

Chapter 2.6

LEARNING SPACES AND SCHOOL FACILITIES

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- **To ensure access to safe learning spaces and provide for children’s daily basic needs during school hours.**
- **To identify risks and hazards to children’s safety in the school environment and take active steps to prevent those risks and hazards from causing a disaster.**

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

The space to learn is one of the most basic elements necessary to ensure access to education. Although school classrooms are the most common location in which structured learning takes place, education can (and does) take place in a variety of locations – in permanent school facilities; in tents or temporary school structures; under plastic sheeting or trees; in places of worship; in people’s homes, etc. Spaces for learning are essential and should be demarcated even at the earliest stage of the creation of a new settlement or camp. Refugee children, and sometimes IDP (internally displaced person) children, especially those in camps,

cannot generally be accommodated in existing local schools, which may be subject to overcrowding if they are opened to these children. Construction of refugee schools is sometimes undertaken by external agencies without consulting the local and national authorities concerned in the host country. This may cause resentment among the local population unless appropriate measures are taken. For this reason, safe spaces for learning are needed within the camps themselves – a requirement that is more challenging if the camps are overcrowded.

However, in acute emergencies it is more important for children to have swift access to learning opportunities than to buildings and actual facilities. Although shelter of some kind is needed, the initial temptation to begin constructing new buildings as soon as possible should not override the more critical need to hire and train teachers and to begin classes in a temporary structure so that children can quickly engage in educational activities.

National and international education providers may begin uncoordinated construction of inappropriate schools, without proper safety factors, adequately sized classrooms, access for the disabled, or space for future expansion. There may be little or inadequate information available on both the number of students or teachers to expect and their educational levels or needs. While learning spaces are important, what is happening inside them is paramount, especially in emergency settings.

Conventional learning spaces are often destroyed, inaccessible, or occupied for purposes other than schooling – such as housing, storage or medical care. Particularly during civil conflicts, school buildings are often targeted due to their status as gathering points for the community and as training grounds for future

community leadership. This is less common in the context of international conflict, due to international rules of engagement such as the Geneva conventions. However, this may be exploited by the warring parties who often use school premises to conceal weapon stores, etc., rendering the schools intrinsically unsafe. In situations of conflict, school premises can also become places for recruitment of both male and female child soldiers.

In all types of conflict, parents are often afraid to send their children to school during periods of active fighting, since both schools and their access and exit routes may be unsafe. In the case of protracted emergencies, premises may progressively deteriorate – due to deliberate damage, looting and/or lack of repair and maintenance. If natural materials for rapid educational response are not used wisely, environmental damage can occur. However, communities are often left with no choice but to attempt to repair old school buildings with what limited resources they have. The most important factor remains the provision of a safe and secure environment in which a level of quality education may be provided.

In addition, during many conflict or disaster situations, health issues can occur as a result of poor hygiene and sanitation conditions. In these situations or during specific times of rapid onset epidemics (e.g. cholera outbreaks), school premises are often converted into emergency health facilities. Not only is it important to ensure that, if used, these premises are properly disinfected, but it is necessary to have clear agreements between education and health agencies to ensure minimum disruption to schooling.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

Developing and providing learning spaces in emergencies and during early reconstruction is a costly and significant investment. Special consideration must be given to the fact that the actual teaching and learning processes are more important than buildings – but the latter may help to facilitate the former. Providing safe and adequate learning spaces should therefore also be a priority and especially during emergencies and early reconstruction. The strategies listed below outline some of the key considerations in the provision of safe learning environments.

In all of these activities, collaboration and discussion with the IASC humanitarian clusters in the country/region are essential (HPG, 2007). These should at the minimum include the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Cluster, the Education Cluster (see the *Guidebook Chapter 5.II, 'Coordination and communication'*), and the Nutrition and Protection Clusters.



Summary of suggested strategies

Learning spaces

Physical safety

1. **Take steps to strengthen the education ministry's department to support provision and management of safe school construction and infrastructure.**
2. **In early emergencies, ensure immediate access to schooling for as many children as**



possible and encourage schools to seek the support of the local community.

