Guidance Notes for Safer School Construction

- Chinese earthquake (2008): More than 7,000 children were killed in their schools and an estimated 7,000 classrooms were destroyed.

- The cyclone in Bangladesh (2007) destroyed 496 school buildings and damaged 2,110 more.

- The Super Typhoon Durian in the Philippines caused $20m USD damage to school, including 90-100% of school buildings in three cities and 50-60% of school buildings in two other cities.

- The earthquake in Pakistan (2005) killed at least 17,000 students in schools and seriously injured another 50,000, leaving many disabled and over 300,000 children affected. Moreover 10,000 school buildings were destroyed; in some districts 80% of schools were destroyed.

- Hurricane Katrina in the United States (2005) destroyed 56 schools and damaged 1,162 more. 700 schools were closed and 372,000 children displaced. $2.8billion USD was spent to educate displaced students for a year.

As these figures demonstrate, disasters continually destroy or damage school infrastructure. Infrastructure lost to a disaster is a great economic loss for a country and the cost of reconstruction can be a substantial burden on the economy. What the figures don't say but is all too apparent is that the death of the children in these schools causes irreplaceable loss to families, communities and countries and life-long injury to millions of children around the world.

In addition to providing a space for children's learning, schools often serve as centers for community activities and constitute social infrastructure that is key in the fight against poverty, illiteracy and a disease free world. The Education for All Goals and the vision of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) – that all people in crisis-affected and fragile states have access to quality, relevant and safe education opportunities -- cannot be achieved without the construction of safe and disaster resilient education facilities.

Therefore, INEE is collaborating with the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) to facilitate a consultative process to develop Guidance Notes for Safer School Construction. This will be a simple tool composed of: 1) an explanation of key steps for planning and constructing safer schools, 2) basic construction principles, and 3) the resources available which can help country policy makers in governments, NGOs, donors, and other stakeholders to both advocate for, and integrate, disaster risk reduction into the education sector.

GET INVOLVED!
These Guidance Notes will draw on material already available, which will ensure that the guidance contained within them is based upon concrete experiences, good practices and lessons learnt from the field. Once a first draft is produced in early 2009, INEE will facilitate a series of virtual consultations over the INEE listserv as well as face-to-face consultations to ensure not only sound technical input but also that the tool is practical and user-friendly.

The development of these important Guidance Notes will require not only strong inter-agency partnership but also inter-sectoral partnership, particularly with shelter design and construction communities. In this, INEE will draw upon its companionship with Sphere as well as its linkages with ISDR's Knowledge and Education Platform, the Coalition for Global School Safety's Working Group on Disaster Resistant School Infrastructure, the IASC Emergency Shelter and Education Clusters, and many others.

To begin this consultative development process, the INEE Secretariat is requesting:

1) Materials that already exist on the construction of safer schools. This includes not only guidelines/ guidance but also case studies -- grey literature as well as published sources. For more specifics as to the potential content areas, please see the draft outline below.

2) Recommendations as to experts whom the network should approach for participation within:

a) the Technical Expert Group, which will help to peer review (virtually) the draft of the Guidance Notes throughout the development process and whom the consultant can approach for specific technical expertise *(please specify technical expertise area when recommending someone for this group)*

b) the face-to-face consultations -- two are now planned (one in Washington, DC in March 2009 and Istanbul, Turkey on 4 April 2009), with more possible in March - May. For anyone interested in facilitating their own consultation, a user-friendly facilitator's guide with draft talking points and a template to aid in organising and facilitating such a consultation will be developed.

Please send recommendations on any of these points to Monica Garcia: monica@ineesite.org. To participate in the INEE listserv consultations in early 2009, please register by joining INEE: ineesite.org/join.

The Guidance Notes will be produced, translated and widely launched in the second half of 2009 by the GFDRR and INEE, in partnership with other networks and organizations, and INEE and Sphere will integrate content from these Guidance Notes into their revised Minimum Standards handbooks during the 2009 revision processes.

Suggested Draft Outline for Guidance Notes for Safer School Construction*

1. Impact of disasters on the education sector
2. Why there is an urgent need for Safe Schools
3. We CAN build safer schools – *brief success stories*

4. Steps for Safer Schools
   - 4.1 School Structure
   - 4.1.1 Establishment of a Technical Working Group within the Ministry of Education.
   - 4.1.2 Examination and modification of school building designs, construction retrofitting and maintenance practices by the Technical Working Group (including discussions about finance)
   - 4.1.3 Development of a Training module for engineers, architects, school communities and other stakeholders
   - 4.1.4 Training of Master Trainers
   - 4.1.5 Development of a Techno-legal regime (policy, legislation / decree) for Institutionalization of safer school construction standards and codes
   - 4.1.6 Certification of engineers, architects, masons, etc.
   - 4.2 School Emergency Planning and DRR in the curriculum
   - 4.3 Quality Control (social audits, community participation)

5. Construction Principles

by Disaster Type

   - 5.1 Earthquake
   - 5.1.1 Basic design, construction, retrofitting and maintenance practices
   - 5.1.2 Precautions for non-structural components
   - 5.1.3 Reference and hyperlinks to good literature, handbooks, guidebooks, etc.
   - 5.1.4 Examples – Good practices, lessons learned

   - 5.2. Flood
   - 5.2.1 Basic design, construction, retrofitting and maintenance practices
   - 5.2.2 Precautions for non-structural components
   - 5.2.3 Reference and hyperlinks to good literature, handbooks, guidebooks, etc.
   - 5.2.4 Examples – Good practices, lessons learned

And so on for other hazards

**NB: This is a suggested outline. Partners are encouraged to suggest additions of / changes to the draft to ensure that the guidance notes to be comprehensive and relevant.*