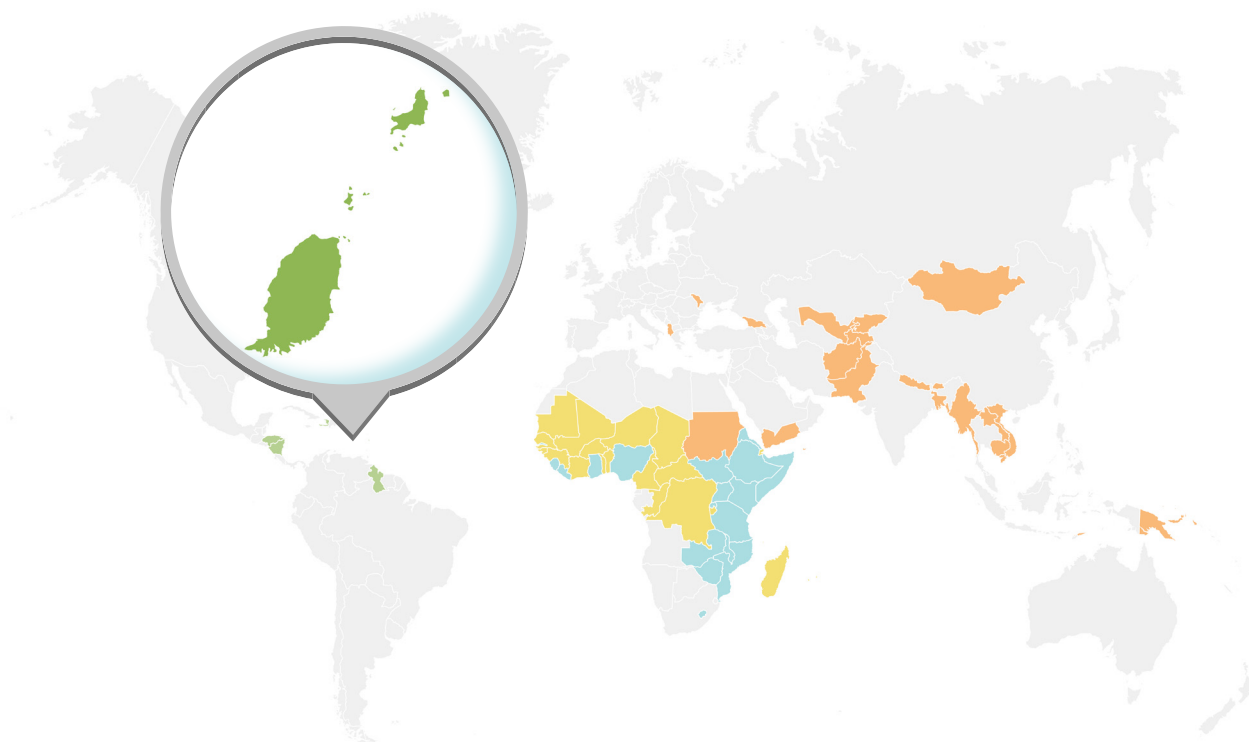




COUNTRY REVIEW

Challenges and opportunities in the education system of Grenada



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Challenges and opportunities in the education system of Grenada



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ABOUT SUMMA

SUMMA is the first Laboratory of Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean. It was established in 2016 by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), with support from the education ministries of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

Since 2018, the ministries of Guatemala, Honduras and Panama have also joined. Its mission is to contribute to and increase the quality, equity and inclusion of the region's education systems by improving the decision-making process for education policies and practices. To accomplish its mission, SUMMA organizes its actions in three strategic pillars that allow the promotion, development and dissemination of (1) cutting-edge research aimed at diagnosing the main challenges in the region and promoting shared work agendas, (2) innovation in education policies and practices aimed at providing solutions for the main education problems in the region, and (3) collaborative spaces that allow exchange between policymakers, researchers, innovators and the school community, based on a shared regional agenda.

ABOUT OECS

The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) was created in 1981 as an intergovernmental organization for promoting cooperation, harmonization and integration among its member states.

OECS has developed a considerable amount of valuable knowledge sharing and direct technical assistance among Ministries of Education. It has also been part of the Regional Education Strategy and has supported participatory planning and monitoring processes. In this regard, the OECS has a strong leadership role with the Caribbean States, and especially in supporting the countries that belong to this territory: Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As a current partner of the GPE, the OECS has led the implementation of the Education Sector Plans in these states.

ABOUT KIX LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Knowledge and Innovation Exchange Hub (KIX) of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is a joint initiative of the Global Partnership for Education – GPE – and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), which brings together various stakeholders in education. The regional network is led by SUMMA (Educational Research and Innovation Laboratory for Latin America and the Caribbean), and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, and aims to contribute to the strengthening of education systems in partner countries: Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

KIX connects expertise, innovation and knowledge to help developing countries build stronger education systems and move towards SDG 4: inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

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SUMMARY OF KIX LAC EASTERN CARIBBEAN ROUNDTABLE

The Eastern Caribbean Roundtable was held on July 8th and it counted on the presence of the following KIX LAC representatives:

Dominica

Bekissa Labadie
Mr. Mervin Alexander
Dr. Kimone Joseph
Mrs. Octavia Timothy

Saint Lucia

Claudia Louis
Merphilus James

Grenada

Mrs Michelle Brathwaite
Dr. Nicole Phillip-Dowe
Mr. Frankson Marshall
Miss JudyAnn Auld
Mr. Glenroy George

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Mr. Dixon Findlay
Mrs. Michelle King Campbell
Mr. Oswald Robinson

Dr. Verna Knight and her team at the University of West Indies (Dr. Rasheda Moody-Marshall, Dr. Jason Marshall and Dr. Kathy Depradine) presented the main findings of the research for the Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines separately, although at the end they stressed common challenges and opportunities for the sub-region.

After the presentation, some of the representatives shared their perspectives and gave inputs for further discussion. Overall, there was a collective perception that the four countries are not as different as they think they are. In this sense, Dr. Kimone Joseph (UWI – Dominica), Dr. Phillip-Dowe (UWI-Grenada) and Frankson Marshall (Teachers' Union, Grenada) highlighted this aspect.

Improving access to technology, evidenced by the COVID-19 context, was something that representatives such as Dr. Kimone Joseph, Mr. Oswald Robinson (Teachers' Union, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Michelle Brathwaite (Ministry of Education, Grenada) mentioned.

Additionally, Mr. Robinson raised the topic of inclusive education and how special education is integrated into the school system. Although it wasn't directly approached during the presentation, researchers informed that the subject is covered in the four reports. Actually, Ms. Schenelle Leonce (participant from the Ministry of Education of Saint Lucia informed us that they are working specifically to provide access to education for our special needs children.

On the other hand, both Mr. Robinson and Mrs. Brathwaite underlined the importance of ongoing training for administrators, school leaders and teachers for both emergencies and for a virtual context.

Finally, Dr. Neva Pemberton (OECS) gave the final remarks, where she emphasized the extent to which evidence-based policy action and sector planning has been and remains a developmental priority for the OECS and KIX LAC. In the end, these documents would help OECS and KIX LAC in designing some of the key activities in their new education sector program, specifically in terms of capacity building for teachers and educational leaders, to support improved learning.

As Dr. Knight pointed out, these reports are not intended to tell countries what to do. Instead, KIX LAC purpose is that they are used as inputs, especially given that Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are now in the process of developing a new sector plan.

FOREWORD

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) continue to face major social challenges, and their education systems are a mirror of the contexts of inequality in which they are embedded. Today it is urgent to move forward under the commitment of transforming our education systems into living, collaborative ecosystems that make use of evidence, innovation and knowledge sharing to address the challenges related to improving quality, equity and adaptability in the face of the new challenges of recent years. At the core, Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) initiative emphasizes the ultimate purpose of improving the holistic learning outcomes of all students in the region.

For this reason, the KIX LAC Hub, led by the partnership between SUMMA - Laboratory for Research and Innovation in Education for Latin America and the Caribbean - and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), concentrates its efforts on contributing to the improvement of the equity and quality of the region's education systems through its three main pillars of work: identifying a regional education policy agenda, mobilizing knowledge to respond to countries' needs and strengthening the institutional capacities of country partners.

In this context and with the conviction of the importance of consolidating a regional education policy agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, SUMMA and OECS have promoted a series of studies with specialists, under the common denominator "Challenges and opportunities in the education systems of the KIX LAC countries". As a result of this research, it was proposed to develop a series of working papers aimed at updating the educational diagnosis of each country and identifying the difficulties, strengths, challenges and current priorities faced by the following countries: Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

This series of working papers focuses on six thematic areas prioritized by KIX such as: (i) early childhood education, (ii) learning assessment systems, (iii) gender equity, (iv) data systems, (v) equity and inclusion, and (vi) teaching and learning. The research papers drew on secondary sources and interviews with key local stakeholders that delve into the challenges and experiences of different education systems from various perspectives: legal and policy frameworks, governance and financing, the impact of the pandemic, curriculum and learning materials, teachers, learning environments, and the contribution of educational communities and students.

