

# Contextualizing Global Standards to Local Settings:

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

*Tzvetomira Laub*

**INEE**

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## Introduction

Developed in 2004, the INEE Minimum Standards (INEE MS) Handbook is the only global tool to articulate the minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies through to recovery and development. Based on international legal frameworks,<sup>1</sup> the Standards express the network's mission and commitment that all individuals have the right to safe, quality and relevant education, even in the most dire circumstances of violent conflict and natural disaster. The INEE MS are a useful tool for practitioners and policy makers working on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of quality education programs and policies in emergencies through to recovery.

The INEE MS are the foundational tool for the INEE network and for the broader field of education in emergencies (EiE). In the first decade since their launch, the Standards have strengthened policy, practice and advocacy on EiE and contributed significantly to professionalizing the entire EiE field.

The INEE MS have been used in 110 countries and territories, with most frequent use in Pakistan, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), South Sudan, Kenya, Haiti, and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), according to the 2012 INEE MS Assessment Report. The INEE MS have been used most frequently in conflict contexts (32%), followed by natural disasters (24%) and both conflict and natural disaster contexts (20%). The INEE MS are utilized most during the preparedness phase, followed by early recovery, development, and in chronic/protracted emergencies. In terms of types of usages, INEE MS have most often been used for advocacy for the recognition of education as a key humanitarian response in emergency settings, as well as in disaster and preparedness planning, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity development and trainings. Furthermore, the Standards are also frequently used in developing proposals, project design and carrying out coordination of the education response.<sup>2</sup>

The Standards enhance the quality and accountability of humanitarian and development action on education. The INEE MS raise the level of quality expected, and promote accountability in providing education services. The Standards allow colleagues and partners to speak the same language. This facilitates better coordination, program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Feedback from INEE members and partners over the past 10 years shows that the INEE MS are appreciated greatly for giving the colleagues at HQ and field level a common reference and language that facilitates mutual work and collaboration on EiE programming, advocacy and policy-making.

This paper explains the process and outcomes of contextualizing the INEE MS and reflects on challenges and lessons learned. The aim of the paper is to inform future contextualization exercises on the INEE MS, as well as to guide similar attempts to contextualize other global humanitarian standards, such as the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.<sup>3</sup>

First, the paper lays out the background, structure and usage of the Standards and distinguishes between two types of contextualization exercises—informal and formal. Next, the paper reviews contextualization challenges and lessons learned, organized by logistics, process, template, facilitation, participants, language and translation and other topics. Finally, the paper shares useful tools and resources to support future contextualization exercises.

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<sup>1</sup> INEE MS, page 6.

<sup>2</sup> See 2012 INEE MS Assessment Report.

<sup>3</sup> Child Protection Working Group, (2012). *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action*. Retrieved from: <http://cpwg.net/minimum-standards/>

## Background

In its early years, the INEE Working Group on Minimum Standards and Network Tools (INEE WG) focused on the development of the INEE MS.<sup>4</sup> This was a broad, consultative, highly collaborative process involving over 2,250 colleagues in over 50 countries. The launch of the Standards generated a tremendous interest among the humanitarian aid community globally, and requests for technical support, training and capacity development on the Standards flooded the INEE Secretariat and the INEE WG. In the years following the launch, INEE developed a training package on the INEE MS, and subsequently an EIE Training Package in partnership with the Education Cluster, and carried out numerous trainings and Training of Trainers (TOTs) worldwide. In addition, INEE developed a number of tools to support the application of the INEE MS. These include institutionalization checklists, case studies, advocacy documents, talking points and compilation of implementation tools systematized in the INEE Toolkit.<sup>5</sup> INEE surveyed users of the INEE MS on a number of occasions to understand how the Handbook was being used and how best to support users of the Handbook. In 2009-2010, the INEE WG updated the INEE MS to reflect recent developments in the EIE field, such as the establishment of the Education Cluster, and to mainstream 11 thematic issues (conflict mitigation, disaster risk reduction, early childhood development, gender, HIV and AIDs, human rights, inclusive education, inter-sectoral linkages, protection, psychosocial support and youth).

As the recognition and usage of the INEE MS grew globally, so did the requests for technical support, and particularly requests for guidance on using and adapting the Standards in the local context. In an attempt to address this need, the INEE WG developed a contextualization package to guide formal contextualization processes. The package includes:

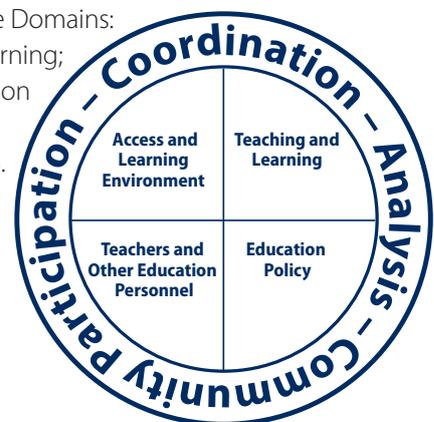
- Steps to contextualize the Minimum Standards ([http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource\\_db\\_steps\\_to\\_contextualize\\_the\\_minimum\\_standards](http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource_db_steps_to_contextualize_the_minimum_standards))
- INEE MS Contextualization template ([http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization\\_Package.zip](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization_Package.zip))
- Sample of contextualized standards for Afghanistan Community Based Education ([http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource\\_db\\_sample\\_of\\_contextualized\\_standards\\_for\\_afghanistan\\_community\\_ba](http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource_db_sample_of_contextualized_standards_for_afghanistan_community_ba))
- Sample Logframe for the contextualization process ([http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization\\_Package.zip](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization_Package.zip))
- Further guidance available on the INEE website <http://www.ineesite.org/en/minimum-standards/contextualization>

This contextualization package has served as the basis for formal contextualization exercises in 8 countries/territories to date: Afghanistan, Somalia, Vietnam, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and OPT.

## Structure of the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook

The guidance in the INEE MS is systematized in 19 Standards, organized in five Domains: Foundational Standards; Access and Learning Environment; Teaching and Learning; Teachers and Other Education Personnel; and Education Policy (see also map on inside back cover and circle graphic). The contextualization template and the contextualized Standards all follow the same structure as the original INEE MS.

