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ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

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- 1 Issues Arising in the Caribbean SIDS
- 2 UNESCO Education Response Strategy
- 3 Framework for Reopening Schools
- 4 Increasing Access – short term
- 5 Increasing Access – long term



1 Issues Arising in the Caribbean SIDS



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION IN THE CARIBBEAN SIDS



Impacts of school closures are multi-dimensional!

- Interrupted learning for under-privileged learners
- Lack of free or discounted school meals
- Lack of Protection as schools provide a space of safety & risk of social isolation
- Parents unprepared for distance and home schooling & gaps in childcare
- Unequal access to digital learning portals
- Increased pressure on schools and school systems that remain open
- Rise in dropout rates

Ministry of Education Level:

- Policies and protocols for Distance Learning Education
- Up-to-date records and data management systems to inform quick decision-making
- Real-time communication and public relations mechanism to increase Ministry responsiveness
- Provision of capacity building support to ministries as it relates to modalities that can be employed to aid the administration of blended learning techniques

Needs emerging from regional survey

School Level:

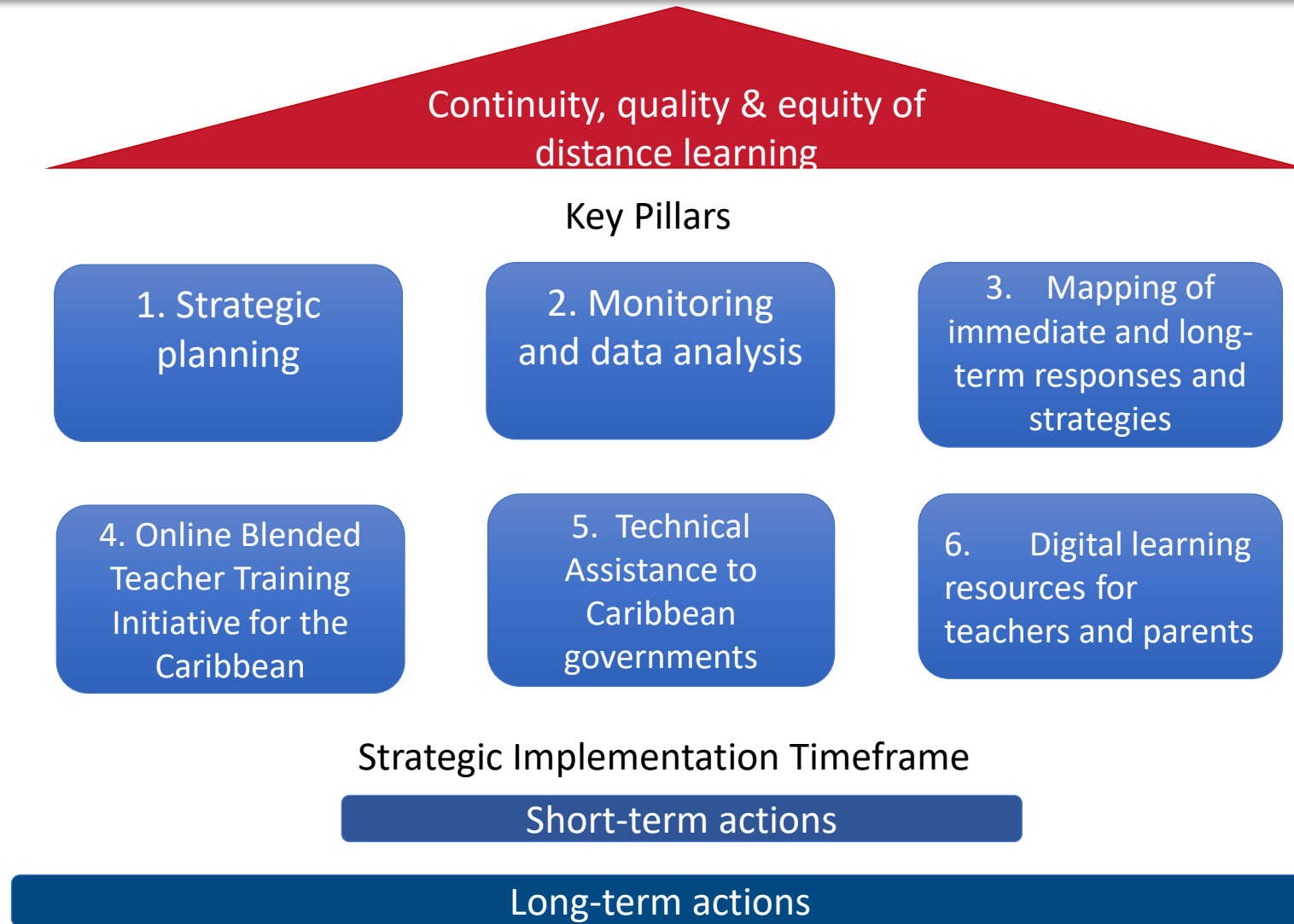
- Capacity of the principals and school administrators to lead and manage in distant modality
- Teacher Training competencies on how to use online tools for instructional delivery, especially for Technical Vocational areas
- Organization and coordination of learning schedules and platforms
- New Tools for assessing quality of education has to be developed
- Sharing of best practices to enhance the integrity of assessment
- Post-COVID strategies to regain lost instructional time

Needs emerging from regional survey

Home/ Community Level:

- Assistance with system requirements for students who are in rural/ remote areas
- Provision of low or no-tech learning materials to support families without access or capacity
- Parents need special support for students with learning and other related challenges
- Psycho-social support for students and parents
- Feeding programmes for the vulnerable communities that may be affected by disabilities or poverty

COVID-19: UNESCO Education Response Strategy



1. Strategic planning

Cooperation with ministries of education to design crisis-sensitive education responses and prepare plans for short, medium, and long-term interventions to cope with, prepare for, and deal with the aftermath of the crisis.