This valuable research is the result of collaborative work between the SUMMA, OECS and researchers from the region, and it counts with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). It is hoped that these documents will encourage reflection and public policy dialogue, open a regional collaboration agenda that will strengthen learning environments among countries and become a real contribution to the construction of fairer and more sustainable education systems.

KIX LAC Team

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Exam
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCSLC	Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CPEA	Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EDMU	Education Development Management Unit (formerly OERU)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FLOW	the name of a telecommunication provider in the Caribbean
GNTA	Grenada National Training Agency
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NEWLO	New Life Organisation
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OESS	OECS Education Sector Strategy
OOSCI	Out of School Children Initiative
SPEED	Strategic Plan for Educational Enhancement and Development
TAMCC	T. A. Marrayshow Community College
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USE	Universal Secondary Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and was commissioned under the Knowledge & Innovation Exchange (KIX) initiative in the Eastern Caribbean, which seeks to connect the expertise, innovation and knowledge of GPE partners to help developing countries build stronger education systems. KIX consists of regional KIX hubs, where partners share information, innovation and best practices, and includes a funding mechanism that provides grants at the global and regional levels to invest in knowledge generation and innovation in eligible countries. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is the grant agent for KIX. In the Eastern Caribbean SUMMA & the OECS have partnered together to create and promote the development of a KIX Regional Hub in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). SUMMA was designated as the leading institution on this specific project.

This national overview of the education system was commissioned for four countries in the Eastern Caribbean: Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It presents an overview of some key aspects of the education system in an effort to highlight current needs and challenges within the system, and to provide evidence-based recommendations that can strengthen education provisions, and by extension the educational experience for every learner.

This country review is necessary for the setting of a relevant agenda that will guide discussions between each country and KIX between April 2021 and December 2023 to support education development that is aligned with their most relevant educational needs.

A brief summary of the main findings of the report on the review of education in Grenada follows.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Grenada is classified internationally as an upper middle class income country. However, its struggle with debt and fiscal imbalances during the first decade of the new millennium, and subsequent limited capacity in supporting growth and job creation has had lasting effects on the overall economy and individual livelihoods. A structural adjustment programme which began in 2013, has since resulted in some economic upturn, but unemployment levels remain high and migration rates out of Grenada continue to be high especially among the educated workforce. Exact figures to represent current unemployment levels are unavailable as the last comprehensive poverty assessment was done in 2008 and at the time showed a worsening trend between 1998-2008. One of the main factors contributing to high unemployment is low education levels.

THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

A free and compulsory basic education is provided for all children in Grenada between the ages of 5–16, based on the premise that education is a basic human need and right. Furthermore, analysis of key education documents which have guided education planning and reforms over the last 10 years or more reflect a strong emphasis on Education as an important instrument in the fight for poverty reduction, and a means for improving individual wellbeing, developing society, and attaining higher economic growth. As such, Grenada has remained committed to several regional and international conventions and agreements which shape its education policy reform, programs and priorities.

Most of the schools in Grenada are either publicly owned or government assisted. Across the six (6) school districts, there is a combined total of 105 preschool centers (62 percent being publicly owned); 79 primary schools (71 percent being publicly owned); and 23 secondary schools (87.5 percent being either fully or partially publicly owned and/or managed; only 3 secondary schools are fully private). Six of the primary schools and two of the secondary schools are located in a single school district which serves the sister islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. There are three special education centers (all publicly owned), one skill training center (governed by an NGO), and there three (3) tertiary education institutions. However, the numbers of students who do access postsecondary education is often relatively low, as many cannot afford postsecondary studies, especially at university level.

Government is currently committed to maintaining universalized access to both primary and secondary education for all children. The primary school enrollment has been especially integral to government achievement of universalized access at the secondary level, as part of a deliberate effort by government to reduce the number of overaged children at the primary school level, and to increase the number of students assigned places in secondary schools upon completion of the 11+ plus exam. Consequently, the percentage of students who gained placement at the secondary level upon completion of primary education increased from 50 percent in 2001 to the highest of 100 percent achieved in 2012. Last available statistics show a slight drop to 99.3 percent in 2017.

This strategy to achieve universal access to secondary education however has not been without its challenges. Studies of Grenada's strategy in this regard (which placed greater emphasis on the age criterion in contrast to the traditional student performance scores on the 11+ examination), have shown that many students who were transferred had not yet sufficiently developed the required competency levels in literacy and numeracy, and subsequently had difficulty engaging with the curriculum at the secondary school level. The result was an increased number of students repeating and/or dropping out at the 3rd, 4th, and 5th form levels, and a gradual disengagement with classroom instruction as many chose to skip scheduled classes even though they were present on the school compound. Grenada continues to grapple with the dual

challenge of maintaining the policy of universalized access to secondary education and improving teaching quality across all sectors of the education system.

Key Summary Concerns/Challenges:

- There is an obvious need for a comprehensive review of poverty and unemployment levels in Grenada to update current projections, and specifically to inform relevant planning moving forward; especially given the clear emphasis on education and training as a means to addressing issues of poverty and unemployment.
- Given that low education is one of the identified factors impacting high unemployment levels, the current disruptions to schooling caused by the current COVID-19 pandemic presents an additional risk to achieving its planned sustainable development goals, and specifically disrupts current efforts to improve the circumstances of the poorest and most vulnerable.
- Data is unavailable as it relates to how many children are of age but unable to access early childhood education due to lack of space in government pre school centers and inability to afford enrollment in private ECD centers.
- There is a clear need for increased support for increasing access to post-secondary education and training, and university level study generally.

ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION

The Education System is headed by a Cabinet Minister, with a Permanent Secretary serving as the administrative head with responsibility for all budgeting and accounting related to the public education sector. The education processes are managed by the Chief Education Officer, assisted by a team of senior education officers with responsibility for specific areas of management such as planning and development, school administration, and curriculum development, and assessment. District education officers have responsibility for specific school districts and schools.

Key Concerns/Challenges:

- A need to maintain continued stability in leadership and management at Ministry of Education for strengthening the ministry's capacity for timely implementation, monitoring and evaluation of planned reforms and programmes critical to education development. One of the past challenges to effective management and administration of education has been the frequent changes in Chief Education Officers and Permanent Secretaries between 2006 and 2015.
- There is a need for government to continue to manage the process of universalized access to secondary education to ensure that quality programmes are in place at all levels of the education system to help children develop or address any gaps they may have as it relates to their literacy and numeracy competencies by completion of the required number of years at the primary school level, and subsequent to their transfer to secondary school (where such support may remain necessary).

SCHOOLS AND INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

A recent 2021 report on schools and internet connectivity across the OECS, confirms that as it relates to schools and internet connectivity, all government owned or government assisted primary and secondary schools currently have access to internet connectivity. The status as it relates to pre-schools and private schools is currently unknown. This especially have implications for access online for teachers and students, for facilitating EMIS, as well as the capacity of schools for facilitating blended instruction, or fully online instruction from or at the school plant during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Concerns/Challenges:

- Although all schools report having internet connectivity, significant challenges remain as it relates to the effective use of the internet in schools; specifically the predominance of non-pedagogical uses of the internet (mostly for administrative purposes rather than for enhancing teaching and learning);
- Furthermore, challenges exist with uneven internet coverage across schools which limits the utility of the internet in classrooms; this is further compounded by the challenge of network congestion due to varying levels of download speed, and subsequent complaints about poor connectivity service overall. Government's efforts to extend connectivity across classrooms are currently ongoing.

COVID-19 AND DISRUPTIONS TO SCHOOLING IN GRENADA

The threat of the COVID-19 virus led to closure of schools as a precautionary measure on and the transition to remote teaching and learning. Efforts were made to facilitate the subsequent launch of the government's new eLearning platform – The MSTAR Learning Support which has provided some useful teaching and learning resources to support teachers and students across the education system. The MSTAR platform was however not originally designed to facilitate online teaching and learning; it is currently being reconceptualized to expand its current capacity to further support teachers and students.

The physical closure of schools in Grenada lasted for an initial nine month period during which the only students who were allowed limited access to schools were those secondary students completing preparations for and sitting the CSEC examinations. Over 24, 035 students (across pre-schools, primary, secondary and tertiary school levels) in Grenada were reported by Ministry of Education data as having been affected by the initial school closures between March and September 2020. One Ministry survey showed that 63 percent of students across the tri-island state were unable to access class instruction during the initial school closure period.

Ministry of Education Preparations for the reopening of schools included the following key measures:

- the preparation of protocol guidelines for each school level;

- the hiring of additional cleaners and security personnel;
- the procurement of additional cleaning supplies;
- the conduct inspections and schools maintenance and repairs;
- the dissemination of tips and published guidelines for parents;
- the provision of psychosocial support for teachers and students; and
- the strategic placement of information posters around the school as reminders for students.
- dissemination of eLearning devices to all teachers, and to all secondary school students;
- Some training also commenced for teachers and students in the use of the devices for classroom instructional purposes;
- Adjustments to assessment regulations and conditions included the cancellation of the 11+ examination for 2020, and subsequent use of a composite score to represent student performance; and the deferral of the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) exam to 2021. The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examinations were administered but with deferred arrangements for student with underlying conditions, or special circumstances.