3. **Prepare/adapt guidelines regarding permanent and temporary building standards, if needed according to the INEE guidelines on safer school construction.**
4. **Ensure that existing learning spaces are safe and prepare and implement a plan for the rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement of damaged buildings.**
5. **Determine whether new schools or additional learning spaces are needed and where they should be located.**
6. **Determine and prioritize needs for school furniture, equipment and supplies.**

Environmental and hygiene safety

1. **Consider the establishment of learning spaces that address the needs of the whole child, including food and health.**
2. **Emphasize the need for safe drinking water. Schools and health centres should have priority in emergency water supply programmes.**
3. **Emphasize the need for adequate and well-functioning latrines.**
4. **Communicate the necessity of establishing waste disposal programmes at the school level.**

Guidance notes

Physical safety

1. **Take steps to strengthen the education ministry's or education authority's capacity to support preparedness for, provision of and management of safe learning environments, school construction and infrastructure.**
 - Conduct a vulnerability mapping exercise in the region/country.

WHAT ARE RISK, HAZARD AND VULNERABILITY MAPS?

The map is a common and effective tool for representing the results of risk, hazard, and vulnerability assessments. Maps allow you to establish geographically 1) the frequency/probability of hazards of various magnitudes or durations, 2) the schools which are exposed to these hazards and 3) the estimated vulnerability of these schools. There are several benefits to using maps to represent risk data:

- Hazard, vulnerability (e.g. building types and ages), and school location data can be overlaid on the map to help estimate the risk levels of different areas
- The clear visual representation of data, if kept simple, facilitates analysis and decision-making
- Maps are easily adaptable for public awareness and other educational purposes
- Maps of any scale (e.g. national, regional, local) and level of detail can be created based on intended use.





Steps in creating a vulnerability map include:

1 *Identify hazards and their characteristics at a macro-level.*

- Determine and prepare for those hazards/risks that affect schools in different geographic areas.

In many cases schools may be exposed to more than one hazard. The most recent hazard event may not be the hazard which poses the most immediate or greatest danger. For example, a coastal region prone to cyclones may also experience flooding due to storm surge, and a school built on the slope of a mountain in a seismically active area may be exposed to landslides.

- Identify and assess each of the potential hazards. For each hazard, you will need to determine these five main variables:
 1. Magnitude
 2. Duration
 3. Likelihood of occurrence
 4. Affected area
 5. Preparedness

2 *Identify the location of schools*

To identify the hazards to which a given school or prospective school is exposed and their potential magnitudes and likelihood of occurrence, you will need to determine the location of schools in question. If you are using hazard maps, school locations can be plotted directly on the hazard maps.

3 *Determine risk of existing schools and prioritize for retrofitting measures*

Where a large number of schools are being considered, conducting detailed assessments of each and every school in order to determine those schools at greatest risk may not be financially feasible. Adopting a transparent and technically based prioritization schema, or risk screening plan, can help to quickly identify the most vulnerable schools.

Source: Adapted from [INEE \(2009\)](#)

- Update hazard assessments on a regular basis.

“Making a school a safer place means working with its community to identify ways to continue monitoring the known hazards, maintaining the protective capacity of the school buildings, and learning new ways to reduce risk.

HOW SAFE ARE YOUR SCHOOLS?

Have all natural hazards posing a threat to schools been identified?

- How often are these risks reassessed?
- Are the school population and the local community aware of the risk?
- Were the school buildings designed to meet building code standards?
- Who designed the schools?
- Did (Does) the building code provide guidance on hazard-resilient design?
- Was the soil tested before the school was built?
- Were builders trained to apply hazard-resilient techniques?
- Was the school construction supervised by a qualified engineer?
- Who is responsible for managing the school maintenance program? Are mechanisms in place to ensure school maintenance is financed and executed?
- Do natural hazard events regularly create disruptions in the school calendar? Is there a backup plan to ensure that school operations continue?





- Are school furnishings and equipment designed and installed to minimize potential harm they might cause to school occupants?
- Do students, teachers, staff, and school administrators know what to do before, during and after a hazard event?
- Has a safe location been identified if the school must be evacuated? Is the passage to that location also safe?
- Does a disaster management committee exist in the school or the local community?
- During a hazard event, does the school serve as a shelter? Has it been designed to do so?
- Are the school population and local community aware of how they can reduce their vulnerability to the damaging impacts of a hazard event? Are they actively taking measures to do so?
- Does the school have a Disaster Risk Reduction manual and trained personnel?
- Does the school have evacuation scenarios, and has a simulation exercise been implemented?
- Are the local authorities aware of the school's routines, action plan and coordination mechanisms?"