2. Monitoring and data analysis

Regularly monitor the situation of school closures and provide data through an interactive map online.

3. Mapping of immediate and long-term responses and strategies in the Education sector across Caribbean SIDS. This mechanism was established via the *Caribbean (COVID-19) Response Task Force*, which incorporates a virtual network of (COVID-19) -Education planners from the sub-region.

4. Online Blended Teacher Training Initiative for the Caribbean

Provide future-oriented digital solutions for teachers' training.

5. Technical Assistance to Caribbean Governments

UNESCO/(*COVID-19*) task force was established, providing advice and technical assistance to governments to provide distance education.

6. Digital learning Resources for teachers and parents

Online multilingual free educational applications to help parents, teachers, and schools facilitate learning, provide social care and interaction during periods of school closure.

UNESCO's Response Strategy in the Caribbean SIDS



Technical Support to Ministries of Education in the Caribbean SIDS through:

- Distance Learning Solutions and curricular content for online learning platforms
- Teacher and Student Preparedness
- Contingency plans to ensure learning continuity
- Bringing education resources in open access domain
- Examining Back to School approaches
- Policy Guidance and Advocacy Briefs
- Multi-country/sub regional situation assessments
- Leveraging Regional Coordination Mechanisms

2 Framework for Reopening Schools

UNESCO, WFP, FAO, UNICEF

April 2020

Safe
Operations

Learning

Including Most
Marginalized

Well-being
and Protection



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Reaching the Most Disadvantaged: Prior to reopening



Direct education funding to schools hit hardest by the crisis.

Adapt school opening policies and practices to expand access to marginalized groups.

Take specific measures to mitigate protection risks for marginalized groups are out of school through increased community engagement and improved referrals.

Reaching the Most Disadvantaged: Prior to reopening

Waive school fees and other costs (school uniforms, etc.) wherever possible and eliminate other barriers to entry, including socio-economic constraints, to maximize re-enrolment rates.

Take specific measures to support populations that are vulnerable to return to school through increased community engagement.



Reaching the Most Disadvantaged: Schools reopened

Prioritize financing to support new recovery needs, especially for disadvantaged students.

Ensure learning materials/platforms, information, services and facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. Public health information and communication should be available in multiple, accessible formats.

Modifications should be made to ensure water, hygiene and sanitation services are accessible for all. Plan for continuity of assistive services if schools are reclosed.



FOCUS ON LEARNING

Basic Access	Learning Gaps	Basic/ Mental Health
<p>Revise admissions policies and requirements to align with the goals of universal education by eliminating barriers and reducing requirements to entry.</p>	<p>Implement large-scale remedial programs to mitigate learning loss and prevent exacerbation of learning inequality after school closures, with a focus on literacy and numeracy for primary-age children, and accessibility accommodations for children with disabilities.</p> <p>Accelerated education models can be implemented in parallel to integrate previously out-of-school or over-age children.</p>	<p>Equip teachers to deal with both learning recovery and students' mental health and psychosocial needs.</p> <p>Training efforts should explicitly improve teachers' ability to meet students' basic literacy/numeracy and social-emotional needs, particularly in schools with a high proportion of at-risk students.</p> <p>Teachers should be trained to identify age-related behavioral and cognitive changes and provide age-appropriate learning support.</p>



4 INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATION – SHORT TERM STRATEGY



INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATION – IMMEDIATE SHORT TERM ACTION

Bridging learning gaps:

- Remedial programmes and catch-up programmes
- Accelerated learning programmes (ALP)
- Adjusting the school calendar and curriculum implementation
- Tailoring assessment methods:
- Weigh the timeliness and usefulness of different options for assessment
- Ensure equality in the assessment processes; include gender equality
- Prioritizing disadvantaged groups, such as learners with disabilities, migrants and refugees,

General

- Ensure hygiene protocols at school, such as wearing masks, keeping social distance, handwashing, etc.
- Strengthen and restore access to services such as school meals, health, and social protection



5 INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATION – LONG TERM STRATEGY



INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATION – LONG TERM ACTION

- Narrowing the digital divide in education - Develop quality open educational resources and build digital commons as a complement to face-to-face learning.
- Investing in skills development, including social and emotional learning and well-being, for inclusive recovery, decent work and enhanced employability.
- Securing financing for education - Increase or maintain the share of public expenditure on education towards the international benchmarks of at least 4-6% of GDP and/or 15-20% of public expenditure.
- Building resilience for future crisis through intersectoral planning:
 - Collaborate among different sectors, such as education, health, telecommunication, labor, etc., in order to develop a comprehensive recovery plan and to invest in essential infrastructures, such as WASH facilities and internet connection.
 - Build partnership with international and national actors, while involving people in the decision making process.





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Thank you

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