Key Concerns/Challenges:

- There is a need for remedial and supplemental instructional sessions for students whose completion of learning was limited due to the school closures; and further inability to access provisions for remote or online instruction (especially Grade 6 students who are of age but were not promoted to secondary schools this year);
- The need for completion of distribution of eLearning devices to students at the primary school level;
- The need for continued training for teachers, students and parents in the effective use of the e-learning devices;
- The need for continued upgrades and renovations to school plants;
- The need for strengthening the capacity of school leaders to better manage education response at the school level during crises;

POLICIES AND PROGRAM IN EDUCATION

The report notes that although the Education Act makes allowance for the establishment of an Education Advisory Board to advise the Minister in the making of education regulations, teacher training, curriculum and other matters which may arise, the common practice is for committees to be formed as needed to plan or advise on specific matters in education. These special advisory committees are usually

comprised of key ministry personnel who will later engage with relevant education stakeholders for input.

As a member state of both the OECS, and CARICOM, education sector plans and planning is often impacted and informed by the education goals and imperatives of both the OECS and CARICOM. While only tenuous links were found between the CARICOM agenda for education and the national education sector plans and planning in Grenada, there was evidence of strong linkages with education sector planning at the OECS level – specifically with the OECS Education Sector Strategy 2012-2021 (the OESS – recently extended to 2026). The OECS Education Development Management Unit (EDMU) has been a key agency in facilitating the coordination of education planning among the OECS member states as it relates to implementing the common agenda of the OESS policy.

The following areas were identified in the last education corporate plan for the ministry of education (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 2017), and remain relevant areas of priority for action while the new education sector plan is being developed: The Corporate plan focused on six (6) priority areas: 1) strengthening the Integration of ICT in education service delivery; 2) increasing educational opportunities for all; 3) ensuring equitable access to quality education for all; 4) strengthening the literacy and numeracy capability of teachers and students; 5) enhancing professionalism and quality in the education sector and 6) completing the rehabilitation of and maintenance of educational institutions.

Other (and at times related) areas of priority identified through field data included strengthening support for special needs education; completing needed curriculum reviews where they may be needed for some subjects; improving and institutionalizing school safety practice in schools; reexamining the overall policy guiding the placement of Grade 6 students into secondary schools; and strengthening ECD as a foundational level in the education sector.

Current and ongoing education reforms and programmes include the following: the ICT Programme; the TVET Expansion Programme; the Student Support Programme; The Literacy and Numeracy Programme; the School Rehabilitation Programme; and the professionalization of Education Service Programme.

Key Concerns/Challenges:

- Progress on the implementation of the OESS strategic imperatives have been constrained by budgetary limitations. Funding was often unavailable or unallocated for OESS and other education plans and programmes highlighted for action in a given year. As such donor funding and partnerships with education development agencies and organizations have been critical to enabling the progress on many of the OESS strategic outcomes, as well as national education programmes;
- Incomplete reporting by countries on the OESS performance indicators was also another factor at the national level which limited the implementation of regional objectives;

- There is a problem with understaffed ministries, and frequent changes in education leadership at the ministry of education have also presented significant challenges to implementation of education goals and objectives outlined in education plans at both the regional and national levels;
- Weak monitoring and evaluation of policies within the education sector – this is critical to ensure adherence to strategic plans and policy statements;
- Limited competence at the ministry level with respect to strategic planning for policy implementation in education;
- Limited collection of education data and use of education data in education planning, and monitoring of implemented programme and projects; which creates difficulty for assessing and or reporting progress on education indicators, and goals;
- Lack of ownership by senior education officers for initiatives and policies where these are externally funded and or implemented;
- Weak meaningful integration of existing education plans into day-to-day work across the education sector;

THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Only 53 percent of the total number of teachers across schools in Grenada have completed teacher training for teaching certification. This figure is slightly higher for the primary teachers (62.6 percent), and lower for the secondary teachers (42.7 percent). Teacher training opportunities provided mainly consist of in-service teacher training offered through the Department of Teacher Education at the TAMCC. As such, teacher certification is considered to be a valuable asset but is not yet a requirement for entry into teaching in Grenada.

The teaching force is predominant female across all education levels; there are no male teachers at the ECD level, 18 percent male teachers at the primary school level; and 35 percent males at the secondary school level.

Key Concerns/Challenges:

- Relatively low salaries and benefits;
- very limited opportunities for job promotion in the education system;
- High uncertainty surrounding job tenure;
- The prohibitive costs associated with tertiary education for teachers;
- The absence of preservice teacher education and training;
- The need for strengthening systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching;

Addressing all of the above concerns have implications for strengthening teacher motivation and support for improvements in professional service delivery which is a critical and current goal of government.

VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS OF STUDENTS

Grenada has made significant gains in terms of strengthening national laws, policies and practices, regulations, and support for child protection and care in recent years. In fact, Grenada is recognized as the most progressive OECS member state as it relates to the legislative frameworks for protecting the rights of children from all forms of abuse.

Current concerns as it relates to children facing vulnerabilities generally relate to the following broad categories:

1. Children who live in poverty, and or may not have access to quality early childhood care and education; may be vulnerable to poor health and nutrition; and may have poor school attendance;
2. Children who may have been removed from their biological homes because of the need for protection and care;
3. Children who may be in conflict with the law; and
4. Children with special education needs;

Key Concerns/Challenges:

Challenges which exist relate to the following broad areas outlined below.

Special Needs Students:

- the lack of an official definition and policy to actions to improve efforts to remove or reduce barriers to inclusive education across the education system; inclusion is generally perceived as integration, often with very little additional support. A Special Education policy has been drafted but not yet passed by Cabinet.
- the need for outfitting education facilities to ensure they are child-friendly as well as fully accessible for all;
- slow progress as it relates to the adequate provision of access to education for all children with special needs;

Child Protection Issues

- Insufficient residential care centers and facilities for vulnerable children and youth;
- large and demanding caseloads and limited resources such as insufficient staff;
- lack of comprehensive written procedures and policies to guide and standardize procedures for staff working for and on the behalf of children;

- The need for additional support and intervention programmes for delinquent children or children at risk;
- the need for a comprehensive review and overhaul of probation services as it relates to children; inclusive of a family court, legal aid and other important social services specific to children and child protective care.
- the need for addressing a high teenage pregnancy rate;
- Social Safety Net Provisions
- Insufficient resources to provide support for all the students and families in need;
- Gender Equity in Education
- The need for further research and actions to address the challenges impacting boys' performance in education;
- The need for strengthening general learning or remedial instructional support in schools for struggling learners;

INTRODUCTION

Education is considered to be a fundamental pillar in Caribbean development. For many individuals who reside in the region, it is the key to social advancement. For many small island governments such as those in the Caribbean, investments in human capital through relevant quality education and training is deemed to be critical to sustainable economic growth and development. This commitment to education is clearly evident in the current National Sustainable Development Plan 2020–2035 for Grenada (National Plan Secretariat, 2019), as well as past education sector plans (such as SPEED II 2006–2015, as well as in the Ministry of Education’s Corporate Plan 2015–2017). Based on a national vision of a resilient and prosperous nation and citizenry by 2035, Grenada’s current national sustainable development plan is built around achieving three broad, central national goals: 1) high human and social development; 2) a vibrant, dynamic, competitive economy with supporting climate-and-disaster resilient infrastructure; and 3) environmental sustainability & security (NSDP, 2019). Investments in Education and training is key to successfully attaining these goals, and thus perceived to be a principal contributor to the development of human resources for personal, economic and social development. Key to achieving these coveted outcomes through education however, is continuous assessment and reviews of the education sector to inform relevant planning and decision-making for strengthening and supporting timely innovation and reform as needed.

This report presents an overview of some key aspects of the education system in Grenada, in an effort to highlight current needs and challenges within the system, to provide discussions with education partners towards strengthening education provisions, and by extension the educational experience for every learner. Specifically, the report is comprised of six (6) key chapters. The main components of each are presented below.

Chapter One presents an overview of the national context undergirding the education system. Specifically, this chapter provides a summary of the demographic context, the political organizational context, the social and economic context, and a description of the general structure of the education system.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the initial impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the education system and its main actors (teachers, students and their families). This section offers insight into some of the relevant decisions taken to guide the provision of education in Grenada while classes were suspended, and the extent of current planning to compensate for learning loss in the immediate post COVID -19 period.

Chapter Three presents a summary of the main policies and programs that shape the educational system of the country, and specifically highlights the national priorities in terms of education, the most important reforms, and the main characteristics of programs that are currently being implemented.

Chapter Four presents a description of the characteristics of the teaching profession of the country and its main challenges.

Chapter Five presents insight into the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and concerns related to gender gaps and trends in education, as well as gaps which may exist in access for these children.

Finally, **Chapter Six** presents a summary of the conclusions, recommendations and implications for research based on an analysis of the overall aspects of the education system as presented in this report.

