COVID-19 Systemic Risk and Education Sector Resilience in the Caribbean Region

SVG Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation and Information Response to COVID-19

Thursday, 28th May 2020

Safe School Working Group of the Education Sector Sub-Committee of the CDM Coordination and Harmonization Council
Comprehensive School Safety in SVG

- Key achievements include;

- Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Curriculum – Lower Secondary
- School Safety Policy
- Model Safe School Plan
- Assessment tool training
- Emergency supplies for schools
Initial Response to COVID-19

- Meetings with the COVID-19 Task Force.
- MOE Action Plan guided by UNICEF Key Action and MOH shared with schools.
- SVG first COVID-19 case – 11\textsuperscript{th} March 2020.
- MOE meeting with staff on 13\textsuperscript{th} March 2020.
- Meeting with Principals and Education officers and the Ministry of Health on 16\textsuperscript{th} March 2020.
- One Week Early closure of schools for Easter – 20\textsuperscript{th} March
Continuity of Teaching/Learning

- Curriculum Development Unit Website

- Wide range of platforms used by schools to engage students (Zoom, Edmodo, You Tube, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Notesmaster among others).

- Through consultation adoption of a common online platform that best served the interest of the Education System - Microsoft Teams.
Continuity of Teaching/Learning

- Training in online teaching and use of platforms - Training of trainers’, administrators, teachers, support team.
- ELearning help desk to address queries, to date, most of the schools have advanced to this platform.
- Electronic media: Live Classes on the television station VC3, channel 114 & the VC3 Facebook, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. during the week.
Continuity of Teaching/Learning

- Where online learning is not possible, due to lack of devices, internet, electricity or other issues the “School In A Bag” initiative is implemented where materials are printed, packed and made available to the students.

- Outreach to pockets of students who were still not engaged by principals, teachers and other education officers.
Psychosocial Support

- **Strand 1: School Level Response** - counsellors working with members of their individual student body and staff.

- **Strand 2: Curriculum Development Unit** - Support and guidance to counsellors, televised guidance lessons and recorded support sessions for students, teachers and parents.

- **Strand 3: Student Support Services** – will involve the psychologist, counsellors at the Student Support Services, counsellors from the Schools Guidance Counsellors Association, Child Protection Officers within the Ministry of National Mobilisation and the SVG Social Workers Association.
Psychosocial Support

- **Strand 3: Student Support Services**

  - WhatsApp Parenting Groups - parents in parenting programmes.
  
  - Online Parenting Sessions - online platforms for one hour parenting sessions.

- **Helpline** - One to one counselling
  Make appointments 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
  @ 4336929, 4337013 and 4320960.
Reopening of Schools: 25 May 2020

- Specific guidelines from the COVID-19 Task Force
- Meetings with a wide range of stakeholders (Principals, Teacher Unions, Heads of Primary and Secondary Principals Association)
- Meeting with the Ministry of Health
- Detailed assessment of School Facilities – Health, Education Officers, Ministry of Transport and Works (BRAGSA), Physical Planning and NEMO.
Interventions for Reopening of Schools

- Cleaning and sanitisation of schools.
- Meeting with cleaners and provision of cleaning guidelines
- Installation of additional hand wash stations and drinking fountains at some schools

Source: S. Abraham, KPS

Extended Hand wash station – Kingstown Prep School
Hand wash station at the Entrance of the Kingstown Prep. School

Source: S. Abraham, KPS
Interventions for Reopening of Schools

- Physical distancing in the classroom or space large enough to accommodate safe distancing.

- Encourage the wearing of face masks.
Physical Distancing & Masks

Kingstown Technical Institute
Source: SEO E. Johnson

Rose Hall Government: Grade 6
Source: N. Allen – Grade 6 Teacher
Interventions for Reopening of Schools

- Staggering of the start and end of the school day as well as break and lunch periods. Timetable adjusted to accommodate changes.

- Utilisation of school buses and designated transport for staff and students.

- Encourage the wearing of face masks.
Posters at the Kingstown Prep. School
Source: S. Abraham, KPS
Interventions for Reopening of Schools

- The feeding programme at the primary schools & food arrangements in post primary schools.

- Secondary students encouraged to attend only for a timetabled subjects.

- Continuous sensitisation of health and safety practices for COVID-19

- Sick bay or identified rooms will be used as isolation areas, if the need arises.
Some Lessons Learnt

- Importance of blended learning: the need to incorporate online, electronic and face to face teaching/learning more effectively in Education.

- Importance of having online teaching/learning protocols, reliable internet and devices to support blended learning.
Some Lessons Learnt

- **Comprehensive School Safety** to be reemphasized: there must be buy-in at all levels including investment of human and financial resources.

- Ensure that all educational institutions develop, update, disseminate and test disaster management/schools safety plans.
Some Lessons Learnt

- Specific guidelines for continuing teaching/learning especially in times of crisis.

- Detailed assessments, storage and management of data is critical to operations in normal and times of crisis and necessary to inform quick decision making in time of emergencies.

- Importance of managing information flow and conduct regular meetings with key stakeholders in times of crisis.
Thank You