The structure of the guidance within each of the 19 Standards is as follows: First, the **Standard** is spelled out. Each Standard is based on the principle that affected populations have the right to life with dignity and the right to safe, quality and relevant education. The Standards are “qualitative in nature and are meant to be universal and applicable in any context.”<sup>6</sup>



<sup>4</sup> The original title of the Handbook was “INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Reconstruction.” In the 2010 updated edition, the title was changed to the “INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery.” This change was a reflection of the wide usage of the Standards beyond the acute emergency phase.

<sup>5</sup> See INEE Toolkit at [www.ineesite.org/Toolkit](http://www.ineesite.org/Toolkit); and *Tools and Resources to Support the Use of the INEE Minimum Standards* at <http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1115/Tools.ENGLISH.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> INEE MS, p. 10.

Next are the **key actions**, which are suggested steps to achieve the Standard. These actions should be tailored and adapted to the context. Some actions may not be applicable to some contexts.

Finally, **guidance notes** offer good practice ideas to consider when using and adapting the key actions and Standards in different contexts. Some guidance notes offer background info and definitions and others focus on priority issues and offer advice on how to resolve practical challenges.

Contextualization exercises have embraced a number of different foci in order to make the Standards, key actions and guidance notes relevant, concrete and applicable to the context. Each contextualization process has been shaped by the context and priorities of the stakeholders involved in the development of the methodology in order to reflect the needs within the country.

Each Standard presents a goal that needs to be met, based on international humanitarian and human rights frameworks, which apply even in crisis. Therefore, it is important that contextualization does not lower the Standards, given the difficult context, or alter the rights-based foundations on which the Standards are based. Instead, contextualization should aspire to reaching comparable rights-based objectives by articulating the Standards in the most relevant, comprehensive, and user-friendly language.

*Contextualization should not lower the Standards, given the difficult context, or alter the rights-based foundations on which the Standards are based. Instead, contextualization should aspire to reaching comparable rights-based objectives articulating the Standards using the most relevant, comprehensive, and user-friendly language.*



Adama, Ethiopia (Feb 2013)

# Contextualization

In order to be applicable and usable in any context, the INEE MS Handbook is necessarily written in general terms and provides generic guidance on EiE throughout prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and development phases. However, to be most effective, the Standards need to be contextualized to each context and situation. Contextualization refers to the process of debating, determining and agreeing upon the meaning of global guidance in a given local situation: it is about examining and “translating” the meaning and guidance of the Standards for the context of a country (or region) so as to make the content of the Standards appropriate and meaningful to the given circumstances. Contextualization participants consider how the Standards can be achieved within the particular national context (baseline, structures, constraints, opportunities, etc.) that they are being adapted to.

*Contextualization refers to the process of debating, determining and agreeing upon the meaning of global guidance in a given local situation.*

Since every context is different, the key actions and guidance notes in the Handbook must be adapted to and tailored to each local context, thus making them concrete and actionable. Context, including available local capacity and resources, and the stage of the emergency must be taken into consideration when devising locally acceptable contextualized actions.

For example, the Handbook’s guidance on teacher-student ratio is that “enough teachers should be recruited to ensure an appropriate teacher-student ratio.”<sup>7</sup> In consultation with partners in a country, the locally acceptable teacher-student ratio can be determined to be 1:50. While this ratio might be an acceptable in one context depending on circumstances, resources and the stage of an emergency, the same ratio will not be appropriate in another context. This is partly why the Standards should be contextualized in each context. Another example comes from the Standard on Equal Access, which offers the following guidance: “learning opportunities need to be flexible and adapted to the context.”<sup>8</sup> Once contextualized, flexibility can be achieved through any combination of the following approaches, deemed appropriate and necessary by the contextualization participants: changes to class schedule, hours, shifts, annual timetables, alternative modes of delivery (self-study, distance learning, accelerated or catch-up classes), provision of childcare at or near the school to facilitate child-mothers, and waiving of documentation requirements.

In some circumstances, “local factors make the realization of the Standards and key actions unattainable in the short term. When this happens, it is critical to reflect upon and understand the gap between the Standards and key actions listed in the Handbook and the reality in the local context. Challenges should be examined and strategies for change identified in order to realize the Standards.”<sup>9</sup>

There are two types of contextualization: informal and formal. First, an informal contextualization refers to the adaptation and tailoring of the INEE MS guidance that each individual user does on their own when using the Standards. To apply the Standards, users review, tailor, pick out sections and adapt the guidance for their particular needs. They concretize the general guidance and adapt it to what is appropriate for the given context.

Second is the collaborative group process to contextualize the Standards that engages all education stakeholders in a given context. This type is a more formalized way to adapt and concretize the Standards, and

7 INEE MS, page 11.

8 INEE MS, page 58.

9 INEE MS, page 11.

it differs from the individual contextualization in that the outcome is recorded and shared widely, making it available for all education colleagues to use in that context. Based on a survey of over 700 respondents, the 2012 INEE MS Assessment indicated that the Standards are used in 110 countries and territories, which indicates that the informal individual contextualization and adaptation is much more common than the formal collaborative contextualization exercises.<sup>10</sup> This paper focuses more closely on lessons learned from the formal contextualization exercises.

Formal contextualization exercises can be done at national, sub-national, organizational/institutional or even school levels. They can also be organized to support the education response to a particular crisis (such as the response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon), to support disaster mitigation and preparedness (as in Vietnam), to support the design and implementation of a particular strategy, plan, program or project, or support national education policy and strategies (Afghanistan, South Sudan) etc. For example, Education Clusters could benefit from the contextualization of the INEE MS in preparation for the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) or in developing an Education Cluster Contingency Plan or Strategic Plan. Contact the INEE Secretariat for more guidance, advice and ideas as well.