The need, relevance, and timeliness of this project for the region is especially underscored by the plethora of educational issues that have been reignited by the sudden and unpredictable arrival of COVID-19. Issues such as equity, social justice and inclusion, and technological infusion/integration into teaching and learning have especially taken centre stage as the region grapples with this new reality. As such, with COVID-19 as one of the main focal points, the research is not merely a data collection pursuit, but it presents an opportunity for each country to holistically reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the current educational structures, as each country engages with its educational partners and stakeholders to collaborate on ways to strengthen the overall educational system.

This report was funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and was commissioned under the Knowledge & Innovation Exchange (KIX) initiative in the Eastern Caribbean, which seeks to connect the expertise, innovation and knowledge of GPE partners to help developing countries build stronger education systems. KIX consists of regional KIX hubs, where partners come together to share information, innovation and best practices, and a funding mechanism that provides grants at the global and regional levels to invest in knowledge generation and innovation in eligible countries. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is the grant agent for KIX.

In this context, SUMMA & the OECS – organizations with important educational experience in the region – have partnered together to create and promote the development of a KIX Regional Hub in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). SUMMA was designated as the leading institution on this project.

This report was commissioned for the following four countries in the Eastern Caribbean: Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

METHODOLOGY

This report was developed based on data collected and analyzed in two concurrent phases, and from two key sources – documentary analysis, and field research via interviews and open-ended questionnaires distributed to several key personnel and national education stakeholders in Grenada. The desk review and analysis of key education documents from each country was the agreed methodology for the study.

In Phase 1 of the research, secondary data relevant to the identified indicators was sourced through an initial desk review, and subsequent engagement with an identified focal point person in each country who worked with the research team to identify and source specific documents as needed for developing each chapter of the report. The data collected from Phase 1 provided guidance for identifying gaps in existing data, and engaging the support of the Ministry of Education in filling in the gaps where possible. In some cases where gaps still exist, information was unavailable from the ministry of Education.

Phase 2 involved the collection of field data from a number of key sources inclusive of education administrators/policy makers; the teachers' union, the teacher training department, primary data and will include interviews of key stakeholders in education in each country.

The following is a summary of the key informants utilized in the field research aspect for the report.

Table 1: Key Respondents in the Field Research

Key Respondents/ Interviewees	Area of Responsibility
Mrs. Michelle Brathwaite	Special Projects Officer, Grenada
Mrs. Michelle Peters-George	DCEO-Educational Testing and Measurement Unit, Grenada
Mr. David Andrew	Director Student Support Services, Grenada
Mr. Frankson Marshall	Vice President, Grenada Teachers' Union
Dr. Andre Martin	Research Officer, MOE, Grenada
Ms. Desire Collins	Head, Department of Teacher Education, Grenada
Ms. Nailah James	Senior Education Planner, MOE, Grenada

Dr. Verna Knight	SOE, UWI Lecturer and research representative documenting the implementation of the OECS Education Sector Strategy
Sr. Margaret Yamoah,	Sr. Margaret Yamoah, Executive Director, New Life Organisation (NEWLO)

Each interviewee/respondent in the small field research element of the data collection for this report, was purposively selected based on their experience and level of knowledge of the education system in the relevant country, and ability to fill the gaps as it related to information needed for specific sections of the report. It was agreed that the researchers would provide research participants with an open questionnaire and follow-up with a zoom or telephone interview immediately after. Because of conflicting demands facing each MOE as they grappled with the evolving pandemic and its impact on school processes some persons were able to complete the questionnaire but unable to make time for a face-to-face interview. Where necessary, follow-up emails and WhatsApp messages were utilized to obtain further details, and clarifications based on initial data submissions.

The role of a focal point person was crucial to the communications with the Ministry of Education and obtaining contact details for key persons. The consultant worked with the identified focal point personnel for Grenada to obtain the secondary data (relevant reports, legislative documents, and other available data), as well as to identify key country level stakeholders to be interviewed as part of the field research process.

Table 2: Summary of Methodology Relative to Report objectives

Objectives	Methodological Approach
To outline the main features of the educational systems in the countries and describe their main social, economic and demographic indicators, as well as political characteristics and historical events that are relevant to understanding the education systems as they are today;	<p>Desk Review and Document Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and analysis of secondary data from reputable educational organisations (e.g. UNICEF, UNESCO and local sources of educational documentation – e.g. Education Policy papers, legislative documents etc.);

<p>To explore the countries - main educational challenges in terms of: (a) the impact of COVID-19; (b) governance and regulation; (c) resources; (d) policies and programs; (e) students; (f) teachers and educational leaders; (g) curriculum and pedagogies; (h) accountability and support; (i) innovation and knowledge mobilization; (j) vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.</p>	<p>Desk Review and Document Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analysis of secondary data from reputable educational organisations (e.g. UNICEF, UNESCO and local sources of educational documentation - e.g. policy papers etc. from the various Ministries of Education) • Open ended Questionnaires and One-on-one (virtual) interviews • Open ended Questionnaires and Interviews with key educational stakeholders
<p>To understand how institutions and the interactions among key actors contribute to shape the educational system as well as its outcomes, trying to understand what factors explain educational change.</p>	<p>Desk Review and Document Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analysis of secondary data from reputable educational organisations (e.g. UNICEF, UNESCO and local sources of educational documentation - e.g. policy papers etc. from the various Ministries of Education) • One-on-one (virtual) Interviews • Interviews with key educational stakeholders

<p>To analyze the knowledge mobilization and use of educational evidence in the countries,</p> <p>through a bibliometric analysis that helps illuminate which are the documents/ pieces of research that are taken into consideration in policy-making.</p>	<p>Desk Review and Document Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analysis of secondary data from reputable educational organisations (e.g. UNICEF, UNESCO and local sources of educational documentation - e.g. policy papers etc. from the various Ministries of Education) • Open ended Questionnaires and One-on-one (virtual) interviews • Open ended Questionnaires and Interviews with key educational stakeholders
<p>Development of Matrix</p>	<p>Desk Review and Document Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analysis of secondary data from reputable educational organisations (e.g. UNICEF, UNESCO and local sources of educational documentation and data - e.g. policy papers etc. from the various Ministries of Education)

CHAPTER 1:

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

1. 1 DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The Archipelago of Grenada comprises three sister islands – Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique – and about 600 mostly uninhabited small islets. Grenada is the largest of the three, with a width of twelve miles (18 km) and a length of twenty-one miles (34 km). The tri-island state measures a combined land area of one-hundred and thirty-three (133) square miles or (344km²), is located between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, and is part of a chain of islands called the Lesser Antilles. Grenada is situated less than 150 km to the northeast of Venezuela; to the northwest of Trinidad and Tobago; and to the southwest of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The capital of Grenada is Saint George's, and the state is divided into six (6) parishes: Saint Andrew, Saint David, Saint George, Saint John, Saint Mark and Saint Patrick; and one (1) dependency – Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Grenada is one of the smallest independent nations within the Western hemisphere; and is famously known as the 'Island of Spice.'

The interior of the island has steep rugged topography with many peaks and ridges. Most of the population live on the gentler slopes to the southwest of the island where it is easier to farm and clear space for buildings and roads. Its topography features dense rain forests, jagged coastlines, picturesque beaches, and brilliant foliage, all enhanced by a mild climate. The wet season lasts from July through September, and the dry season lasts from October through June. Rainfall can be quite heavy but generally does not last long. Grenada's southern position on the edge of the hurricane belt generally protects it from hurricanes, and it has suffered only three hurricanes within the last sixty-five years. Hurricane Janet passed over Grenada on 23 September 1955, with winds of 185 km/h (115 mph), and caused severe damages. The most recent storms to hit have been Hurricane Ivan on 7 September 2004, and Hurricane Emily on 14 July 2005. These storms caused severe damages, with Hurricane Ivan being responsible for thirty-nine deaths.

Grenada has the only known submarine volcano (Kick 'em Jenny) in the region, located five miles offshore. The first recorded eruption occurred in 1939, and minor eruptions have been occurring on a regular basis with the summit of the volcano growing at a rate of approximately four meters (13 feet) per year. The potential hazard of Kick 'em Jenny to Grenada and the rest of the Eastern Caribbean comes in the form of tsunamis should a major underwater volcanic eruption occur.

1.2 POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND CONTEXT

The nation of Grenada received political independence from Britain on February 7, 1974, and is a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II recognized as head of state, represented locally by a Governor-General. Executive power lies with the head of government, the Prime Minister. The Governor-General's role is largely ceremonial, while the Prime Minister is usually the leader of the largest party in Parliament. The current governor general is Dame Cécile Ellen Fleurette La Grenade, who has been serving in this position since 2013. The current Prime minister is the Hon. Dr. Keith Mitchell who is on his fifth term in office, (his political party won the government consecutively in 1995, 1999, and 2003; lost the elections in 2008, but subsequently regained office in 2013, and 2018).

The Parliament is comprised of the Senate, which is made up of thirteen (13) nominated members and the House of Representatives, fifteen (15) elected members. At the last general election held on the 13th of March 2018, the New National Party (NNP) won all fifteen (15) Seats in the House of Parliament. The National Democratic Congress (NDC) is the main opposition party. Elections are constitutionally due every five years, and as such the next election is due in 2023.