Source: [INEE \(2009: 12\)](#)

For more information on how to ensure safe school construction and related disaster risk reduction strategies, see *Guidance notes on safer school construction: global facility for disaster reduction and recovery* ([INEE, 2009](#)).

In addition to the latest guidance notes on safer school construction (above), the INEE Minimum Standard 2 on access and learning environment deals with protection and well-being:

“Learning environments are secure, and promote the protection and emotional well-being of learners” (INEE, 2004: 41). The key indicators that may show whether this standard has been met include:

KEY INDICATORS OF PROTECTION AND WELL-BEING

- Schools and other learning environments are located in close proximity to the populations they serve.
- Access routes to the learning environment are safe and secure for all.
- The learning environment is free from dangers that may cause harm to learners.
- Training programmes for teachers, learners and the community are in place to promote safety, security and protection.
- Teachers and other education personnel are provided with the skills to give psychosocial support to promote learners’ emotional well-being.
- The community is involved in decisions concerning the location of the learning environment, and in establishing systems and policies to ensure that learners are safe and secure.
- The nutrition and short-term hunger needs of learners are addressed to allow for effective learning to take place at the learning site.

Source: (INEE, 2004: 45)

See also the ‘[Tools and resources](#)’ section for a full overview of Standard 3, on access and learning, in the *Minimum standards*, which concerns facilities and relate to the above.

- What is the condition of existing school facilities? Have local supervisors and head-teachers reviewed the following:
 - How many schools have been damaged during the conflict? Bombed? Burned?
 - Have the building(s) and grounds been officially cleared of landmines and unexploded ordnance?
 - Have sharp and dangerous objects been removed from both inside and outside the school?
 - Has there been an assessment to determine whether each building is structurally sound? If a building is determined to be a hazard, has it been clearly communicated to all concerned that the building should no longer be used?
- Are the schools in an area of ongoing fighting?
 - Has there been communication with all parties to the conflict regarding the schools' designation as a 'safe area'? [The Rome Statute of 1998](#), which outlines the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, includes protection for educational institutions under Article 8. Therefore, the targeting of schools and educational institutions can be prosecuted as a war crime.
 - What steps have been taken to prepare the students and schools for safety if fighting occurs?
 - Are there evacuation plans?
 - What plans have been put in place to reunite students with their families if attacks occur?
 - Are bomb shelters needed?
 - Are buildings suitably reinforced for fighting – for example, using sacks filled with dirt or sand – to catch ricocheting bullets and provide additional support for walls and ceilings?
- Are parents afraid to send their children to school, as they fear for their safety en route? (See also the [Guidebook, Chapter 2.2, 'Gender'](#), and [Chapter 2.5, 'Former child soldiers'](#), for a

discussion of how to make schools safer from recruitment/abduction.)

- Is it possible to enlist adult escorts or older children to escort young children to school?
- Can a ‘buddy system’ be implemented so children never walk alone?
- Can the community organize transportation for children from particular areas?
- If the school is near a busy road, what provisions have been made for children to cross the road? Are children trained in road safety?
- If children must walk in the dark, how are they seen? Do they have reflectors or reflective tape on their clothing or school bags?



CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES

“Developing designated safe areas in the aftermath of an acute crisis can be an important mechanism of protection for children. In refugee camps, for example, the simple demarcation of an area with rope, plastic tape or stones can preserve a space for children that can later be developed into a school or a playing area. UNICEF’s ‘Child Friendly Spaces’ provide integrated educational, health and social support services for conflict-affected families. The concept was first used in 1999 in the Kosovar refugee camps in Albania and Macedonia. While school classes and recreation served as core activities, the model offered a structure for ensuring that other children’s services, such as early childhood care, psychosocial counselling, infant feeding, nutritional support, basic health care and hygiene, were available. The concept has subsequently been adapted for use in Afghanistan, Angola, East Timor, El Salvador, Guinea, Kosovo, Liberia and Turkey.”

Source: Siegrist, cited in Nicolai and Triplehorn (2003: 20)

As part of provision of learning spaces, the ministry or education authority in collaboration with other partners should determine and prioritize needs for school furniture, equipment and supplies. (See the ‘[Tools and resources](#)’ section in this chapter for examples of what can be done ‘immediately, sooner, later’.)