## The Value of Contextualization Process

Contextualization exercises are important not only because of the final result, i.e. contextualized Standards that are widely used in country to inform and guide policy, practice, contingency planning, strategy etc. As a highly consultative, collaborative process, contextualization is also valuable for the process itself because it helps build a strong community of education practitioners and policy-makers in the country, who are vested in the development and delivery of the quality, safe and relevant education for all. When facilitated well, contextualization also offers an opportunity to hear the hidden voices and perspectives from, for example, local staff or stakeholders who may have been previously excluded from similar activities. The contextualization can also serve as useful team-building and capacity-building exercises, where local staff (regardless of where they hold high positions within their organizations) could take on the lead and feel ownership of the process: they are the ones who have the most context-specific knowledge and understanding of education-related systems, processes, laws, policies etc.

The contextualization process can be used as a window of opportunity for other INEE related processes, i.e. institutionalization of INEE MS and other network tools, case study production, and advocacy.



*Adama, Ethiopia (Feb 2013)*

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10 See 2012 INEE Minimum Standards Assessment Report.

# Challenges and Lessons Learned in Contextualization of the INEE Minimum Standards

This section reflects on the experience of the INEE Secretariat, INEE WG members and INEE partners in contextualizing the INEE MS in 8 countries since 2010: Afghanistan, Somalia, Vietnam, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and OPT.

## Purpose/Goal and Planning, Organization and Logistics

The formal contextualization process begins with identifying the envisaged purpose and end goal, and setting up the planning, organization and logistics. The success of the entire process hinges upon strong host partners<sup>11</sup> and participants who are committed to the goal and objectives of the contextualization. It is crucial that the expectations (regarding process and outcomes) of INEE Secretariat and host partners are aligned from the very beginning. A Ministry of Education (MOE)<sup>12</sup> endorsement of the process and/or their hands-on involvement as a host partner could also add weight to the entire process, and may stimulate the participants to be more invested in the process and outcomes.

At the onset, host partners need to develop a strong vision of what the purpose and goals of the contextualization process are, and how the contextualized Standards help feed in and/or inform ongoing or upcoming initiatives. In other words, contextualization should not be a one-off engagement, and should not be an end in itself. Rather, host partners should be able to articulate (to themselves, education stakeholders and donors in country and to the INEE Secretariat) why the contextualization is needed, what purpose it serves, and what is the final goal, i.e. what plans the host partners have for the ultimate usage of the contextualized Standards.

- Clearly define the purpose and goal of the contextualization process. Consult with the INEE Secretariat on the country-specific purpose and goals. Ensure wide agreement on the purpose and goal and a strong buy-in from all relevant education stakeholders from the onset.

The following lessons learned can inform the planning, organization and logistics of future contextualization exercises:

- Identify one or more strong host partners for the contextualization organization, process and outcome. Host partners should be well-respected agencies working on education in the context and in good relationship with all actors.
- Involve any education organization, which wants to contribute to the organization of the contextualization. If more than one organization is a host partner, set clear roles, responsibilities and deadlines. Actions should be divided fairly among all host partners. Host partners hold each other accountable to delivering on their tasks on time.
- Engage MOE or national education authorities in the process. In some countries, a written permission may be required from the government to hold the contextualization workshop.

<sup>11</sup> "Host partners" refers to the organizations and agencies, which collaborate with INEE to plan, organize, host and lead the contextualization process. In the past, host partners have included UN agencies, MOE, and NGOs. In most cases, the host partners were also members of the local education group/ Education Cluster or were Education Cluster Lead agencies.

<sup>12</sup> In some countries, other relevant line Ministries should participate in the contextualization process, such Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Disaster Management etc.

- Since contextualization is a multi-stakeholder process, discuss the project at Education Working Group or Education Cluster meetings to build support and receive input from a range of key actors and institutions.
- Host agencies should share relevant background documents (strategies, sector plans etc.) from the humanitarian and development sectors. For example, in Ethiopia, UNHCR and Education Cluster strategies were used to inform the adaptation of the contextualization process.
- Host partners should be committed to following through with the contextualization follow-up work, including the promotion and institutionalization of the contextualized standards after the document is finalized.
- Contextualization is difficult without prior knowledge of the INEE MS, as it happened in OPT and elsewhere. Host partners should advise the lead facilitator of participants' capacity and knowledge, and if necessary a training or orientation can be added to the process, to take place before the contextualization workshop.
- Host partners should finalize participant lists at least 2 weeks in advance of the workshop. This will give the Lead Facilitator time to adjust any exercises and make necessary accommodations.
- Contextualization can be a helpful exercise at any stage of emergency response. However, it may be especially helpful in the preparedness stage of an emergency and prior to significant institutional changes, strategic planning processes or policy revisions so that the contextualized Standards can be used as a guiding document for these processes. In South Sudan, the contextualized standards were incorporated into the developing Ministry of Education policies.
- Additional sub-national workshops can be organized to strengthen the process and final outcome document. This is especially important in complex and varied conflict situations where sub-national regions are affected by different types of conflict and emergency. In Ethiopia, an additional contextualization consultation workshop was held in Dolo Ado to ensure that refugee-related issues were mainstreamed throughout the Ethiopia Standards drafted at the national level. In Vietnam, such sub-national workshops were held with school principals to receive their feedback. If travel is required between local workshop locations (as it was the case with West Bank, Gaza and Ethiopia workshops), at least a day of preparation time between the two workshops is needed.

## Participants

Contextualization workshops are greatly strengthened by the consistent active participation of a wide variety of education stakeholders who apply their deep, contextual knowledge of what it means to deliver education in very challenging and diverse contexts. Generally, care should be exercised to ensure a group of participants with diverse background, knowledge and experience: a group heavily dominated by education policy staff will produce an outcome document quite different from a group of mostly teachers.<sup>13</sup> Host partners should take care to secure participants who collectively could offer a wide variety of perspectives and content input (covering evenly all 5 INEE MS Domains).

The following advice could be helpful in ensuring a diverse group of workshop participants:

- All stakeholder agencies working on education and EiE should be invited. Usually, these are members of the MOE and national education authority, Education Cluster, local education group, and education sector donor group. Because contextualization requires deep knowledge of the barriers to education across the country, it is important to include both senior leadership as well as mid-level implementers.
- The involvement of MOE or the national education authority from the very beginning is crucial to the success of the contextualization exercise. Decentralized education authorities should also be engaged.
- The exercise can be strengthened by inviting practitioners from outside the EiE community to participate to ensure the mainstreaming of good practices related to health, protection, psychosocial support, WASH, nutrition etc. In addition, government representatives of relevant ministries should be invited to participate, i.e. Ministry of Refugee Affairs or Ministry of Disaster Response.