The Government of Grenada in its commitment to protecting its citizens' human rights has ratified a number of international conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The government is committed to strengthening efforts to institute legislative and institutional reforms as needed at the national level to ensure adherence to these conventions where gaps currently exist.

Grenada is also a member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) group (and shares its common currency, the Eastern Caribbean Dollar (ECD)), a member state of the regional body Caribbean Community (CARICOM); and along with much of the Caribbean region, a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

1.3 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Grenada is home to an estimated 112,000 persons (UIS, 2020; World Bank, 2019). The population density is reported to be 331 (per km²), with an average annual population growth rate of 0.5 percent. The majority of the population is of African ancestry (82.4%), followed by mixed ethnicity (13.3%) and East Indian descent (2.2%) (PAHO, 2017). Approximately 65 percent of the population live in rural areas; with the majority of the general population (95 percent) living on the main island (IFAD, 2017). The largest settlement on the sister islands is Hillsborough on Carriacou. As it relates to religions, Grenada is predominantly Roman Catholic (53 percent), with Protestants accounting for 33 percent of the population. Among Christians, a substantial number also believe to some extent in Spiritualism.

Grenada's current Human Development Index (HDI) value is 0.779, which places the country in the high human development category—positioning it at 74 out of 187 countries and territories (UNDP, 2020). The tri-island state of Grenada is therefore classified internationally as an upper middle-income country, with a GDP of \$1.211 USD Billion according to World Bank (2019) statistics (\$1.169 Billion according to UN, 2020 statistics).

In the 1970s, Grenada transitioned from being a largely agriculturally based economy (mainly dependent on the production of sugar cane, cocoa, nutmeg, and banana) towards a growing reliance on the services sector, especially tourism. In the 2000s the economy began to face difficult conditions. The impact of the 2008 financial crisis was especially severe, and growth rates plummeted, debt and fiscal imbalances rose to unsustainable levels, and labour market conditions deteriorated as the financial sector demonstrated limited capacity to support growth and job creation. Between 2000–2010 GDP growth averaged only approximately 2.2 percent.

Grenada however experienced an economic upturn during the period 2011–2018, with real GDP growth of 3.7 percent. The expansion has been mostly in activities related to construction, tourism, manufacturing, and private education sectors (NSDP, 2019). This growth along with the structural adjustment program implemented after 2013 has helped to stabilize the economy during this period. Public debt-to-GDP was reduced from 100% of GDP in 2013 to 71.8% in 2017 (Moody's Analytics, 2021). Based on the latest available figures (2017 estimates) the current Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (current US\$) is \$10,485.90; Balance of payments (current account) is estimated at \$-116 (million US\$) and the growth rate is 4.1 percent.

Grenada's population structure can generally be represented as a pyramid, as children and young people (0 to 24 years) comprise approximately 45 percent of the population. The fertility rate (live births per woman) is reported to be 2.1; with infant mortality rate (per 1 000 live births) reported as 15 per 1000 live births (based on 2019 estimates, and is slightly higher than the regional average for Latin America and the Caribbean which is 14 per 1000 live births). Life expectancy at birth in years is reported at 75.0 years for females and 70.1 for males; an average of 72 years overall. The total average life expectancy for Grenada is therefore slightly lower than the regional average for Latin America and the Caribbean which is 75 years (World Bank, 2020; UIS, 2020).

The majority of the labour force is comprised of private employees (43 percent), followed by central government employees (24 percent) and the self-employed (16 percent). The small business sector (comprising micro, small and medium enterprises) is estimated to account for 50 percent of total employment. The unemployment rate was 38 percent based on the last poverty assessment report (CDB, 2008; IFAD, 2017). Unemployment levels among the youth are particularly high, reaching 45 percent (47 percent for women and 44 percent for men). Migration rates of Grenada's labour force have traditionally been high (especially among the educated workforce). It is estimated that more than double of the current population of Grenada lives abroad (mainly in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago) (IFAD, 2017).

THE SITUATION WITH POVERTY IN GRENADA

Grenada's social profile, which is not dissimilar to that of other OECS states, is one of positive achievements in human development, particularly in health and education. It however faces significant challenges in addressing the social ills of poverty, unemployment and exclusion, especially among the most vulnerable groups (Lewis, 2010; CDB, 2008). Since the last 2007/2008 poverty assessment there has been a noted absence of current information on poverty levels in Grenada (World Bank 2020; UN 2020). Major challenges have also been reported as it relates to achieving and reporting progress on the SDG goal of 'zero hunger' by 2030.

The last poverty assessment report indicated a worsening trend as it relates to the poverty rate between the years 1998/99 (32.1 percent) and 2008 (37.7 percent). Poverty was found to be more concentrated among the very young (under 24 years old) which accounted for over 50 percent of those in poverty in 2008 (CDB, 2008) and the same was confirmed for the years 2014–2018 (NSDP, 2019). In 2008 the main material of outer walls of homes was still likely to be wood or timber among the lower quintiles (63.2 % of the poorest), and 72.3 percent of persons within the poorest household quintiles were still dependent on pit latrines. Additionally, although 90 percent of homes had access to electricity, only 48 percent within the poorest household quintile had access to potable water piped into their dwellings (CDB, 2008). Women were reported as remaining unemployed for longer periods than men, despite women's higher participation in education and training activities for more years than men, and women having more certificates than men.

The level of unemployment was noted as one of the greatest contributors to the poverty rate. In 2008 the unemployment rate was 37.7 percent (CDB, 2008). In the absence of an official poverty assessment, the unemployment rate has been reported to have decreased to an estimated 21.7 percent in 2017 given some growth in the economy since 2013 (growth of 5% between 2013–2018) and described as being on a declining trend since 2014 (NSDP, 2019). Nevertheless, the unemployment level in Grenada is said to be one of the highest in the Eastern Caribbean.

Other factors contributing to high poverty (based on the last poverty assessment) included low education levels (due to drop out at primary school level); incidences of poor health and chronic disease complications; dependence on remittances (30.7 percent of households within the lowest quintiles); teenage pregnancy; and gender inequity. Primary level education was the highest level of education attained by 65.2 % of heads of households in 2008. The challenge of high teenage pregnancy was a reported concern as an average of forty percent of females generally have their first child between 15–19 years. Diabetes and High blood pressure were also two of the most prevalent lifestyle diseases affecting persons overall (30.5 percent and 61.4 percent respectively of persons suffering chronic diseases). High unemployment, combined with low incomes, limited safety net programmes, and inadequate social and economic infrastructure in rural communities are reported as some of the main drivers which sustain the current poverty level (NSDP, 2019). A state-sponsored school

feeding programme serves a large proportion of children at the ECD, Primary, and Secondary School levels (CDB, 2008). A total of 7166 students were accessing school meals in primary schools across the tri-island state according to 2016/2017 data (Government of Grenada, 2017). This represented approximately 54 percent of the total number of children enrolled in primary schools in Grenada.

The Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) Programme is the flagship poverty reduction programme of the Government of Grenada. The overarching objective of the BNTF programme is to reduce poverty and vulnerability by enhancing access to basic social and economic infrastructures and human resource development services. The programme focuses on three sectors: Education and Human Resource Development; Basic Community Access and Drainage Improvement; and Water and Sanitation Systems Enhancement. The BNTF projects typically include: (a) development, extension and repair of water treatment plants, and public toilets/bathrooms; (b) building, renovation, refurbishment of education, special needs, school feeding and resource center facilities; (c) skills training and capacity building; (d) construction, renovation and upgrade of health facilities; (e) construction of roads, drainage, footpaths, bridges, and retaining walls; (f) residential accommodation and care for children, the aged, infirmed and homeless, victims of gender-based violence, youth at risk, and counselling and referral centers; and (g) construction, renovation or extension of day care centers. The programme is financed by the Government of Grenada and grant funding from the Caribbean Development Bank, and was in its 9th 3-year cycle in 2019 (NDSP, 2019).

Given the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global economies across the world, especially in relation to disrupting current efforts to improve circumstances for the poorest and most vulnerable, efforts to combat poverty will need to remain a key focus of government planning in Grenada over the next five years. This intention and emphasis on poverty reduction is clearly evident in the government's current *National Sustainable Development Plan 2020-2035* which highlight achieving high human and social development as one of its key goals (National Plan Secretariat, 2019).

According to one 2020 regional report on crime and safety in the Eastern Caribbean (OSAC, 2020), Grenada is generally considered to be a low threat location as it relates to crime and violence. The Homicide rate (per 100,000) is reported to be 10.8 percent; murders average 12 (per 100, 000 people); sexual assaults 284 (per 100, 000 people); robberies 39 (per 100, 000 people); shootings 17 (per 100, 000 people); residential burglaries 762 (per 100, 000 people); drug related crimes 639 (per 100, 000 people); and vehicle thefts 28 (per 100, 000 people) (OSAC, 2020).

