, we have the responsibility to make the conditions of studies more favorable in an environment of peace and security. The government is working on this. Partners such as [Save the Children](#) are also working on this. On Friday, February 3, Save the Children handed out school kits worth 140 million CFA francs to EDIs in the Centre-North, the North, the Sahel, the East, the Hauts Bassins and the Boucle du Mouhoun. A beautiful work that deserves to be praised ».

In addition, Save the Children have been providing technical and material support to the Technical Secretary for Education in Emergency, including dedicating an EiE specialist to directly support the MoE. This programmatic and technical support truly help create and keep privileged relationship with the ministry and facilitate our SSD advocacy process.

The SSD advocacy has also engaged different [staffs who contributed to echo our messages](#) in favour of safe environment and safe school for children. From the [Country Director](#) to [field offices managers](#), all get involved to make this process a collective and successful experience.

ANNEX OF KEY DOCUMENTS USED

Letter to the Prime Minister	Reply from the Prime Minister	Draft of technical note proposed by SCI to the MoE	Draft of interministerial decree proposed by SCI to the MoE	Interministerial decree signed, setting in place the SSD Steering committee
 Lettre de plaidoyer au Gouvernement d	 Réponse du PM à la lettre de plaidoyer s	 Note%20technique- mise%20en%20plac	 Avant-Projet%20d'A rrêté%20MENAPL_M	 ARRETE INTERMINISTERIEL D