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<sup>13</sup> In some cases, though, host partners may consider it advantageous to weight the participation of a given group, if the aim is to deliberately capture their perspectives and experiences.

- The host partners are responsible for putting out a call for participants, advertising it and organizing a fair, transparent and gender-sensitive selection process. Host partners should ensure that the selection process is conflict-sensitive and should not contribute to further exacerbating possible existing tensions.<sup>14</sup>
- When participants from a part of the country have a restricted freedom of movement, such as was the case with Gaza participants in the OPT contextualization, a contextualization workshop should be held in that region to feed in the overall contextualization exercise for the entire country.
- Participants should be informed clearly on the need for the contextualization exercise, how it contributes to strengthening the quality of their education work, how it benefits them as professionals and how this fits within the broader processes and initiatives on education. This ensures their buy-in and more committed participation and contributions through the entire contextualization process. Demand should be locally driven, not externally prescribed.
- It is helpful to identify lead focal points that can help to guide the small group work prior to the workshop. A short meeting can be organized prior to the workshop to orient these individuals and share additional guidance on how to support their group's contextualization process. All of this should be factored in the preparation time. Getting focal points on board ahead of the actual workshop and ensuring their strong buy-in and ownership of the process is a responsibility of the host partners (See also Facilitation section below).
- Participants' engagement following the workshop is important. Identifying technically-strong lead reviewers for each Standard or Domain at the end of the workshop could impact the quality of the feedback final product. The host partners can help with the identification of the lead reviewers. Additional reviewers can be asked to volunteer during the final session as well. In some countries, lead reviewers have convened additional meetings and feedback sessions to collect and collate country-wide feedback.

## Process

Contextualization usually follows the following process:

1. one or more participatory workshops are held, where participants discuss, debate, determine and agree upon locally appropriate and concrete meaning of the Standards;
2. workshop inputs are then synthesized in a draft version of the contextualized Standards;
3. workshop participants and other education stakeholders provide feedback on the draft version;
4. this feedback is incorporated and finalized;
5. outcome document is graphically designed;
6. MOE (or other) endorsement of final document is obtained;
7. the contextualized Standards are shared with all stakeholders in country for wide usage;
8. INEE Secretariat and host partners provide any necessary follow up and technical support.

In some cases, as in Vietnam, a local event is organized to officially introduce and adopt the contextualized Standards framework, which also aims to better organize and coordinate in-country application of the contextualized Standards.

However, contextualization is also an adaptable and flexible process and the contextualization process and template should be tailored to fit the needs and goals of the host partners. See also the section on Structure of the Contextualization Template below.

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<sup>14</sup> INEE Secretariat can share the list of INEE members per country who could be invited to the contextualization and later, receive the final contextualized document.

For more information on the steps in this process, see the INEE guidance on this process.<sup>15</sup> Lessons learned include:

- It is important for host partners, lead facilitators and INEE Secretariat to have a clear understanding of all steps in the process and the roles and responsibilities of each actor.
- Tailoring the above-described general process to the needs and circumstances of the context is important. Any process modifications and/or methodology should be discussed and made at the beginning of the process.
- Clear expectations of the final outcome document (size, style, presentation of guidance in text or box format etc.) should be discussed and agreed upon in advance. Host partners can review the contextualized Standards for other countries (available on the INEE website and Toolkit) as examples of what the final outcome could look like.
- If translation is needed, the process for translation of workshop materials, workshop outcome documents, draft versions and feedback should be established in advance. INEE and host partners should be clear on who will cover associated costs.
- Lead facilitators, host partners and small group leaders should have pre-workshop meetings to ensure all have the necessary information on the group process, tools and outcomes expected from each group. Following the workshop, the same actors should debrief to ensure that steps and processes to obtain feedback and to close any content gaps in the contextualized Standards are agreed upon.
- It is advisable for the contextualization process to take place over the course of several months (as it happened in Vietnam, Ethiopia and Afghanistan), rather than a few days or a week.

### **Intro Session and Review of the INEE MS Structure, Content, and Development**

- The welcome and opening of the workshop should express a high-level of commitment to the contextualization process from MOE and Education Cluster actors so that participants know that their work will be carried forward and will be of value to themselves and to the broader EiE community in their country. MOE and host partners should identify a leading education expert with a high-ranking who can open the contextualization workshop. Host partners can brief him/her on key points to emphasize in the opening speech so as to contribute to the wide buy-in and ownership of the contextualization by the workshop participants. Reference can be made to relevant national laws, regulation and policy at the beginning of the session. (Referring to such documents is also helpful during the small group activities.)
- At the beginning of the small group work to contextualize the standards during the workshop, the lead facilitator should take care to explain clearly the process and steps the group is taking to contextualize the Standards. This is crucial and if it is not done well, it could jeopardize the entire contextualization exercise.
- Participants' expectations should be obtained at the beginning of the workshop, and the lead facilitator should ensure that their expectations are aligned with those of the host partners and INEE. Any accommodations to meet the needs, capacities, and interests of the participants should be made, to the extent possible.
- The introduction session should be adapted to the level of INEE MS knowledge of the participants. If participants have not had an INEE MS training before, or have not used the INEE MS, it is best to include a day-long session on the INEE MS structure, content, development, history and application prior to the contextualization workshop. This should include practical activities, exercises, and case studies to ensure that all participants are well versed on the INEE MS. Without prior knowledge of the INEE MS, participants may find the contextualization process difficult.<sup>16</sup>
- The introduction to the contextualization process should highlight that the final outcome document will be designed, published, promoted and used widely so that participants are aware of the future impact of their work. Participants should also be informed that their work will be acknowledged in the document.

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<sup>15</sup> INEE, *Steps to Contextualize the INEE Minimum Standards*, available online at [http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource\\_db\\_steps\\_to\\_contextualize\\_the\\_minimum\\_standards](http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource_db_steps_to_contextualize_the_minimum_standards)

<sup>16</sup> Training materials can be accessed in the INEE Toolkit: <http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1129>.