1.4 THE EDUCATION CONTEXT

Based on a national vision of a resilient and prosperous nation and citizenry by 2035, Grenada's current national sustainable development plan (2020-2035) is currently built around achieving three broad, central national goals: 1) high human and

social development; 2) a vibrant, dynamic, competitive economy with supporting climate-and-disaster resilient infrastructure; and 3) environmental sustainability & security (NSDP, 2019). Investments in Education and training is considered to be key to successfully attaining these goals, and thus perceived to be the key to national development, and most specifically, a principal contributor to the development of human resources for personal, economic and social development.

Education in Grenada is founded on the belief that it is a basic human need and right. The goal of education is determined to be the development of the whole person leading to the production of good citizens through harnessing the physical, mental, spiritual and social power of citizens. Education policy is therefore based on the basic premise that every individual has the right to access education for lifelong learning. As such, primary and secondary education is mandatory and free in Grenada for all children ages 5-16. The Education Act (Amendment No. 26) of 2012 is the main legislative framework for the delivery of education services in Grenada. Under this Act, it was established that the total number of school days in each school year should not be less than 190 days or thirty-eight working weeks.

THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The formal education system is organized into four levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary. Public and private institutions exist at all levels, and churches still play a role in the management of schools as members of school boards. The school terms across the region generally run along the same schedule although start dates can differ by a few days. Generally Term 1 runs from early September to mid-December; Term 2 runs from early January to end of March; and Term 3 runs from mid-April to end of June with vacation breaks ranging from 2-3 weeks in terms 1 and 2, and for 8 - 9 weeks in Term 3.

PRE SCHOOL

Based on the latest available 2017/2018 reports there were one hundred and five (105) pre-school centers across the tri-island state. Of these, sixty-five (65) were Government owned whilst forty (40) were privately owned. The total enrolment for the public preschools was three thousand, six hundred and ninety-eight (3698) students; of which 49.7% were girls. The pupil-teacher ratio was 12.4:1 (EDMU, 2019). Gross enrollment was 92.2 percent for pre-primary education which covers children ages 3-4+ (NSDP, 2019). Students begin primary schooling at age 5. The Ministry of Social Development retains responsibility for day care centers which cater to children ages 0-2 years (UNESCO, 2010).

PRIMARY EDUCATION

There are 79 primary schools across the tri-island state of Grenada; fifty-six (56) of these are public schools; while twenty-three (23) are fully privately operated. Six (6)

of these primary schools are located on, and services the school district comprised of sister isles of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Total enrollment in primary education averages thirteen thousand, one hundred and ninety-five (13,195); of which 48.2 percent are girls (based on latest data available at the regional level (EDMU, 2019). Although primary schools' enrolment has been on the decline since 1995/96, there is universal access to primary education in Grenada. The decrease in the enrolment in primary schools is partly due to a deliberate policy of the Government, as it endeavors to achieve Universal Secondary Education, and reduce the number of overaged children at the primary school level. The total enrolment in 1995/96 was 22, 283 then fell to 19,134 in 2000/01 and continues to decline. 2017 reports show a gross enrollment percent of 102.2 percent for primary education. Pupil-teacher ratio was 16.4:1 (EDMU, 2019). A recently completed assessment and mapping of internet connectivity across OECS schools confirms that all government owned primary schools now have internet connectivity. The status of connectivity for private primary schools is not currently known (Marius, 2021)

SECONDARY EDUCATION

There are 24 secondary schools in across the tri – island state of Grenada (with two of these schools located in the school district which comprises the sister islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique). Only three (3) of these are fully private owned institutions; the rest are public schools. The total number of students enrolled was nine thousand three hundred and nine (9309) of which 48.7% were girls (EDMU, 2016). Secondary enrolment has been more or less constant from 2000/01. Grenada was able to finally achieve Universal Secondary Education in September of 2012. While previously students who would have failed to meet the pass mark set would have remained at the primary level, the policy of universalized access sought to allow placement for all upon attaining the age of 11. The percentage of students who gained places at the secondary level via the Common Entrance Examination increased from 50% in 2001 to 70% in 2009, and 98% in 2013, with the highest percentage of 100% in 2012. In 2012/13, 89% of the country's 12–16 year olds were enrolled in secondary schools. In these earlier years students who did not pass the Common Entrance exams were retained at the Primary school level to attempt it again (or another exam which was then known as the School Leaving Exam). If they failed to pass either exams, they usually dropped out (before or after) upon attaining the age of 16. Based on 2013 data estimates, school dropout rate was 0.09 %, and repetition rate was 4.6% (MOE, 2014). Latest enrollment figures for 2017 report gross secondary school enrollment as having since decreased to 99.3 percent, and pupil teacher ratio was last estimated at 12.4:1 (EDMU, 2019).

The strategic approach taken by government to achieve universal access at the secondary level however was not without its challenges. Research on the universalization of access to secondary education showed less than 50 percent of the students at the time were performing at required minimum competency levels in English and Math on national standardized exams, and the decision to use age as the main criterion in contrast to the traditional emphasis on student performance

scores on the grade 6 11+ examination, exacerbated existing educational risk factors. The result years in the subsequent years as the policy continued, was an increasing number of students in secondary schools whose academic skills and achievement levels were so poor that they were unable to meet basic school standards for approval to sit CSEC examinations at the fifth form level. This contributed to an increased number of students repeating classes at the secondary school level, as well as an even more serious problem with student drop outs at the Forms 3, 4 and 5 levels. Both student repetition and dropouts were found to be highest at the fourth form level (beginning of upper secondary school). Another significant change was an increased level of student misbehavior – inclusive of an increasing number of students choosing to ‘scull’ classes or deliberate non-attendance of scheduled classes by students even though they were present on the school compound. This was believed to be symptomatic of a gradual disengagement with learning. Most teachers were adamant that the increasing challenges were as a result of the way in which the policy of universalized access was implemented (Knight, 2014).

A recently completed assessment and mapping of internet connectivity across OECS schools confirms that all government owned or government assisted secondary schools now have internet connectivity. The status of connectivity for private secondary schools is not currently known (Marius, 2021).

SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTERS

There are three (3) Special Education Centers on the island, and they are all publicly owned and operated institutions. The student enrolment is one hundred and nineteen (119) students (based on latest available figures from the national education digest). The students can be classified into three (3) main areas of disabilities namely; hearing impairments, visual impairment and mentally challenged (MOE, 2019).

SKILLS TRAINING CENTER

There is one skill training center on the island – NEWLO – which is governed by a Non-Governmental Organisation, which reflected an enrollment total of two hundred and ninety-three based on the last national statistical digest (MOE, 2014). The center was founded in 1984 by leaders of the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Church Communities. Initially NEWLO catered mainly for young men and women between the ages of 17 –24 who were interested in getting a technical or vocational training. These students mainly came from vulnerable homes and families. In recent years, however, NEWLO has expanded to accept adult males and females of all ages who desire to pursue Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). There are currently 185 students enrolled in the regular programme of the center. Enrolled students include primary and secondary school dropouts, secondary school graduates, single mothers and other mature individuals.

The government of Grenada also currently utilizes the NEWLO facilities to expand opportunities for TVET training in a number of highly demanded skill areas under two programmes: The Skills for Youth Employment (SkYE) programme sponsored by the government of the UK, and the Smart Agriculture Enterprise Project (SAEP), sponsored by IFAD. There is currently a total of 205 trainees enrolled under these sponsored programmes.

Table 1.3 provides a breakdown of both the regular, and sponsored programmes currently on offer at the center, as well the current number of students enrolled under each.

Table 1.3

Programme Specializations	Certification Level	Number of Regular Students Enrolled	Number of Students Enrolled under the (SkYE) and SAEP Programmes
Computer Engineering	(CompTIA A+ and Network+)	19	19
Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration	CVQ Level 1	11	-
General Construction	CVQ Level 2	19	19
Early Childhood Development	Level 2	15	-
Cosmetology	CVQ Level 2	28	-
Electrical Installation	CVQ Level 2	10	19
Plumbing	CVQ Level 2	16	19
Food and Beverage Restaurant Service	CVQ Level 2	22	-
Garment Construction and Fashion Designing	CVQ Level 1 & 2	15	37
Food Preparation and Cookery	CVQ Level 2	16	22
Allied Health- Geriatric	CVQ Level 2	14	44
Furniture Making	CVQ Level 1 & 2	Nil	25
Subtotals		185	204
Total trainees			389

Source: Based on data collected from NEWLO's Office

TERTIARY EDUCATION

Education beyond primary or secondary levels is a luxury that few people can afford. Scholarships or a sponsoring relative abroad is often the only way to reach the college level. There are three (3) Tertiary Institutions on the island of Grenada, namely: the St. George's University (SGU), the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus, and the T.A Marryshow Community College (T.A.M.C.C). Although a summary of the total number of Grenadian students accessing tertiary education at SGU and the UWI Campus is unavailable, there were 1159 students reported as accessing CAPE/A Levels programmes at the T. A. Marryshow Community College in 2014/15 (EDMU, 2016). The Caribbean Advance Proficiency Examination was introduced in 2007 at the College, and has since replaced the traditional GCE 'A' Level Examinations.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION

The overall administration of education is very centralized in terms of personnel, resources, and decision-making, as very little authority resides at the school level. Educational services are controlled by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development. Although a large number of schools are denominational, these are nevertheless jointly managed by the Ministry of Education and the respective denominations to which the schools belong.