- What type of seating is appropriate for students?
 - Seating and furnishings should be based on student needs and local norms, for example mats with low tables, desk/bench units for two to three students, desks with individual chairs or chair desks.
 - Furniture should be appropriate for the students’ age and height. Care should be taken in multi-age classrooms that both older and younger children in the classroom can be comfortably seated.
 - Consider the use of participatory teaching methods when selecting school furniture. Will children be able to move around the classroom and work together in small groups?
- How many desks, chairs, benches and/or mats are necessary?
- How many and what size blackboards are required?
 - Blackboards should be positioned so that all children can easily see them.
 - Blackboards should be repainted when necessary.
- How many tables and chairs are needed for teachers? In classrooms? In staff rooms?
- What other furniture is needed, for example lockable cupboards for supplies?
- Is school furniture permanently marked with the school’s name?
- Are local carpenters/businesses used to build school desks, benches or chairs? Do other local purchase options exist?

- Can young people assist with furniture production – perhaps through a vocational/skills training or apprenticeship programme?
- What procedures will be put in place to maintain the furniture and equipment?

2. In early emergencies, ensure immediate access to schooling for as many children as possible.

Access can be organized in the open air (in some climatic conditions), with temporary shelter (e.g. tents or plastic sheeting) or school buildings. (See the [‘Tools and resources’](#) section for examples of what can be done ‘immediately, sooner, later’.) Issues to be considered by national and local educational authorities, as well as other education providers, include the following:

- Can displaced children be integrated directly into existing schools and classrooms?
 - In the case of refugees, is this option acceptable to government authorities and community members?
 - Is it feasible, for example if refugee numbers are high?
 - For refugee students, how are critical considerations such as curriculum issues and language of instruction to be addressed? (See also the [Guidebook, Chapter 4.1, ‘Curriculum content and review processes’](#).)
 - Is there enough space so that classrooms will not be overcrowded?
 - If classrooms are already overcrowded, can they be used during non-school hours for the education of displaced children?
 - Does the inclusion of displaced populations require amendments to the learning spaces, for example to provide separate classrooms for girls, access for disabled children, etc.?

- If there is a shortage of classrooms, what alternative, safe, learning spaces can be used on a temporary basis?
 - Shelter provided by trees.
 - Roof or frame constructed of wood or bamboo and covered with a plastic sheet or tarpaulin.
 - School tents.
 - Non-school property such as gyms, warehouses, unused government buildings, or religious buildings – if such facilities are safe.
- What spaces can be used for recreation and sports, preferably in proximity to schools?
- Who must grant permission for such spaces to be used?
- Do the plans for temporary structures ensure that children are protected from rain, sun and cold? All construction should be appropriate for the local climate and allow for adequate light, ventilation and heat, if necessary.

3. Prepare and implement a plan for the rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement of damaged buildings.

Depending on the scale of the emergency, this may be a matter of a few buildings or it may cost millions of dollars. A detailed survey is needed to identify the condition of buildings, prioritize maintenance, repair or reconstruction work, and decide which buildings are unsafe and must be vacated.

- What is the condition of the buildings? The water supply? Latrines? Electricity supply?
- How much work can communities undertake, if certain materials are provided?
 - Consider establishing district or sub-district centres with roofing materials, etc., for reconstruction of schools and on-site examples of how to use the materials.

- How much will it cost to rehabilitate, reconstruct or replace the damaged buildings?
 - Is international assistance required?
 - If so, how will such assistance be coordinated to ensure that schools throughout the country are repaired and replaced?
- Have district education offices been rehabilitated/reconstructed? These offices will be essential for the co-ordination of school rehabilitation or (re)construction.
- Is a national construction unit required to handle major infrastructure programmes?



SCHOOL REHABILITATION IN EAST TIMOR

A team of East Timorese engineers and school architects, hired in early 2000 to conduct a civil engineering survey, reported that nearly half the schools surveyed needed to be demolished and replaced. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, district education committees made the decision on which schools to rehabilitate, based on damage reports and enrolment estimates. A group of supervising engineers then set out to inspect the schools selected to assess whether they were repairable, and if so, to scope the repair work. School principals, in consultation with school councils where they existed, managed the rehabilitation. As deemed appropriate, this could be done through volunteer labour or sub-contracted. Overall, some US\$1.19 million was paid out to communities for work on minor school construction. In addition to local volunteer labour, 52 different local businesses and community cooperatives were contracted to rehabilitate schools. To inform the community of these activities, posters were translated into local languages and posted at school sites. They contained information on the total amount of the sub-grant, its expected outcomes, names of the construction workers and the expected start-up and completion dates.