Such training can be also provided by the Education Cluster in advance, allowing time for application of the knowledge on the INEE MS.

## Small Group Work to Contextualize Each Standard

- The lead facilitator should give very detailed, easy-to-understand instructions on how to proceed with the contextualization process in the small groups. Examples are crucial.
- As a good practice, the lead facilitator should facilitate in a plenary a Q&A exercise to illustrate how to contextualize one Standard as a model for the group work. Usually the Standard on Equal Access works well for this exercise. The small group work should proceed only when every participant understands the process and task.
- Before beginning group work, the roles and responsibilities of the group members should be clarified as well as the resource persons to approach with any further questions. Observe the small groups and redistribute participants if it seems that a group is struggling with the task.
- Small group work can be recorded directly into the printed template or on flipchart paper and captured later in soft copy. If possible, using flip-chart paper is preferable so that it is a more participatory experience for group members. Based on past experience, it is not advisable to use laptops for the small group work: this tends to limit the active participation only to just 1-2 people from each group. The use of laptops can also slow, rather than speed up the process because not everyone can type fast enough.
- Smaller groups (3-5 people) facilitate greater participant engagement and accelerate the contextualization process.

## Session of Peer-Review

- A gallery walk exercise (Vietnam, South Sudan) or groups working in pairs (Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Somalia) are useful methods for reviewing the inputs on each Standards and ensuring a rich debate, discussion and agreement. This allows participants to understand what other small groups have worked on and feed into the process by raising questions, suggestions and comments.
- Allow ample time for this session so that participants feel that they have the opportunity to reflect on others' work and integrate comments from their peers.

## Session of Action-Planning

- The session on action planning should review the next steps for the finalization of the contextualized document, including sharing the timeline for the review process and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the reviewers.
- In South Sudan, the session on action planning included a review of the work already achieved and an identification of areas that need more clarification and focus by the education community. For this session, participants were divided in groups according to the type of organization (INGO, local NGO, UN, MOE etc). In Ethiopia, however, a regional grouping was more appropriate and facilitated collaboration between colleagues working in the same region, including the identification of joint activities.
- In Ethiopia, Institutionalization checklists<sup>17</sup> were useful for the sessions on action planning, while in Lebanon, INEE MS case studies were used.<sup>18</sup> However, the lead facilitator should consult with the host partners how best to present examples of how the Standards could be used in practice: a Powerpoint presentation (building on data on INEE MS usage from the 2012 INEE MS Assessment Report) or a presentation of a participant who already uses the Standards may be more useful than the examples from the Institutionalization checklists or the case studies.

## Review of First Draft of Contextualized Standards

- Feedback on the initial draft contextualized Standards should be obtained from as many reviewers as possible. This includes workshop participants as well as relevant education stakeholders (MOE, UN agencies, local and international NGOs) who did not participate in the workshop.
- Holding a separate workshop to review the draft should be considered, if feedback via email is insufficient. Such a workshop was held in Vietnam and it contributed to the local ownership and buy-in the process. Alternatively, focused group discussions, survey or structured interviews can also be considered.

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17 Access the Institutionalization Checklists online at <http://www.ineesite.org/en/minimum-standards/support>

18 Access the INEE MS Case Studies online at <http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1115>

- Reviewers should review the first draft in their native language (See also section on Language and Translation Issues below).
- Agree in advance how to handle discrepancies and conflicting comments. In South Sudan and elsewhere, conflicting comments were highlighted and then resolved through discussion with the Education Cluster and host partners.

### Graphic Design

- The final text should be graphically designed and include a letter of endorsement, if possible, from the MOE or national education authorities.

## Workshop Facilitation

The facilitation of contextualization workshops is usually a responsibility of the INEE Secretariat, INEE WG members and host partners. In all cases except Somalia and Afghanistan, due to workloads and other responsibilities, INEE Secretariat and host partners have worked with external consultants for facilitating the workshops.

- The workshop is best facilitated by a team of 2-3 facilitators, with one of them being the lead facilitator. The facilitators should “float” through the small groups during the entire workshop to provide guidance and ensure that work is progressing.
- Small group work is best facilitated by a group leader selected among the participants. The host partner can identify such group leaders on the basis of strong EiE skills and experience, facilitation skills, familiarity with the INEE MS and the local education context. Small groups work best when groupings are based on varying skills, experience, knowledge, position/status and organizational representation, with one person identified as a group leader.
- If the contextualization takes place in a country where English is not the main language, it is best to work with a facilitator who is fluent in the local language. The selection criteria should include strong familiarity and prior experience with applying the INEE MS and an understanding of the local context and EiE. When INEE and host partners cannot identify a qualified local facilitator, English-speaking facilitators can be deployed. (See more guidance on relevant translation issues below).
- Facilitators need strong facilitation skills (e.g. questioning techniques/Socratic methods) to be able to engage a group with diverse skills, capacities, knowledge, experiences and differing agendas.
- Host partners should brief facilitators prior to the workshop on any local sensitivities. For example, in the past, this has included guidance on how to approach issues related to child protection, fragility, past armed conflict, non-state armed groups etc. It is also necessary to provide relevant examples from the context. These may be case studies, or specific examples. Referencing examples from other contexts may be sensitive, and it can create obstacles if the examples are given from contexts that the participants have difficulty relating to.
- To set the tone and ensure a committed participation throughout the workshop and its follow-up process, the facilitators should explain persuasively how the workshop and the outcome fit in the broader EiE work at country level, emphasizing that the efforts spent on contextualizing the Standards will ultimately help the participants in their own EiE work, programs, and policies. A strong buy-in and ownership of the process should be established at the very beginning. (See also section on Planning, Organization and Logistics).
- The host partners should also brief the lead facilitator on any cultural issues that should be taken into account, i.e. stopping for prayer time, holidays, cultural preference for lecturing vs. collaborative group work etc.
- Each activity needs to be explained very carefully and with examples to ensure that all participants understand the activity’s process and outcome.