The Ministry of Education is headed by a Cabinet Minister. The administrative head under the Minister is the Permanent Secretary who has responsibility for managing all budgetary and accounting related to the public education sector. The education section itself is managed by the Chief Education Officer (CEO) who is assisted by a technical team of Senior Education Officers with responsibility for principal areas of planning and development, school administration and curriculum development.

One noticeable change in the traditional structure of the Ministry of Education has been the addition of the portfolios of Human Resource Development and Religious Affairs which has created additional layers to the organizational chart. A copy of the organizational chart as developed and supplied by the MOEHRD can be viewed in Annex A. The description provided above refers only to the administration section specific to the Ministry of Education. Further discussion of the structure of the Ministry is provided under Chapter 3 as it relates to actors in the policy process.

A noted challenge reported both in the filed data collected and in recent reports on education in Grenada has been the inconsistent leadership and management. A 2015 evaluation of SPEED II (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 2015), and a more recent education audit (Miller, Forde & Hordatt-Gentles, 2020) for example specifically identified this as a major obstacle which contributed to the failure to operationalize the last education sector plans, as five (5) Chief Education Officers and ten (10) Permanent Secretaries were noted to have rotated in and out of the MOE during the period 2006–2015. Leadership in the last five years has since remained more stable.

SCHOOLS AND INTERNET CONNECTIVITY ISSUES

The number of individuals in Grenada using the Internet (per 100 inhabitants) was 59.1 percent (in 2017), while the mobile broadband subscriptions (per 100 population) was 32.9 percent (UN, 2020). The quality of internet reception was generally rated by the MOE as “Average”. This has additional implications strengthening internet access and broadband capacity given the current reliance on online mechanisms for facilitating learning across the country – especially given that 65 percent of the population live in the rural parts of the country.

A recent 2021 report on schools and internet connectivity across the OECS (Marius, 2021), however, confirms that all government schools at the primary and secondary levels report having internet connectivity. Through the Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program (CARICP) Project, all schools were able to be provided with internet access via fibre-optics. All schools now have up to 1 Gbps of internet connectivity speed. This has implications for access to online resources for teachers and students; for facilitating EMIS; as well as the capacity of schools for facilitating blended instruction, or fully online instruction from or at the school plant during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is expected that the internet connectivity provided to schools would be used for both administrative and pedagogical purpose, however, the report also notes several current concerns which relate to the effective use of the internet in school. These concerns include the predominance of non-pedagogical uses of the internet (mostly for administrative purposes rather than for enhancing teaching and learning) due to lack of access extended to classrooms; challenges with uneven internet coverage across the school which limits the utility of the internet in classrooms; and a broader challenge of network congestion due to varying levels of download speed ranging from 20 Mbps up to 100 Mbps, and complaints about poor connectivity service overall. In Grenada a project which is being currently funded by the Universal Service Fund is currently being implemented to extend connectivity into classrooms. This fund is generally available for provision of telecommunications related services to unserved and underserved communities (Marius, 2021).

CHAPTER 2:

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, which is spread primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person's coughs or sneezes. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus tend to experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are at great risk to becoming seriously ill, or dying. Prevention and slowing down of the transmission have been noted by and large the most common strategy supported by research, and implemented for successfully dealing with the virus across world countries. This is achieved through the implementation of precautionary measures such as frequent sanitization of common spaces, frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based sanitizers, physical distancing when in the company of others, and the wearing of masks (WHO, 2021).

Since the declaration of COVID 19 as a global pandemic by the WHO on March 12th, 2020, there has been increased restrictions for travel implemented at borders across the region, as well as the closure and/or additional protocols implemented for the operation of schools and businesses as additional measures to curb the spread of the virus. These latter measures have especially directly affected the education sector across the OECS region. While, it is generally expected that the impact of the pandemic will have socioeconomic repercussions for families and children especially in low SES homes, the temporary closure of schools in many countries, and the increased reliance on online mechanisms to facilitate remote learning specifically, has potential negative implications for student learning, student assessment, and students', teachers, and parents' psychosocial health. As such, the impact of the pandemic on education is a key area of current concern and interest for educators, education administrators, and other education stakeholders alike. The following is an initial summary report on the situation based on available data and insight gained from Ministry of Education personnel as it relates to Grenada as of March 2021.

2.1 DISRUPTIONS TO SCHOOLING AND IMPACT ON LEARNING

The first confirmed case of COVID 19 virus was recorded in Grenada on March 23rd, 2020. By July 31st, 2020 this figure increased to 24 confirmed cases (all connected to airport arrivals (WHO, 2021; MOE, 2020). There was no community spread reported or suspected at this time. As a precautionary measure however, the decision was taken to the close all educational institutions throughout the tri-island state of Grenada, and to move to remote teaching and learning. The government's new eLearning platform

was launched in March 2020 – the MSTAR Learning Support Platform (<https://gov.gd/m-star-learning-support-platform>). Remote teaching and learning began on March 18th, 2020, and continued for the entire school term. The physical closure of schools in 2020 therefore lasted for the entire six-month period (March to September 2020). The only students who were allowed to resume physical classes during this period were the 5th Form secondary students who were completing preparations for CSEC examinations. These students were allowed to return to schools for face-to-face class sessions and to sit final regional examinations during the period June 7th to August 4th, 2020.

On September 7th, 2020, all schools were reopened for the beginning of the new school year. The St. Georges University also reopened but chose to resume classes online.

Between October 1st and November 21st, Grenada only recorded an additional 17 confirmed cases. However, between December 6th, 2020 and March 23rd, 2021, Grenada experienced a spike in new cases which took its total to 154 confirmed cases, and one death amongst reports of local spread. The spike in new cases which began in December 2020, and suspected community spread, led to the decision by authorities to delay the reopening of schools for the start of the second school to allow for an evaluation of the extent of community spread. After monitoring the situation, and efforts by health authorities to combat the confirmed clusters of confirmed cases, education officers and other ministry and wider government officials engaged in deliberations with employers, principals, teachers and other key personnel to discuss plans for the reopening of school. The new school term was previously scheduled to begin January 7th, 2021 but the decision was taken to delay the reopen of schools by two weeks, and schools allowed to reopen on January 18th, 2021.

2.2 GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PROVIDE EDUCATION DURING COVID-19 INCLUDING DISTANCE EDUCATION POSSIBILITIES

In September 2020, after being closed for five months, all schools (pre-schools, primary and secondary schools) in Grenada were scheduled to reopen in five phases in accordance with COVID-19 protocols (as set forth by Ministry of Health). Details of the reopening phases are as follows:

- Phase 1 (beginning August 24th, 2020) – Final week of preparation for the return of the academic staff, to their respective schools;
- Phase 2 (beginning August 31st, 2020) – The return of cooks and all other members of staff, and the commencement of schools' Planning Week activities);
- Phase 3 (beginning September 7th, 2020) – students' school orientation and needs assessment (staggered according to grade levels);
- Phase 4 (beginning September 14th, 2020) Grade level and form level meetings with parents (staggered according to grade levels);

- Phase 5 (beginning September 21st, 2020) – The return of students to the physical classroom for instruction, in accordance with the timetable schedule that they had been issued.

Preparations for reopening included the preparation of protocol guidelines for the various school levels, the hiring of additional cleaners and security personnel, and the procurement of additional cleaning supplies, and the conduct of inspections and school maintenance and repairs where necessary to meet protocol standards. Tips were also published for guiding parents in their preparation of children for the return to school, resources disseminated to enhance psychosocial support for teachers and students onsite, and principals ensured that information posters were strategically placed around schools where physically reopening for final year students sitting examinations were allowed.

As it relates to national standardized assessments for 2020, these were facilitated as follows: the CPEA final exam was cancelled in 2020 and a composite score derived for each student based on past work completed, as well as students' past performance on prior minimum competency tests in Grades 4 and 5. The Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) was deferred to 2021, but the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examinations were administered with deferred arrangements for student with underlying conditions, or special circumstances. The CSEC examinations were taken during the period July 13–30th, 2020.

Upon the physical reopening of schools in September 2020, teaching and learning generally took on a blended approach (a combination of both virtual and face to face sessions) each week. Schools were expected to accommodate students daily according to specific numbers when allowances for physical distancing was considered. For example, schools with larger student populations but limited space designed class schedules which allowed access to specified grade levels on specified days of the week.

On October 9th 2020, these initial guidelines were revised as Cabinet gave approval for schools to return to regular schedules/seating arrangements, but students were expected to wear protective face masks. The revision to the protocol afforded schools the opportunity to return to pre-COVID-19 seating arrangements. Schools facing unique circumstances were expected to work towards a return to normal scheduling of classes, in the shortest possible time. Private schools were also expected to adhere to these guidelines, while tertiary institutions (such as TAMCC, SGU, and UWI) made their own arrangements.

