

Context:

School location	Coimbra, Portugal
Details about students	Students from the 5th to the 9th grade (between 10 and 15 years old). Currently it works at maximum capacity relative to student intake, with 938 students.
School premises	Eugénio de Castro School was built in 1972. It is composed by several pavilions.
School context	The school is located in one of the newer centres of the city, in a sector predominantly inhabited by the upper and upper-middle social classes.
Type of activity	Reformulation of outdoor and indoor spaces to support students.
Stage in design process	This school is being used, but in need of deeper intervention, which is being planned.

Tool used

S3S Survey on Students School Spaces

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/cored/tools/school-spaces/>



Rationale for activity and tool adopted

Survey on Students School Spaces (S3S) aims to promote an inclusive reflection on possible changes to school spaces, supported by the feedback of students attending it.

It is intended to understand how school communities can cooperate in creating a more inclusive learning environment that answers students' needs and expectations, based on their opinion, as an essential contribution to the refurbishment of different school spaces.

Even though this school is currently being used, it needs deeper intervention, which has already been authorized by the Municipality. So, the implementation of S3S in this school is fundamental, given the need for careful reflection on the possible refurbishments in both outdoor and indoor spaces by means of an inclusive and participated process.

Case study description: Process

Task 1 - Students online survey

- The survey explores the uses and feelings linked to specific school spaces and the consideration of potential refurbishment interventions. It assesses five types of spaces: outdoor spaces, formal learning spaces, study spaces, eating spaces and communal and circulation spaces.
- The school was provided with a tutorial to create the survey. The teacher has begun by identifying a set of relevant school spaces in which to focus on, and took photos of each one of them. Using an editable version of the survey, the photographs were placed in the appropriate sections.
- This survey has been answered by two classes: one from the 7th grade (12 years old) and another from the 9th grade (14/15 years old).
- Answered by 43 students, the survey data were analysed (descriptive statistics) and used as the basis for the second phase of the tool.



Case study description: Process (continued from previous page)

Task 2 – Focus groups

- The focus groups have visited the spaces identified in the previous survey. Here the students discussed their feelings about each one, as well as how they used it and the reasons for their views. A tutorial on how to run these focus groups, including the types of question to ask, was provided to the teacher to guide the students on these walkthroughs.
- Two classes were selected in the following school year: the 8th grade (which moved from the 7th to the 8th grade) and a random 9th grade. Overall, 20 students have participated in the focus group, 10 from each class.

Case study description: Outcomes

The data concludes that this school is experiencing a high level of decay, which enabled the students to identify multiple types of possible improvements and to provide suggestions for many spaces, such as:

- Vaster and more diverse green areas
- Better equipped and more comfortable outdoor spaces in which to play, eat and study, with suitable amounts of shade and greenery, furniture, and sports facilities.
- Better equipment/furniture indoor spaces
- Specific refurbishments on the students' common room and on the cafeteria
- General maintenance

All these results were presented to the School Leaders. Afterwards, to generally present and discuss these results, a School Assembly took place on June 2022, gathering one of the classes that participated in the study, the student representatives of all the other classes, teachers, and School Leaders. This generated an inclusive and bottom-up discussion, where students' voices were heard, on the most pressing spatial needs to be addressed and the potential spatial interventions.

Finally, considering that this school will be subject of a deep refurbishment intervention, which will go through structural and large-scale issues, the outputs conveyed by this tool and student feedback from the School Assembly will inform and monitor the various stages of the project that will be achieved by stages.