## Language and Translation Issues

During the contextualization for Afghanistan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, and OPT, INEE and its local partners had to work in at least one local language in addition to English; in Afghanistan, partners worked in three languages (English, Dari and Pashto). This created challenges with translation, logistics and processes that had to be resolved in order to ensure a truly participatory processes and local ownership of the final product. The following are lessons learned and good practice:

- If possible, the contextualization should be facilitated by a well-respected EiE specialist, fluent in the local language and familiar with the INEE MS. When this is not possible, external facilitators can be hired.
- If the contextualization workshop needs to be done in English, it is best to use simultaneous translation. Translators need to be briefed by the lead facilitators prior to the workshop on the content, agenda, instruments and overall EiE terminology. If the INEE MS Handbook has been translated in the local language, this translation needs to be shared with the simultaneous translators beforehand.
- In addition to simultaneous translation, it is best to identify 1-2 colleagues in each small group, who are fluent in both English and the local language. These colleagues can serve as group leaders and should be briefed beforehand on the process, desired outcomes and facilitation skills so that they can help move the group discussion on the Standards in the local language.
- To facilitate debate and discussions, workshop progress can be recorded in the local language and subsequently translated in English by one of the group leaders or the host partners.
- Following the workshop, all content from the group work should be translated into English. The process to follow (such as which partner/agency will take on the translation of feedback to and from English, as well as deadlines for each step) needs to be set and agreed upon prior to the workshop.
- Once the lead facilitator has drafted the contextualized Standards, the draft needs to be translated back into the local language in order for EiE colleagues in country to comment. Feedback on the draft document needs to be translated back into English in order for the lead facilitator to consider and incorporate the feedback. Finally, the English document of the contextualized Standards also needs to be translated into the local language. The process for these translation steps, and the associated costs, need to be discussed and agreed upon in advance, with clear roles and responsibilities.

## Structure of the Contextualization Template

The generic contextualization template developed by INEE has been adapted for each country and this should be done in the future as well. The template that works for one country may not be the best for another country. The final decision on the template to be used for the context should be made in consultation with the host partners.

The following questions have been included in templates in the past:

1. What does this [Standard, key action] mean in the context of your country?
2. Verification: how do we know that this [Standard, key action] is being achieved in your country?
3. In your country, what should this [Standard, key action] look like?
4. How should this [Standard, key action] realistically look like in your country?
5. Identify one best practice in applying the Standard from the perspective of (a) students & families; (b) Ministry; (c) UN & INGOs; (d) local NGOs in your country?
6. Identify one barrier to meeting the Standard from the perspective of (a) students & families; (b) Ministry; (c) UN & INGOs; (d) local NGOs in your country?

**Good practice and recommendations on contextualization templates include:**

- In some countries (South Sudan, Somalia, Sri Lanka), at the advice of the host partners, the Education Policy Domain was addressed differently. In some cases, this was a plenary discussion, or more time was allocated for this Domain compared to other Domains. In Somalia, the Education Policy Domain was not included in the process because it was deemed that MOE involvement was crucial but there weren't any MOE participants.
- Focusing on best practices and barriers to education has been useful in helping participants examine the education planning and delivery from different perspectives.
- Linking EiE to the development processes should be integrated in the entire contextualization process. In some countries, where the government authorities and others are opposed to recognizing or admitting that the context is one of emergency, crisis or post-crisis, the development discourse could be helpful.

Here is a sample of the contextualization template for one Standard:

<b>INEE Minimum Standard</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning Standard 1: Curricula</b> Culturally, socially and linguistically relevant curricula are used to provide formal and non-formal education, appropriate to the particular context and needs of learners.
<b>In your country, what do the following terms mean?</b>	
Curricula	
Formal education	
Non-formal education	
Curricula that is culturally relevant	
Curricula that is socially relevant	
Curricula that is linguistically relevant	
<b>In your country, what are best practices for achieving the following aspects of the standard?</b> Please use specific examples, suggestions and references to laws, policies and programmes as appropriate.	
Curricula is used (when, by whom and how)	
Curricula is appropriate to the context and needs of learners	

The entire contextualization template is available on the INEE Toolkit here:  
[http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization\\_Package.zip](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization_Package.zip)

## Financing

All previous contextualization exercises have been co-financed by the INEE Secretariat and the host partners. The only exception was Afghanistan, where the Education Cluster and other partners financed the entire process, include the translation of the outcome document in Dari and Pashto. Financial support from the INEE Secretariat is not a requirement—if host partners have enough budget to finance the entire process, financial support from INEE is not needed. Host partners could also explore the option of tagging the contextualization to other ongoing processes or meetings (such as already planned monthly Cluster meetings) to make the contextualization affordable.

- Finalize the contextualization budget. Ensure clear financial responsibilities from the onset for each cost item.
- If an organization would like to be a co-host, but is unable to make a financial commitment, it can be tasked with responsibilities, such as sending out invitations, which require staff time rather than finances.

## Follow-up & Tech Support

To date, technical support and follow-up help provided by the INEE Secretariat have been limited due to resources, capacity and other priorities. It is hoped that in the future, the INEE Secretariat will be better positioned to provide long-term support.