Source: Nicolai (2004: 106)

- In all of the above, encourage the support of the local community. (For more information about involving the community, see the [Guidebook, Chapter 5.5, on ‘Community participation’](#))
- Have head teachers and supervisors received training on working with the local community and encouraging community participation? Possible areas of participation include:
 - Site selection committees.
 - Construction of schools – helping with construction, carrying sand or water, etc.
 - Maintenance and upkeep of schools – cleaning and maintaining classrooms, grounds and latrines.
 - Provision of funds for school construction or maintenance needs.
 - Assistance with school safety and security – providing escorts to children, acting as school guards, if the situation warrants.
 - Responsibility for school gardens.
- Can parent–teacher associations be established to facilitate cooperation?
- Are school facilities available for community events? This will help integrate the school into the community.

4. Determine whether new schools or additional learning spaces are needed and where they should be located.

(Refer also to the [Guidebook, Chapter 1.5, ‘Education for all in emergencies and reconstruction’](#) for a general discussion on access and how many children are not in school.)

- How many children are estimated to be out of school and seeking admission?
- How many additional learning spaces are available?

- What are the local norms or standards for how many children should occupy a classroom at one time?
- Has the possibility of multiple shifts been considered?
 - UNHCR (2003: 73) recommends a minimum of 6 hours per day for students in grade 4 and above, which in many conditions means a full-day session.
- How many additional classrooms/learning spaces are needed? Is this estimate based on the use of shifts for students in lower primary, or for higher grades?
- Have learning resource centres/libraries for students and adults, and teacher resource centres, been considered? These may help to raise education standards, and provide places for study and lesson preparation.
- Have donors been asked to provide support for temporary structures in all locations rather than modern school buildings for a few central locations?
- Have site selection committees been formed? The committees should include:
 - Teachers.
 - Parents and community members.
 - Local government officials.
 - Engineers or site planners.
 - Health and social workers.
- If a site selection committee is not established, are communities consulted regarding the proposed locations of new schools/classrooms?
- Has the distance from students' homes been considered in the site selection process?
 - Ideally, lower grade primary schools should be located within walking distance so that young children will be able to attend. If the schools are too far from home, parents

will be reluctant to send their children. Therefore, the use of multiple, smaller ‘feeder’ primary schools or ‘satellite campuses’ should be considered.

- For upper primary grades, larger schools that take students from multiple ‘feeder’ schools or ‘satellite’ campuses in the area can be constructed. These schools can be further from students’ homes as the children will be able to walk longer distances.
- In times of insecurity, older girls should be allowed to attend classes at sites nearer to their homes. (See box on ‘Home schools for girls in Afghanistan’ in the *Guidebook, Chapter 2.2, ‘Gender’*.)
- Do the proposed sites have water access? (See below for more on water access and latrines.)
- Do the proposed sites allow for expansion of the school as more children begin schooling each year?
- Do the proposed sites have spaces for sports and recreation?
- Is government land available for new schools?
- If government land is not available, who owns the land?
 - What procedures must be followed in order to use the land?
 - What procedures must be followed for the government or the local community to obtain ownership of the land?
- If either temporary or permanent schools/classrooms are to be constructed within the boundaries of a refugee or IDP camp, will the local community also be allowed access to the school (if language and curriculum considerations make this appropriate)?
- In refugee or IDP situations, what procedures will be put in place to ensure that the local community benefits from the school after the refugees or IDPs return home?

5. Prepare guidelines regarding permanent and temporary building standards, if needed.

Semi-permanent or permanent school facilities may be constructed in protracted emergencies or during early reconstruction. The decision of what type of facility to construct should be based on the materials available and their adequacy – in terms of both educational quality and students’ and teachers’ health. Consideration must also be given to how long they will last in the climatic conditions of the place concerned. The *UNHCR Environmental guidelines* (UNHCR, 2005) and the *Sphere handbook* (Sphere Project, 2004) should be consulted when setting these standards. Other points to consider regarding new school/classroom construction include the following:

- Have national standards been established for key aspects of classroom size, building design, etc., to ensure good practice in erecting temporary as well as permanent schools?
 - If outside organizations are building permanent schools/classrooms, are they being built to the government’s standards? Are guidelines needed to guide the construction of temporary schools (e.g. classroom size, roof overhang)?
 - If there is not an official school standard, consider establishing one. The standard may reflect the example set by an already existing school, such as a well-run local government school near the capital.
 - Ensure that local building standards or good practice (where standards are not practicable for temporary or semi-permanent structures in rural areas) are followed and that proper permits are obtained when necessary.
 - Encourage local purchase and the use of local materials, such as bamboo or mud.

