

The Psychosocial Dimensions of e-Learning and Technology-based Pedagogies

ACROSS NINE CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Key Objectives

- ▶ Map the various MHPSS education responses across the nine countries.
- ▶ Shed light on the various psychosocial dimensions of e-learning and use of technology-based pedagogies in five select Caribbean countries.
- ▶ Document emerging issues and lessons learned during Covid-19 in the context of MHPSS component of education.
- ▶ Propose key recommendations to expand MHPSS in the post pandemic education system.

Countries Selected for Study

Countries Selected for MHPSS Mapping

Antigua and Barbuda

Barbados

Belize

Dominica

Grenada

Jamaica

Saint Vincent

Saint Lucia

Trinidad and Tobago

Case Study Countries

Antigua and Barbuda

Belize

Jamaica

Saint Lucia

Trinidad and Tobago

Key Concepts & Issues

The impact of COVID-19 is felt by nearly 12 million learners in 29 Caribbean countries.

- ▶ The existing gaps in access to internet technology between and within countries.
- ▶ Impact on children and young people made more acute by **a parallel economic crisis**.
- ▶ Moving **class rooms to the home** increased frustrations, stress and anxiety among parents, teachers and students.
- ▶ Reports of **sexual abuse of children increasing** in Jamaica, and **greater levels of violent disciplining** reported in St. Lucia, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.
- ▶ The issues surrounding **migrant and refugee** children in Trinidad and Tobago has become more pronounced with the geographical and other **barriers which confront indigenous communities** exacerbating disparities.
- ▶ 49% of children in Belize living in **multidimensional poverty**.
- ▶ Children with disabilities faced an abrupt **suspension in their physical and academic support frameworks**

Existing MHPSS Intervention Frameworks

- ▶ **Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)**
- ▶ **Guidance Counsellors**
- ▶ **MHPSS Related Policy and Protocols**
- ▶ **Student Support Services Department**

MHPSS Delivered Across the Nine Countries

- ▶ Four of the nine countries offered MoE helplines -Jamaica, Dominica, Barbados and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. However no national helpline provided for multiple languages.
- ▶ All utilized multi-media approaches in outreach. None offered ongoing MHPSS programming.
- ▶ Trinidad and Tobago was the only country which offered formal e-counselling services
- ▶ All countries issued e-guidelines, pamphlets and most held at least one virtual outreach for teachers.
- ▶ All countries issued guideline and pamphlets and most held at least one virtual outreach for parents.
- ▶ All nine MoE's assisted economically vulnerable students through their school feeding programs.

Examples of MHPSS Interventions Across Five Case Study Countries

- ▶ **Helplines:** Jamaica student Helplines in collaboration with Child Guidance Clinic and UNICEF and 36 parent hotlines through ChildLine.
- ▶ **Radio/TV/Social Media Outreach:** MoE Belize in collaboration with UNICEF to launch TV and radio programme ["In It Together"](#) – for children by children. UNICEF/PAHO/USAID six part interactive radio program across twelve (12) countries to deliver a 10-minute weekly programme themed "COVID-19: "Supporting our Children." MoE Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua and Barbuda shared daily mental health tips via social media. Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica issued workbooks for children via their facebook page as positive mental health activities during the lockdown.

Examples of MHPSS Interventions cont'd

- ▶ **Teacher Focused MHPSS** : In Antigua and Barbuda, the Guidance Counselling Division delivered three sessions targeting Guidance Counsellors. MoE Belize “Continued Development Plans” (CDP) for teachers incorporated COVID-19 MHPS related topics into its course offerings. In Trinidad and Tobago, MoE scaled up its existing Employee Assistance Programme.

Various stakeholders also hosted several teacher outreach initiatives: The Jamaica Association of Guidance Counselling in Education; hosted “Reach Out Zoom Sessions for Counsellors,” and zoom talk shows discussing mental health. The Belize School Counsellor Association (BSCA) also conducted a series of virtual trainings via zoom.

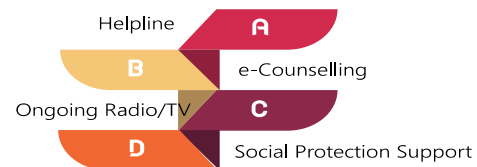
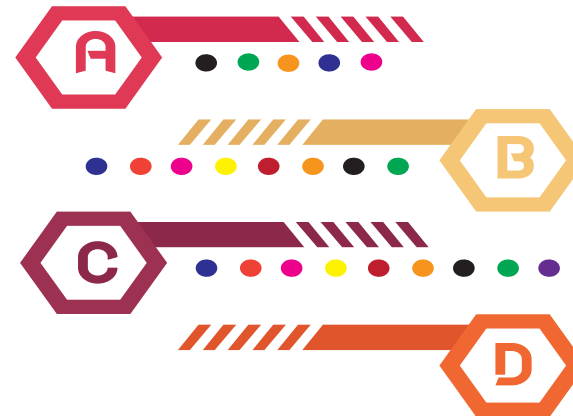
- ▶ **Parent Focused MHPSS** : MoE Antigua and Barbuda hosted “Parenting 101”, conducting three zoom sessions in June and one session in September. In Jamaica MoE in collaboration with the National Parents Teachers Association, hosted on parenting session and in collaboration with ChildLine offered a number of one day webinars. In Saint Lucia, a MHPS parenting video was circulated.