- The contextualization workshop should end with an action planning session in order to identify and prioritize actions that can be taken at the country level to support sustainable use of the Standards. Where time does not permit such a session, a separate workshop or meeting should be convened on the same topic. Avenues for consistent sharing of lessons learned, challenges and good practice on the use of the INEE MS in country include meetings of the local education sector group, Education Cluster and education sector contingency planning group or processes under the umbrella of the Global Partnerships for Education.
- The contextualized standards can be used immediately to inform ongoing or future EiE-related work, such as the development of Education Cluster workplan and strategies and education policy development/revision. For example, in Ethiopia, the Standards were used to support the development of the UNHCR country education strategy. In Vietnam, the Standards were used to carry out MOE advocacy for strengthening national law on preparedness and disaster response, to train school principals on school preparedness as well as to develop a school self-assessment tool.
- INEE and leading education organizations in country should make funding available to support follow up work. This could include training, technical support, roundtable events, support for advocating and mainstreaming EiE in policies and practice.
- One or more organizations should be identified to serve as champions of the follow-up technical support on the application of the contextualized Standards in country. Key champions (both institutional and individual) among MOE and local civil society organizations are crucial. These can work in collaboration with the INEE Secretariat.
- Finalized contextualized Standards should be shared, together with supporting materials, tools and resources, with all INEE members in the country. Blogs and information should be shared globally as well through the INEE listserv.
- MOE endorsement of the contextualization is best obtained prior to the workshop, and could influence participants' involvement and follow-up application of the Standards. In some countries (Vietnam, South Sudan), the MOE demonstrated strong ownership and investment in the process, but in both cases, this was cultivated by the strong host partners and their prior relationship and collaboration with the MOE, upon which they could build on.
- To ensure the consistent follow-up, partners in Vietnam created a working group to support in-country implementation and applications in schools.
- Follow-up depends heavily on the host partners taking on the lead, or helping identify a champion in country who wants to take on the lead. In OPT, staff changes in the host partner agency impacted the follow-up work. To prevent this, the follow-up work needs to be understood as an institutional commitment and should not be dependent on an individual staff member.

## Conclusion

Contextualizations of the INEE MS have taken place in eight countries/territories to date: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Somalia, and South Sudan. These have been productive processes that resulted in not only the development of the contextualized Standards, but also in the strengthening of the EiE communities in those countries and the identification of joint activities and collaboration to achieve quality, safe and relevant education for all.

By nature, contextualizations are complex processes involving a diverse group of education stakeholders, each with their own agenda and priorities. The INEE Secretariat and host partners worked through a number of challenges and obstacles in organizing, implementing and following up on the contextualizations. Lessons learned and good practice have been shared through this paper.

In terms of application and usage of the contextualized Standards, most notably these have informed:

- the development of MOE policies in South Sudan
- EiE project design and implementation by NGOs in South Sudan
- Advocacy with MOE for the development of national policy on education and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Vietnam

One of the areas that warrants most attention moving forward is the follow-up phase. In particular, the INEE Secretariat, working with host partners and EiE champions in country, should develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a follow-up strategy: a strategy that provides technical support to INEE MS users in country and creates a functioning mechanism for sharing good practice and lessons learned on the usage of the INEE MS at the country level. This need is well-recognized at the INEE Secretariat and the INEE WG and efforts will be made to strengthen this component of the contextualization process.

Guidance in this paper will be useful to INEE Secretariat and host partners seeking to contextualize the INEE Minimum Standards in other countries. Interested partners can contact the INEE Secretariat for more guidance and collaboration. It is also useful to partners in other humanitarian sectors who wish to carry out contextualizations of other leading quality and accountability standards for humanitarian response, e.g. Sphere Standards or the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. For support, interested colleagues should contact the networks who support the particular quality and accountability standards.



Beirut, Lebanon (Feb 2013)



Participants of the Gaza Workshop (June 2013)

## Acronyms

<b>CAP</b>	Consolidated Appeals Process
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>EiE</b>	Education in Emergencies
<b>INEE</b>	Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies
<b>INEE MS</b>	INEE Minimum Standards
<b>INEE WG</b>	INEE Working Group on Minimum Standards and Network Tools
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OPT</b>	Occupied Palestinian Territories
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund



*Juba, South Sudan (March 2012)*



*Dollo Ado, Ethiopia (Feb 2013)*



*Participants from the Ministry of Education (left) and UNICEF (right) review the contextualized standards.*

*Juba, South Sudan March 2012*

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Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Technology, UNESCO-Vietnam and INEE, (2011). Contextualized INEE Minimum Standards for Vietnam. Retrieved from: [http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Vietnam\\_MS\\_full\\_contextualized\\_handbook.pdf](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Vietnam_MS_full_contextualized_handbook.pdf)

# Tools and Resources to Support Contextualization Efforts

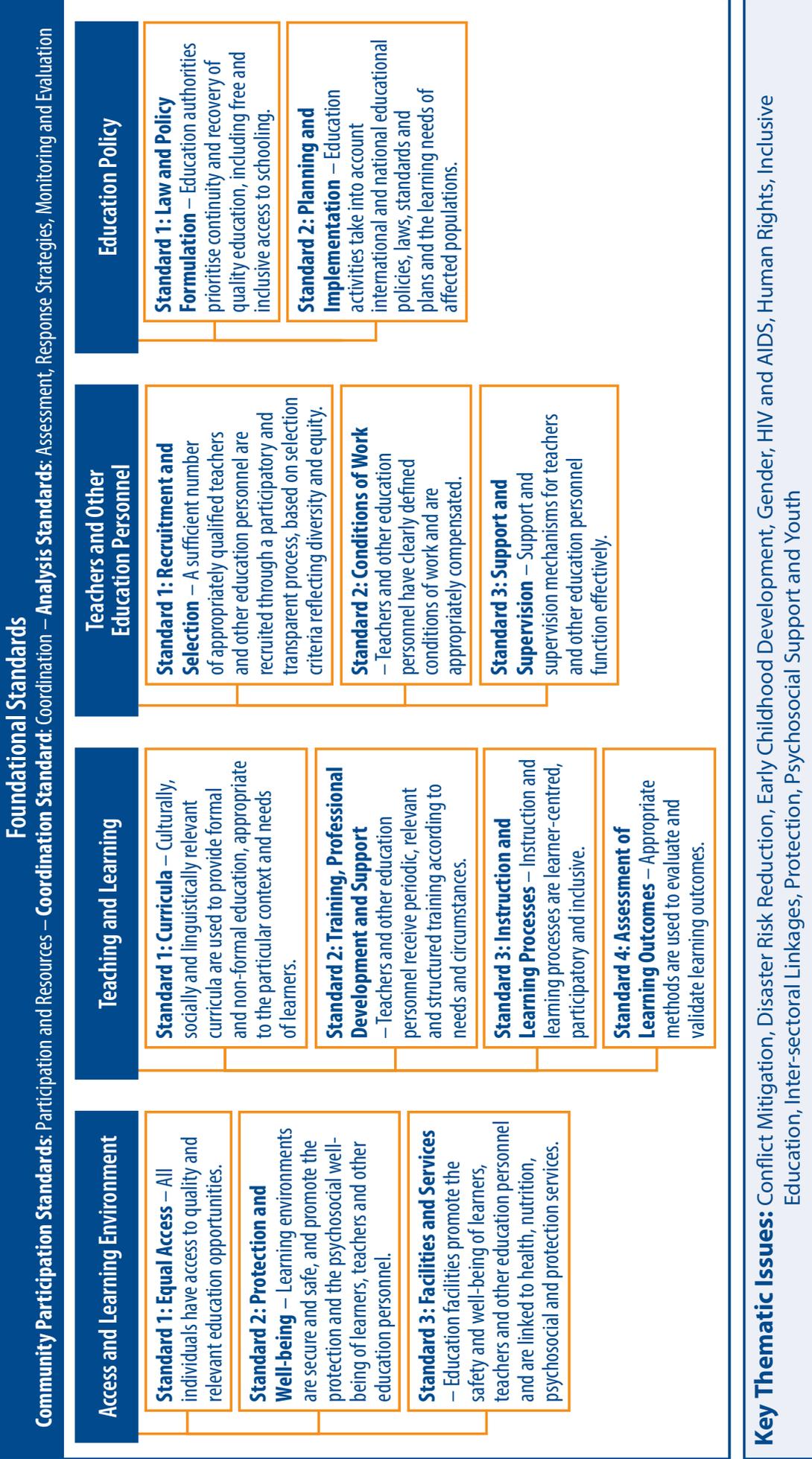
Partners interested in contextualizing the INEE MS may find the following tools and resources helpful. For further help, technical support and guidance, please contact the INEE Secretariat. To share how you have used the contextualized Standards or for ideas on how to apply the Standards, please contact the INEE Secretariat at [minimumstandards@ineesite.org](mailto:minimumstandards@ineesite.org) and [mstraining@ineesite.org](mailto:mstraining@ineesite.org).

