



**Educational  
Support to  
Children of  
Underserved  
Populations  
(ESCUP)**



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## **Organizing Children's Playgrounds**



### **ESCUP partners include:**

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## Organizing Children's Playgrounds

### 1. Overall Goal

- θ Participants can use building a playground as an opportunity to involve the community in the development of the school as well as making the school a more child friendly environment.

### 2. Specific Objectives

- θ Participants can use simple guidelines to build a playground that are low cost, participatory, and safe.
- θ Participants can put in place mechanisms that ensure that the playground has a long life.



An example of community-supported playground in a child friendly school

### 3. Time: 2 hours

### 4. Materials

- θ Poster Outlining Playground Construction Guidelines
- θ Handouts that describe various playground equipment and the kinds/quantities of materials required
- θ Marker pens, poster paper, handouts

### 5. Procedure

#### 5.1. School Selection

- ❖ School selection for the playground should be decided by the Local Cluster School Committee.
- ❖ The LCSC should consider the following factors in selecting a school:
  - The director shows good leadership at the school (this will ensure that the playground is maintained).
  - The school is willing to put aside funds for maintenance (e.g., yearly PAP funds, approximately \$10).
  - The school has a suitable site for the playground (a shaded area, trees that will the purchase of expensive materials, etc.).
  - The community is willing to provide for all labor costs in the construction of the playground.

#### 5.2. Presenting guidelines to the school and community

- ❖ Following the selection of a school, the facilitator should appoint a time to meet with the school and the community.
- ❖ The best setting for this capacity building exercise is the local school itself. Participants should include:

- members of the community or the School Support Committee
- the school director and vice director
- one or more teachers
- ❖ The facilitator should present the following guidelines to participants to plan for the construction of the playground. These should be written on a large piece of poster paper:

**Playground Construction Guidelines**

- 1. Site Selection**
  - ❖ Select a site for the playground that is in the shade, well drained, and not too far from the school office but not so close to classrooms that it will disturb teaching.
- 2. Kiinds of Materials**
  - ❖ In building a playground it is best to use low-cost, local materials.
  - ❖ Possible materials can include local wood, old poles, old tires, and rope.
  - ❖ Try to put the playground near some big trees as these can be utilized for swings and high bars and will help to defray costs.
  - ❖ Some materials will need to be purchased in the market but these should be as minimal as possible.
  - ❖ Ideally, there should be enough materials for 3 or 4 kinds of playground equipment.
- 3. Management of the Construction**
  - ❖ Since the community has agreed that it will provide the labor for the construction of the playground, it is only fair that funds should be managed by the community.
  - ❖ Community management of the activity will also help to ensure local ownership of the playground.
  - ❖ Funds for the playground should be conveyed to the school via the LCSC.
  - ❖ The school director should in turn convey these funds to the community or the School Support Committee.
  - ❖ The School Support Committee should appoint several members who will oversee the purchase of all materials (for transparency) and who can forward receipts back to the LCSC.

- ❖ The facilitator should explain each point in turn. With each point ask probing questions such as:
  - Is there a playground site that fits these criteria, where is it ?
  - Are there any waste materials that can be used for the construction, is there a place where we can get old tires, etc.
  - Who in the School Support Committee will be responsible for the funds received, do you think they can make a budget for the playground, will it be difficult to find community members who will donate their labor?

### ***5.3. Specific playground equipment***

- ❖ The facilitator should next pass out some handouts that describe various playground equipment such as those shown below.
- ❖ **High Bars**
  - High bars should be made at different levels so that children of all different heights can use them.

PICTURE	<p><b>Required Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wood 10 cm x 10 cm</li> <li>● Wood 5 cm x 5 cm</li> <li>● Cement, sand, gravel</li> <li>● Nails</li> </ul>
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❖ See Saws

PICTURE	<p><b>Required Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wood 15 cm x 5 cm (3 meters long)</li> <li>● Metal pole</li> <li>● Cement, sand, gravel</li> </ul>
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❖ Swings

PICTURE	<p><b>Required Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wood 10 cm x 10 cm</li> <li>● Wood 2.5 cm x 15 cm (or 20 cm)</li> <li>● Wood 5 cm x 8 cm</li> <li>● Wire rope 10 mm gauge</li> <li>● Wire rope 12 mm gauge</li> <li>● Cement, sand, gravel</li> <li>● Nails</li> </ul>
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❖ Slides

PICTURE	<p><b>Required Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Metal stripping</li> <li>● Wood 10 cm x 10 cm</li> <li>● Wood 5 cm x 5 cm</li> <li>● Cement, sand, gravel</li> <li>● Nails</li> </ul>
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❖ Playthings using old tires

PICTURE	<p><b>Required Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Old tires</li> <li>● Plywood</li> <li>● Old poles</li> </ul>
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- ❖ Review each picture with participants describing some of the required materials and how the equipment is to be constructed.
- ❖ In small groups, ask participants to make some selection decisions.
- ❖ After participants have selected the equipment that they wish to build, the School Support Committee should make some cost estimates to ensure that the available budget will be enough.

**5.4. Maintenance and Safety**

- ❖ Before ending the training session, ask the school to appoint a teacher who will be responsible for monitoring the use of playgrounds by children. Regular maintenance of

the playground is essential and require planning and organization. Teachers and children should all be involved in maintenance.

- ❖ The selected teacher or teachers should inspect the playground on a weekly basis to ensure that damaged equipment is replaced promptly to avoid accidents and injuries to children.
- ❖ Children may also be designated to assist teachers in inspecting playgrounds and reporting problems to teachers. To boost enthusiasm, keep lists in a public place of all the children and teachers who help with maintaining the playground. This will build individual pride and responsibility.