- If temporary schools are built, what is the plan for replacing them and building semi-permanent or permanent structures?
- Have the needs of students with disabilities been considered?
 - Schools and classrooms should be accessible to children and teachers with disabilities.
 - Latrines should be accessible to children and teachers with disabilities. (See also the *Guidebook, Chapter 2.4, 'Children with disabilities'*.)
- In camp situations, is regular monitoring of the condition of school and classroom structures conducted?
 - This will indicate the types of classrooms that work the best (in terms of durability and classroom instruction) and should be replicated in future construction.
 - It will also indicate the need for repairs and maintenance.

Environmental and hygiene safety

It is essential in any emergency or crisis situation to also consider the health and hygiene requirements for rehabilitated, new or temporary learning spaces.

- Has a health manual been developed?
- Have national policies regarding these issues been developed?

1. Consider the establishment of learning spaces that address the needs of the whole child, including food and health.

- Is a school feeding programme desirable? (For more information on school feeding, see 'Tools and resources' in

the *Guidebook, Chapter 1.5, 'Education for all in emergencies and reconstruction'*.)

- Are health services integrated into the schools? Consider the use of UNICEF's 'child friendly space' concept where routine health procedures, such as immunizations, are also offered on the school grounds.
- Are sanitary supplies for girls made available? This may be important in securing older girls' access to school and their regular attendance.
- Has a health focal point been appointed to schools?
- What is the condition of schools in preparation for an epidemic?
 - Are the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) facilities appropriate?
 - Is the access to safe drinking water guaranteed?
 - Does a school health focal point exist?
 - Did the teachers/education personnel receive any training for epidemics?

2. Promote access to safe drinking water. Schools and health centres should have priority in emergency water-supply programmes.

- Consider the following challenges to providing access to safe drinking water in schools:
 - Have there been any attempts to assess the existing water and sanitation facilities in school?
 - What is the availability and sustainability of a sufficient quantity of water?
 - Is water treatment required? If so, what is the feasibility of water treatment plans?
 - How much time, technology or funding are required to develop a source?

- Is the source within the proximity of the affected population?
- Are there any social, political or legal factors concerning the source?
- Have water points been located in areas that are accessible to all regardless of, for example, gender or ethnicity?
- In urban situations, it may be necessary to supply water into individual buildings to ensure that toilets continue to function.
- In situations where water is rationed or pumped at given times, this should be planned in consultation with the users.
 - Times should be set that are convenient and safe for women and for others who have responsibility for collecting water; all users should be fully informed of when and where water is available.
 - If children are responsible for collecting water, school hours should be flexible and permit them to do so.
- Schools should have appropriate vessels to collect water.
 - Vessels should be clean, hygienic and easy to carry, and be appropriate to local needs and habits, in terms of size, shape and design.
 - Some hand pumps and water-carrying containers may need to be designed or adapted for use by children, people living with HIV/AIDS, and older and disabled people.

3. Emphasize the need for adequate and well-functioning latrines.

Standards for school construction and operation should take account of the following:

- Latrines should be at least 50 metres away from the school, 30 metres away from any ground water sources and at least 1.5 metres above the water table. Care should be taken to

ensure that “drainage or spillage from defecation systems does not run towards any surface water source or shallow ground water source” ([Sphere Project, 2004](#)).

- Schools (and health centres) should have priority in emergency sanitation programmes.
- Latrines should be built separately for boys and girls and for teachers and students. Consider the use of the following WFP standards ([INEE, 2003](#); [WFP, n.d.](#)):
 - One toilet cubicle for every 25 girls.
 - One toilet cubicle for every 100 boys and one urinal for every 40-60 boys.
- Consider the type of latrine that is most appropriate for the situation.
 - Pit latrines: These require covers and use of wood ash or soil to prevent flies.
 - Ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines: While more expensive, VIP latrines are preferred because they prevent flies from spreading germs.
 - Flush toilets: If flush toilets are installed, it will be essential to have plans for both maintenance and the supply of spare parts.
 - Defecation fields: These are not an acceptable option as the risk of spreading disease among schoolchildren is too great.
- Soap and water are needed so children can wash their hands immediately after using the latrine. Determine who will provide the soap and how often.
- Incorporate sanitation issues into the health curriculum. (See also the [Guidebook, Chapter 4.2, 'Health and hygiene education'](#).)
- Establish responsibility for inspecting, cleaning and maintaining latrines.