## Contextualization Package

- Steps to contextualize the Minimum Standards ([http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource\\_db\\_steps\\_to\\_contextualize\\_the\\_minimum\\_standards](http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource_db_steps_to_contextualize_the_minimum_standards))
- INEE MS Contextualization Template ([http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization\\_Package.zip](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization_Package.zip))
- Sample of contextualized standards for Afghanistan Community Based Education ([http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource\\_db\\_sample\\_of\\_contextualized\\_standards\\_for\\_afghanistan\\_community\\_ba](http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource_db_sample_of_contextualized_standards_for_afghanistan_community_ba))
- Sample Logframe for the contextualization process ([http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization\\_Package.zip](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Contextualization_Package.zip))
- Further guidance available on the INEE website <http://www.ineesite.org/en/minimum-standards/contextualization>

## Contextualized INEE Minimum Standards (as of Summer 2013)

- Afghanistan, 2011, led by CARE Afghanistan and the Education Cluster. ([http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/files/resources/INEE\\_Contextualized\\_2010\\_Edition\\_%28English\\_Final\\_Hamza%29.zip](http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/files/resources/INEE_Contextualized_2010_Edition_%28English_Final_Hamza%29.zip))
- Afghanistan, 2008, led by Community Based Education Forum in Afghanistan. ([http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/contextualization\\_of\\_the\\_inee\\_minimum\\_standards\\_in\\_afghanistan](http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/contextualization_of_the_inee_minimum_standards_in_afghanistan))
- Somalia, 2011, led by the INEE Secretariat and the Somalia Education Cluster. ([http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/files/resources/MS\\_Contextualization\\_Somalia\\_full.docx](http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/files/resources/MS_Contextualization_Somalia_full.docx))
- Vietnam, 2011, led by the INEE Secretariat, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Technology, and UNESCO-Vietnam. ([http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Vietnam\\_MS\\_full\\_contextualized\\_handbook.pdf](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Vietnam_MS_full_contextualized_handbook.pdf))
- South Sudan, 2012, led by the INEE Secretariat and the South Sudan Education Cluster. ([http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource\\_db\\_south-sudan-contextualized-minimum-standards-2012](http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/resource_db_south-sudan-contextualized-minimum-standards-2012))
- OPT, 2013, by the INEE Secretariat and the OPT Education Cluster. ([http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Draft%20INEE%20MSopt%20-%202013.6.19%20\(2\).docx](http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/INEEcms/uploads/1154/Draft%20INEE%20MSopt%20-%202013.6.19%20(2).docx))
- Lebanon, 2013 by the INEE Secretariat and the Lebanon Education Working Group. (<http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1154>)
- Ethiopia, 2013, by the INEE Secretariat and the Ethiopia Education Cluster. (<http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1154>)
- Sri Lanka, 2013, by the INEE Secretariat and the local education group. (<http://toolkit.ineesite.org/toolkit/Toolkit.php?PostID=1154>)



For the full version of the INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery, please visit [www.ineesite.org/standards](http://www.ineesite.org/standards)





An international network for education in emergencies  
Un réseau international pour l'éducation en situations d'urgence  
Una red internacional para la educación en situaciones de emergencia  
Uma rede internacional para a educação em situações de emergência  
الشبكة العالمية لوكالات التعليم في حالات الطوارئ

# Contextualizing Global Standards to Local Settings:

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

This paper reflects on challenges and lessons learned from the contextualization of the INEE Minimum Standards, the only global tool that articulates the minimum level of educational access and quality in emergencies through to recovery and development. Contextualizations have taken place in eight countries/territories to date: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Somalia, and South Sudan.

Contextualization refers to the process of debating, determining and agreeing upon the meaning of global guidance in a given local situation: it is about examining and “translating” the meaning and guidance of the Standards for the context of a country/territory. Contextualization participants consider how the Standards can be achieved within the particular national context (baseline, structures, constraints, opportunities, etc.) that they are being adapted to.

Guidance in this paper will be useful to INEE Secretariat and host partners seeking to contextualize the INEE Minimum Standards in other countries. It is also useful to partners in other humanitarian sectors who wish to carry out contextualizations of other leading quality and accountability standards for humanitarian response, e.g. Sphere Standards, Minimum Standards for Child Protection and others.