

Regional Conference on Population & Development Virtual Dialogue:



Population Impacts and
Policy Responses to the
COVID-19 Pandemic in
Grenada

Questions to be Addressed



- How have school closure, remote working and other restrictions on normal life affected the burden on caregivers?
- How can employers and social protection systems support those with care responsibilities?
- How have care workers been affected and how can they be supported?

The Following Agencies/Organization Will Address Those Questions Respectively



- Geriatric Care/Homes and Grenada caregivers programme
- Grenada National Council of the Disabled (GNCD)
- Mental health Implications (Psycho-Social Service)
- Day care and roving caregivers programme

How Have School Closure, Remote Working And Other Restrictions On Normal Life Affected The Burden On Caregivers?

Geriatric Home/Care and Grencase

Positive effects:

- Caregivers attended work during the lockdown.
- Caregivers enjoyed the lockdown.
- Some Homes reported that they received exemplary work ethic from caregivers during the lockdown.

Negative effects:

- Not having the necessary online knowledge to assist their children with the online schoolwork.
- Provision of extra food supplies for bored children at home.

How Have School Closure, Remote Working and Other Restrictions On Normal Life Affected The Burden On Caregivers?

Geriatric Home/Care and Grencase

Negative effects:

- Caregivers were unable to properly supervise their children who were at home due to the lockdown
- There was one report that a child of one of the caregivers was abused.
- Caregivers took time off from their day to facilitate the purchase of food. Since the authorities did not acknowledge them as essential workers, they were required to wait in long queues in order to purchase groceries at the supermarket.

How Have School Closure, Remote Working and Other Restrictions On Normal Life Affected The Burden On Caregivers?

Grenada National Council of the Disable (GNCD)

- Classes are conducted virtually. This forced parents and guardians to adapt and become technologically savvy in order to help their children.
- Clients who live alone required special assistance during the COVID-19 period. Such persons received home delivered groceries, walkers, wheelchairs, walking sticks and commodes. Others received periodic telephone calls to ensure they were coping and to find out if they needed psychosocial intervention.

How Have School Closure, Remote Working and Other Restrictions On Normal Life Affected The Burden On Caregivers?

Grenada National Council of the Disable (GNCD)

- Due to limited staffing, work overload was inevitable.
- Since most assessments are conducted on the field. It was extremely challenging to work remotely.
- Children did not have the necessary devices to attend their online classes.
- Lack of proper WIFI connection forced teachers to travel to the homes to deliver class work for the students.
- Virtual classes have challenged them to be creative in order to make online learning fun.

How Have School Closure, Remote Working And Other Restrictions On Normal Life Affected The Burden On Caregivers?

Mental Health – Counseling

- Great strain was placed on parents to juggle working remotely and tending to virtual classes with their children.
- For some parents, the increased stress resulted in mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.
- A greater mental toll was seen on single parent families and those who lack safe support personnel to care for their children.

How Have School Closure, Remote Working And Other Restrictions On Normal Life Affected The Burden On Caregivers?

Day Care and Roving Caregivers programme

- Incompetency on the use of computers.
- Poor or no access to internet.
- Poor nutrition which resulted in weight gain or weight loss.
- Workers faced financial hardships. Some private day care owners were unable to pay their loans, rent, bills and food bill.
- Uncertainty of maintaining their jobs.
- Unexpected and unknown reopening of their programmes/services.

How Have School Closure, Remote Working And Other Restrictions On Normal Life Affected The Burden On Caregivers?

Day Care and Roving Caregivers programme

- Separation of caregivers from each other.
- Inability to stay connected with their children
- Frustration about conducting early stimulation activities remotely
- Unpreparedness of parents to be at home with their children indefinitely
- Having to work remotely and supervise minors at the same time resulted in accident.

How Can Employers And Social Protection Systems Support Those With Care Responsibilities?



Geriatric Home/Care and Grencase

- Employers should be more accommodating to the needs of caregivers. For example, when time off is requested to attend to personal issues.
- Continuous development of caregivers to meet their personal needs and those of their clients.
- Caregivers should be considered when social protection mechanisms are being developed and distributed as their salaries are amongst the lowest in Grenada.
- Housing considerations should also be given in terms of preference in allocations of housing resources.

How Can Employers And Social Protection Systems Support Those With Care Responsibilities?



Geriatric Home/Care and Grencase

- The Manager of one of the homes indicated that during the pandemic their staff received the following support:
 - Assistance with transportation to and from work, with help from Social Development, this continued due to difficulty and lack of public transport on the weekends and public holidays. The Home assists with the transport cost.
 - Assistance with the purchasing of food items where necessary thus limiting their contact with too many individuals.
 - The Home also rearranged the working hours to support those with small children and not enough childcare support.

How Can Employers And Social Protection Systems Support Those With Care Responsibilities?



Grenada National Council of the Disable (GNCD)

- Provide proper training in areas that would enhance performance and growth in their field.
- Provide psychosocial and emotional support to care givers who in turn can provide to the children in their care.

How Can Employers And Social Protection Systems Support Those With Care Responsibilities?



Mental Health – Counseling

- Employers and social protection systems are essential to protect and promote the mental health needs of caregivers. These individuals should be afforded additional caregiver support/help for the elderly, the disabled and children.
- Employers should be especially sensitive to the needs of parents with children and their responsibility to provide safe and adequate supervision for their children.
- Daycare facilities should be considered by workplaces to ease the burden of parents with school aged children.

How Can Employers And Social Protection Systems Support Those With Care Responsibilities?



Day Care and Roving Caregivers Programme

- Provide financial help where there was a loss or reduced income
- Provide physical help in the form of monthly food hampers
- Provide psychological support/ counseling
- Encourage buddy groups for those who maybe feel more comfortable with a familiar peer
- Create an employee resource group for caregivers to share resources and experiences

How Have Caregivers Been Affected And How Can They Be Supported?



Geriatric Home/Care and Grencase

- The fear of the Covid-19 virus placed caregivers under immense psychological strain while they provide service to their clients and cared for their families.
- The Psycho-social support team should be readily available to caregivers to assist them with the emotional and psychological challenges they may experience.
- The management team in one of the Homes along with Bishop Harvey was and continues to offer moral, spiritual and physiological support to staff, residents and relatives.
- Have regular staff meetings and WhatsApp group chat to update on the changes in the virus status in Grenada and the Protocols that must be followed.

How Have Caregivers Been Affected And How Can They Be Supported?



Grenada National Council of the Disable (GNCD)

- Care workers have suffered burnout from long hours of work.
- Care workers were unable to properly provide the required services and support to their children. This resulted in the delay of students' progress and development.

How Have Caregivers Been Affected And How Can They Be Supported?



Mental Health – Counseling

- Caregivers are faced with a huge task and often times care for others while neglecting their own mental health needs. Due to the high demands placed on caregivers, there is sometimes little time and energy to tend to their own emotional functioning and self- care. These individuals often face burn out together with physical health challenges which then goes on to affect family functioning.
- Priority must be given to make available mental health services for caregivers.