

MODEL SAFE SCHOOL PROGRAMME TRAINING

Briefing Note for Schools

GUYANA

1. Background

The Caribbean is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Various types of natural and man-made hazards can impact the region including floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, volcanic eruptions in some countries, infectious diseases and climate change and all the varied impacts associated with it. Disasters and the associated impacts threaten lives and the economic, social, developmental and environmental progress made in the region over the past decades. Educational institutions are no exception. Ministries and Departments of Education, as well as school administrators throughout the region must be fully cognizant of the impact that natural and human-induced hazards may have on the safety of students, teachers and administrators. In several Caribbean countries schools are used as shelters during times of disaster which results in damage to facilities and disrupted learning. Planning for school safety is a challenge; as schools continue to plan and prepare for hazard events that could have severe consequences, identifying the appropriate measures to reduce risks is an important step and must be carried out systematically. Schools need to use appropriate tools to capture the relevant data required to inform the development and maintenance of customised plans and programmes and to identify functional/operational, non-structural and structural deficiencies.

The Model Safe School Programme (MSSP) is designed to assist Participating States with implementing processes that result in safer and greener educational facilities. Its Toolkit comprises a policy that can be adopted by governments and Ministries of Education, tools for assessing the level of safety and greenness of schools, a template Emergency/Disaster Plan that can be adapted to a school's specific situation and hazard context, and, finally, a list of tools and guidance documents that can be utilized to create safer and greener institutions.

The Model Safe School Programme is congruent with the global strategic Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) approach to reducing risk in schools. The MSSP establishes an ideal, yet adaptable, approach to risk management at the school level that encompasses (i) the articulation of school safety policies, (ii) the recognition of detailed and wide-ranging standards for school safety, (iii) the identification of risk through assessment against the recognised standards and (iv) the implementation of interventions to address risk that are guided by the concrete knowledge generated through assessment.

The Model Safe School Programme (MSSP) and Toolkit for the Caribbean was endorsed by the CDEMA Council in 2015 as the vehicle through which the region would address school safety. School safety exists in a broader context of enhancing local, national and regional resilience through the mainstreaming of DRM in the education sector.

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The implementation of the MSSP at the national level supports achievement of the outcomes of regional and international strategies and initiatives inter alia:

- i. The Regional CDM Strategy 2014-2024.
- ii. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
- iii. The Worldwide Initiative for School Safety (WISS).
- iv. Caribbean Initiative for School Safety.
- v. Antigua and Barbuda Declaration on School Safety in the Caribbean and its Roadmap

2. About the training

The overall MSSP training objectives are to: (a) familiarise trainees with the context for the MSSP and the assessment tools, (b) train on the utilization of the tool to assess risk in schools, and (c) train on the preparation of assessment reports.

In addition to a sound approach to the MSSP theory and methodology, a hands-on learning experience is envisioned where trainees undertake all stages of the assessment and reporting process, including the development of recommendation reports and action plans. Consequently, the participation of schools, providing a real-life setting, is of vital importance for the achievement of the training's learning objectives.

Furthermore, participating schools themselves benefit from this training, as using the safety standards and the application of the assessment tools provide Ministries and schools with a means of understanding the anatomy of the risk they face, thus enabling them to make fact-based decisions on the design and implementation of programmes to increase the resilience of school. The information generated by the application of the assessment tools allows for flexible action planning across various times scales (short, medium and long-term) and which considers the available resources and other unique characteristics of the implementing country.

3. About the school assessment

The MSSP assessment consists of the three tools, namely the (a) Questionnaire for the School Safety Compliance Standards, the (b) Building Condition Assessment, and the (c) Green Assessment. Training participants are will have an opportunity to apply these assessment in the participating schools. The details of the three tools are as follows:

a) Questionnaire for the School Safety Compliance Standards

The questionnaire is a checklist that comprises a series of questions built around international safety standards. The questions contained in the checklist are used to calculate a score and subsequently can serve for School Safety certification purposes.

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The checklist/questionnaire is divided into the following 8 sub-sections:

- **Disaster Planning** which looks at what plans, guidelines and procedures that is in place to guide response to disaster situations, and how and when they updated.
- **Emergency Planning** which covers supplies and equipment related to safety, health and contact information for students and the training of individuals in the areas of First Aid, fire suppression and CPR.
- **Health and Safety Administration** which looks at those responsible for administering health and safety issues, risk assessments and complying with local labour regulations.
- **Medical Emergencies** covers whether or not a health care provider is located on the school compound or is accessible in case of an emergency, food preparation on-site, the mechanisms for reporting potential issues and having easy access to emergency contact information.
- **Physical Plant** deals with the structural integrity of, and any hazards that may be associated with, school buildings.
- **Physical Safety** covers on-site security issues and procedures.
- **Protection of the Person** pertains particularly to secondary and tertiary level institutions and covers safety gear and equipment available.
- **Hazardous Chemicals and Materials** also pertain to secondary and tertiary level institutions where potentially hazardous chemicals may be used in laboratories, etc.

b) Building Condition Assessment

The questionnaire seeks to collect information on the condition of the school building(s) and grounds that could potentially harm staff and students and which may make the school more vulnerable to hazards such as hurricanes and flooding. The major categories of the Building Conditions Assessment include:

- Exterior Building Elements
- Interior Building Elements
- Mechanical Systems
- Safety/Code Compliance

c) Green Assessment

The questionnaire is a checklist that comprises a series of questions built around sustainability and environmental responsibility. The questions contained in the checklist are used to calculate a score and subsequently can serve for Green certification purposes.

The checklist is divided into the following 8 sub-sections:

- **Sustainability Management** pertains to formulating supporting policies, raising awareness and establishing a baseline from which improvements can be measured.
- **Natural Resources** focus on reducing water and energy use and purchasing practices.
- **Indoor Environment** focuses on maintaining indoor conditions conducive to teaching and learning.

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- **Hazardous Chemicals and Materials** focuses on the proper labelling, handling, use and storage of chemicals and the identification and proper management of hazardous materials such as asbestos.
- **Facility and Grounds** pertains to the proper pest management in an effort to reduce or eliminate the use of and exposure to harmful chemicals, proper waste storage and disposal and overall maintenance.
- **Food Service** pertains to the sustainability of the foods used and proper management of food waste.

Expected support from participating school

The participants of the MSSP Training are required to implement all three assessment tools, process their results, propose improvements based on the findings and develop an assessment report. For this purpose, participants will conduct interviews with key school staff, such as the Principal, Deputy Principal, Care Taker, teachers, students and canteen staff, in addition to conducting a visit of the school premises.

As this is a learning exercise, around 25 people will be involved in carrying out the assessment. This is considerably more than normally required for such an action. Therefore, some activities are divided among smaller groups, each of which will pursue specific elements of the assessment tools. Training participants will carry proper identification.

Should school authorities have any specific consideration as to staff availability, premises or any other requirement allowing for an undisturbed school business continuity, please inform the training's focal person listed at the end of this briefing note.

General requirements:

The following requirements will support the implementation of the assessment.

- A room (class room, meeting room, etc.), which can be used for collective review sessions or interviews.
- Availability of the following staff for separate and parallel interviews:
 - School Principal and/or Deputy Principal
 - School Care Taker
 - Three to four teachers, preferably senior staff
 - Four to five students, preferably if involved with any safety or environmental initiative
 - Canteen staff, if applicable

For more information, please contact:

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