Summary of MHPSS Delivered Across the Nine Countries

YES



NO



- Antigua & Barbuda
- Barbados
- Belize
- Dominica
- Grenada

- Jamaica
- St. Vincent & the Grenadines
- St. Lucia
- Trinidad & Tobago

MHPSS from a Distance -Key Challenges and Opportunities

- ▶ Mainstreaming of MPHSS in e-Learning curricula
- ▶ Gaps in student access to e-learning modalities
- ▶ The Need for Multipronged Approach Requires More Resources
- ▶ Reduced Privacy May Mean Reduced Reporting and Engagement
- ▶ Teacher Pedagogical Capacity - Difficulty Keeping Students Engaged Online

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Crisis Breeds Collaboration
- ▶ Convenience and Access
- ▶ Emergence of Innovative e-Learning Modalities, Platforms and Applications

Key Recommendations

- ▶ Scale Up and Prioritize the “Life Skills” Component of HFLE
- ▶ Conduct Rapid Needs Assessments
- ▶ Determine Mental Health Protocols for Cluster Support Interventions
- ▶ Community-based Counsellors and Support Networks
- ▶ Design Indicator Frameworks for Identifying at Risk Students in the eLearning Environment
- ▶ Policy Development and Systematization
- ▶ Standardize Data Collection, Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation
- ▶ **Prioritize Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups.**

Recommendations cont'd

Prioritize Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups.

MHPSS and awareness building initiatives should be wide ranging, available in multiple formats and languages and multiple channels of delivery utilized.

Children with Disabilities

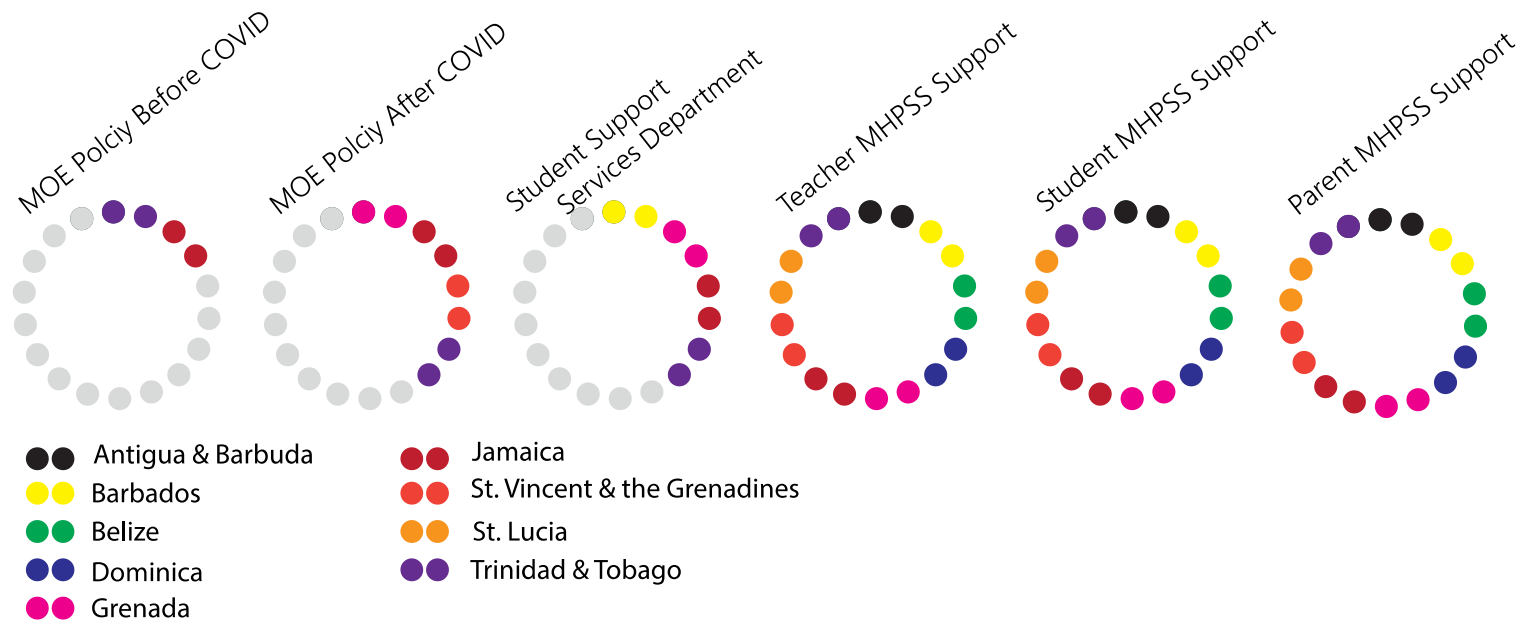
- ▶ Develop personalized education plans.
- ▶ Scale up assistive technologies for learners with disabilities.
- ▶ Ensure data collection frameworks promote disability-inclusive data

Indigenous, Migrant and Refugee Communities

- ▶ Utilize community leaders and existing community systems of governance.
- ▶ Build capacity within vulnerable and marginalized communities.

CONCLUSION

Key Policy Measures & Services Offered on MHPSS



CONCLUSION

ALL MoE's moved to inject some aspect of MHPSS in it's emergency response.

- ▶ The response was **largely progressive** characterised by an ad hoc, siloed, approach at a class and individual level in most of the countries.
- ▶ All countries confronted **similar challenges**: the attitudes of stakeholders, access to internet connectivity and technological devices, teacher e-learning pedagogical and SEL capacities, the parental and household dynamics driving risks and the further exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized communities
- ▶ The response was **multifaceted** with a mix of multi-media outreach via TV and Radio, production of short interactive programming, videos, webinars, e-flyers and the provision of virtual counselling sessions, helplines, parent and teacher capacity building interventions are working to build a culture of awareness of these issues.
- ▶ The need to **build institutional resiliency** requires robust integration mechanisms to address gaps in psychosocial components of e-learning and facilitate mainstreaming of MHPSS as a **developmental component** in education children and young people.