- Develop Health and Hygiene awareness materials for children (posters and brochures for hand washing, safe water, latrine use, etc.)
- 4. Communicate the necessity of establishing waste disposal programmes at the school level.**
- Have head teachers implemented provisions for disposing of waste and keeping the school compound clean?
 - Are rubbish bins available or have pits been dug for waste disposal?
 - Is there stagnant water close to the school? How will it be drained to prevent mosquitoes?

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

1. INEE minimum standards for access and learning environment¹

Standard 3

Education facilities are conducive to the physical well-being of learners.

Key indicators

- The learning structure and site are accessible to all, regardless of physical ability.
- The learning environment is marked by visible boundaries and clear signs, as appropriate.

1 [Source: INEE, 2004: 47-48.](#)

- The physical structure used for the learning site is appropriate for the situation and includes adequate space for classes and administration, recreation and sanitation facilities (see guidance note 1).
- Class space and seating arrangements are in line with an agreed ratio of space per learner and teacher, as well as grade level, in order to promote participatory methodologies and learner-centred approaches (see guidance note 1).
- Communities participate in the construction and maintenance of the learning environment (see guidance note 2).
- Basic health and hygiene are promoted in the learning environment.
- Adequate sanitation facilities are provided, taking account of age, gender and special education needs and considerations, including access for persons with disabilities (see guidance note 3).
- Adequate quantities of safe drinking water and water for personal hygiene are available at the learning site (see guidance note 4).

INEE minimum standards guidance notes

- **Structure:** appropriateness of the physical structure should take into account its long-term use (post-emergency), the available budget, community involvement and whether it can be maintained by local authorities and/or the local community at a reasonable cost. The structure may be temporary, semi-permanent, permanent, an extension or mobile.

The following elements should be kept in mind:

- Locally procured materials and labour, when available, should be used to build the structure. Steps should be

taken to ensure that structures are cost-effective and that physical features (e.g. roofs, floors) are durable.

- Adequate lighting, cross-ventilation and heating (wherever required) should be available to promote a quality teaching and learning environment.
- A locally realistic standard should be set for maximum class size, and every effort should be made to provide enough space for additional classrooms if enrolment increases, to enable progressive reduction in the use of multiple shifts.
- Education programmes need not wait until all of the infrastructure components and adequate space mentioned above are secured. These components, however, should be supplied or adhered to as rapidly as possible.
- **Maintenance of the learning environment:** this should include facilities (e.g. latrines, water pumps, etc.) and furniture (e.g. desks, chairs, blackboards, cabinets, etc.).
- **Sanitation facilities:** these should include solid waste disposal (containers, waste pits), drainage (soak pits, drainage channels) and adequate water for personal hygiene and to clean latrines/toilets. Learning environments should have separate toilets for males and females and adequate privacy. Sanitary materials should be available for females.
- **Water:** this should be available within or in close proximity to the learning environment as per local/international standards (see Linkages to Sphere Standards annex on the MSEE CD-ROM for the relevant Sphere water standards).

2. Excerpt from the ‘immediately, sooner, later’ matrix of response

TOPIC	PROGRAMME EXAMPLES		
	IMMEDIATELY	SOONER	LATER
SITE SELECTION AND SHELTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe areas for child-related activities, within walking distance for children • Plastic sheeting and mats or special school tents • Educational areas should be marked and fenced • Male/female latrines for students/ teachers • Potable water supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-effective shelter (taking account of climate), typically good roof and floor, low-tech walls • Access for the disabled • Construction with minimal impact on the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where applicable, construction of schools • For refugee schools, priority to locations where schools can later be used by nationals
FURNITURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboards and supports, teachers’ chairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benches/ desks of the correct size for students preferably made by refugee youth apprentices • Oldest students receive desks before younger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairs and tables for teachers for school administration • Locking cabinets for school books and administration

Source: Nicolai and Triplehom (2003)

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