



Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
Réseau Inter-Agences pour l'Éducation en Situations d'Urgence
La Red Interagencial para Educación en Situaciones de Emergencia

INEE Good Practice Guide: Shelter and School Construction

In areas of crisis, shelter space for school activities is typically limited. During the immediate emergency, the shelter and school alternatives in the accompanying text box should be explored as both short-term and long-term options. If no facilities are available for education, then schools for long-term use should be built with the standard of construction based upon that of a well-run, rural government school near the capital city. For example, in many parts of the world, mud-walled classrooms with a metal roof or thatched roof is the norm, while in others, locally made bricks are the standard for construction.

Strategies

- **Involve the community in school placement, design and construction**

Communities should be actively involved in deciding how the schools will be constructed, where, by whom and what the community will contribute to the construction. Frequently, communities contribute labor for carrying water, sand or making the walls, while the NGO provides the roofing, doors, windows and furniture. When considering community-initiated schools, it is important to consider the time frame for completion and quality of construction. Frequently, communities overestimate their resources and underestimate the constraints on their time.

- **Maximize placement and use**

Ideally schools and educational facilities should be placed within walking distance of students' homes. This requires many smaller schools or "satellite" schools for pre-school and lower primary and fewer schools with upper primary and secondary classes, as older children can walk further to school. Additionally, schools should be designed to maximize their use e.g. equal number of latrines should be available for male and female students and teachers, accessible to children with disability. Plans should also be made to maximize the use of school facilities by the community, with classrooms serving as meeting halls.

- **Planned sequence of shelter**

From the outset, plans should be made to transition temporary schools and educational shelters to permanent structures. Typically, during an initial emergency, temporary shelters such as plastic sheeting, tents, and sunshades or in some locations, prefabricated schools are provided or constructed for educational activities. Depending on the longevity of the crisis, these temporary shelters (unless planned for) can be viewed as permanent, and in time will disintegrate when donor attention has moved on to another crisis and this will again disrupt the education system. The permanent schools should ideally be cost-effective, environmentally sensitive, disaster resistant, and based upon the standard of a well-run local government school near the capital. In refugee areas, school locations should be chosen so that the permanent schools can be handed over to the government for local use when repatriation takes place.

Checklist

Where no school or building exists

- Where are children presently learning? Under a tree? In which building?
- Who gave authority to use this space? Is this permanent or temporary? Is this in writing?
- Can space be allocated for schooling? And sports areas?
- Are the children protected from the weather? Are they sitting in the rain? In the sun? Are they cold?
- What are the students sitting on?
- What materials are available to build a school? What is a traditional school built of? Bamboo? Mud?
- Have mechanisms been put into place to constantly report how many children are without classrooms?
- What are the possible shelter options?
- Are there plans to transition from temporary to semi-permanent structures? Is there an annual review of shelter problems and possibilities?

School Rehabilitation

- Has the school been damaged during the conflict? Bombed? Burned?
- Has the building been officially cleared of land mines, unexploded ordnances? Have sharp and dangerous objects been removed both inside and outside the school?
- Has there been an assessment to determine whether the building is structurally sound? If the building is determined to be a hazard, are there alternative learning spaces?
- Is there any graffiti in the school? Can it be painted over?

School Location Selection

- Considering the demographics of the community, water and sanitation, where is the best place to put the schools? How will this effect the placement of pre-primary, primary and secondary schools?
- What is the farthest that children will have to walk to school? Will this limit their ability to attend school?
- Is there ample space for expansion?
- Will water be available on site?
- Does the location of latrines on the site pose a problem for existing water supplies? Where will latrines be expanded?
- Is sufficient space for recreational activities and expansion? Space for a football, volleyball or basketball pitch?
- Who has been involved in the site selection? Community leaders? Government? Local community? Construction engineer? Social worker?
- Who owns the land? Documentation? If the land is government land, has permission been received?

- If permanent buildings are being constructed in areas of refugee or IDP displacement, how will they be used when the crisis is over?

School Construction

- Have proper building permits been obtained from relevant government authorities?
- Are local building standards being followed? If there are variations, have these been approved?
- How were the plans for the schools developed? Were they based upon local plans or created especially for this situation? Do the plans provide sufficient space and materials for the implementation of the curriculum?
- In areas of bright sunshine or dust are there coverings on the windows?
- Is furniture also going to be provided as part of the construction? Blackboards?
- In hot areas, does the construction include ways to make the classrooms cool, such as ceiling boards, half walls?
- In cold areas, how will the school be heated? Wood? Coal? Oil? Is this the most cost-efficient means? How will the fuel be provided?
- Is there a staff room?
- What provisions have been made in the design for security?
- Is the school going to have electricity? What type of features are provided? Will they be sufficient for evening classes or study sessions?
- Do the plans include the building of latrines? Are there equal facilities for both male and female students and teachers?
- Is the school accessible for children with disabilities? Are the doors wide enough for children with crutches or in wheelchairs? If there are stairs is there a ramp? Are the toilets wide enough for children with crutches or wheelchairs?
- Is a cooking facility needed? Is there sufficient space for food preparation and clean-up? Where will the students eat?
- How was the number of schools and classrooms determined? Was this calculation based upon students coming to schools in shifts?
- How will the local community be involved?
- When is the building season? When could schools be ready? Could the beginning of a term goal be established for completion?
- Is the school fenced? Is there a crossing sign at the relevant roads?

Community Contributions

- What work has the community done to make the school functional so far?
- What resources does the community need to rebuild/refurnish the school? Tools? Cement? Paint?
- Are there technicians in the area who can assist with the renovation/refurnishing? Are they available?

- Can the community contribute labor to renovating/refurnishing the school? Labor? Hauling of sand or water?

Resources (Available on the INEE Website)

Primary School Buildings: Standard, Norms, Design, Available here:
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001017/101760e.pdf>

Protection of Education Buildings against Earthquakes, Available here:
http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/6_51.pdf

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