A total number of 24,035 students were reported by the MOE to have been affected by the school closures between March and September 2020 (preschools – 3130; primary schools – 10779; special needs institutions – 167; secondary schools – 8062; and tertiary institutions – 1897). Based on survey responses to an assessment of student engagement via the e-learning system, 63 percent of students across the tri-island state were unable to access their classroom instruction during the school closure period. During the closure 5079 (vulnerable/need) students benefitted from

monthly allowances for food and transportation provided to their families through the SEED programme (SEED – Support for Education, Empowerment and Development programme) via the Ministry of Social Development.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION DURING THE PHYSICAL CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS (PERIOD MARCH - SEPTEMBER 2020)

Activities which facilitated education delivery during the school closure period included the following:

- The early launch of the MSTAR online learning support platform This platform was launched on March 25th, 2020 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0449MT_2Z1A). Under the MSTAR programme:
 - 25 thousand credentials were issued for students, teachers and administrators;
 - online tutorials were recorded and distributed for the MSTAR platform;
 - Support content was created and uploaded for students preparing for the CSEC examinations;

Since the design and development of the MSTAR learning platform would have started prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it generally serves as a support mechanism for teachers and students and is currently being upgraded to allow for its expanded use as an official teaching and learning space. As such no formal evaluation of the platform has yet been conducted as the current work on improving the site is ongoing.

- A policy decision was made to equip each teacher, and secondary school students with an eLearning device which could be used to support blended teaching and learning methodology during the period of closure and after. By the end of December, a total of 9600 e-learning devices were distributed to all teachers and secondary school students in Grenada. Useful apps were added to the devices for teachers to support online teaching and learning, and E-text book content was specifically added to the e-learning devices for the secondary students. Parents were asked to pay a small annual registration fee of \$50 ECD (Eastern Caribbean Dollars) per student device. Those children who were already beneficiaries under the national text book support programme were allowed a further reduction and therefore paid \$25 ECD per student device.

The Government of Grenada has also obtained 11,000 e-learning devices in preparation for distribution to primary school students. The start of distributions for these devices is scheduled from March 24th, 2021. It is intended that government will (at a future date) work with content makers to develop e-textbook content for adding on the e-learning devices at the primary school level.

School and district level training workshop sessions were provided for students and teachers in the use of both the MSTAR learning platform, and the use of the e-learning devices. Training is still ongoing, and is being led and/or facilitated by an IT officer at each School District level. There are six school districts, and these IT officers are tasked with the responsibility for training needs; addressing IT issues which may arise in each school district. Round 1 training for teachers was completed during Term I and was centered around ICT features and functionalities, with subsequent training opportunities aimed at pedagogy and instructional design. A total of 1500 teachers were trained in Round I. It is expected that individual schools would liaise with the IT officer and plan subsequent training for groups of teachers based on the school/district needs. The training for use of the devices ranged from beginner level to advanced level according to teacher needs and student needs.

- Over 60 educational videos were created and aired on TV stations, on YouTube and major Facebook pages;
- A new App was launched and was made available at no cost to students preparing for CSEC with 20 thousand CSEC practice questions;
- Videos were recorded and aired to assist and support parents;
- The MOE partnered with Digicel and Lime and secured free data and cell phones which were provided to teachers and students who had no devices to access learning or to communicate with teachers during the lockdown;
 - The partnership with Digicel and Lime also included a zero rating of a list of learning platforms recommended for teachers and students;
- Standardized Remote Learning Guidelines were also prepared by the MOE (by grade levels) to support teachers and students with remote learning. Students with special education needs were supported either online or through hard copy learning packages sent to parents (159 of 167 students were reached).
- The MOE developed a national timetable that catered for multiple students in a home functioning context with at least one device;
- Psycho-social support to parents, teachers and students were provided through a counselling hotline. The Ministry of Education partnered with FLOW who provided hotline numbers to allow students, parents and teachers to access counselling support provided by existing/functioning school counselling officers who were placed on a shift system to provide remote support services as needed. Although the support was limited in its scope, initial perceptions were that the service benefitted families, teaching staff, and the general public.
- A local programme was developed called 'Spice Signs' to teach sign language to children with special needs and the individuals who support them. This programme is still being aired and videos can be accessed from the Government Information

Service (GIS) via: <https://www.facebook.com/page/1886973244861393/search/?q=%20soice%20signs>)

- A Spice Math programme was also launched at the same time of the MSTAR launch. This was also in an effort to provide free access for students to quality education content and activities during the school closure period.

THE DELAYED REOPENING OF SCHOOLS (JANUARY 2021)

When schools reopened in January 2021 after a delay of two weeks, it was under a mandate that 3 ft be maintained in all classrooms and learning spaces across the school. Those schools who were able to meet this requirement reopened fully. Those schools that were unable to meet the requirements have adopted a variety of approaches to ensuring access to education for students. These generally take the form of school rotation systems and a blended format which allow for groups of students by class levels or class groups to attend school face to face on specific days, and to engage in learning at home or online on other days. Aggregated data on the number of schools facilitating full face to face sessions vs partial access was unavailable at the time of data collection for this report.

EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS' SUPPORT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Some of the main external (non-governmental) education stakeholders who provided support to the national effort to ensure the continuation of education during the pandemic included the following agencies:

Support Agencies for Education Response to COVID 19	Types of Support
Caribbean Development Bank	Funding
FLOW (Caribbean former telecom Cable & Wireless Communications)	Zero-rated platforms; phones and free hotlines
Digicel	Zero Rated Platforms; Phones and Data
Rubis	Tablets/Devices
Grenada Cooperative League	Sanitation supplies/products
Grenada Red Cross	Sanitation tools
Grenada Cooperative Credit Union	Sanitation supplies/products
OECS, UNESCO, UNICEF, CARICOM:	Webinars; Strategies; Funding, Sanitation Tools
Grenadians in the diaspora	Computers for schools

2.3 AFTER COVID-19

The Ministry of Education has identified several short-term and long term goals to be pursued during and in the immediate post COVID 19 period. These are outlined below.

SHORT-TERM/IMMEDIATE PLANS

The following are immediate Post COVID 19 plans identified by the MOE;

- Ensuring that Grade 6 students who did not transition to Secondary School are supported through a special remedial programme;
- Providing additional instructional sessions for students during vacation school and evening classes via a pilot project;
- Uploading additional learning resources to the MSTAR Learning Support platform so students can access any remedial packages which they may require.
- Having already provided devices to all teachers, as well as all secondary students, the next stage will be distribution of e-learning devices to all other students across the tri-island state to continue to facilitate instruction remotely as needed;
- To continue to provide training or tutorial sessions to the capacity of teachers, students and parents to effectively manage blended learning (to be managed by district IT officers);
- Major sanitary upgrades to at least fifteen (15) schools;
- Improvement of water storage facilities in least five (5) schools;
- Major renovations/refurbishment to forty-eight (48) schools unidentified under any of the current major projects – includes general repairs, electrical and plumbing, pumping of sewer tanks, upgrading of sanitary blocks and school kitchens to meet required COVID 19 health and safety protocols.

LONG TERM PLANS

More long-term plans include the following:

- The continuation of training for teachers to facilitate and improve the utilization of technology in the classroom through a blended learning approach even when schools reopen for full face to face instruction;
- building the capacity of school leaders to better manage education response at the school level during emergency periods;
- the Implementation of a fully functional Educational Management Information System (EMIS);

LESSONS LEARNT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Three key lessons learnt during this experience with the pandemic, which can help improve education in Grenada for the future were stated as follows:

1. The need to ensure that the current Education Sector plans make provisions for distance education and blended learning approaches;
2. The need for capacity building across the education sector to ensure that teachers and students are better adapted to use of technology in the classroom; and
3. The need for families to be more involved in the education process, so that parental support at home can be strengthened; especially for instances where parents are needed to support student learning remotely.

2.4 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS

The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges as it related to equity and access to education in Grenada (as it did for most education systems in the region). The following is a summary of some of the initial issues (identified from field data collected from the Ministry of Education) and which remain a concern in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and education in Grenada.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- In addition to government's monthly allowances for food and transportation for vulnerable and needy students, there is a need for additional means of support to these and other students who may not have been previously included in these provisions. This has implications for supplementing the current Education budget as funds have been primarily used/reassigned for the COVID19 Response instead of other areas initially planned for;
- The need for remedial and supplemental instructional sessions for students who need it (especially Grade 6 students who are of age but were not promoted to secondary schools this year);
- The devices were already purchased and were being equipped/programmed appropriately for distribution to students at the primary school level (this was earmarked to begin March 24th, 2021);
- The need for continued training for teachers, students and parents (especially those at the primary level who will be receiving the new devices) in the effective use of the e-learning devices; this training would need to continue into the longterm as a support for the systematic integration of technology into education even post-COVID-19; and

- The need for continued upgrades, renovations, and maintenance for school plants across the tri-island state.
- There is also a need to build the capacity of the newly introduced MSTAR Learning Platform as well as district and school level IT capacity, to support teachers' continued use and engagement with this ICT in education.

GAPS IN INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

The following were some identified areas or gaps in research as it relates to COVID-19 and schools in Grenada.

- There is an absence of information on the current status of access for, and the experiences of children with special needs in education during the pandemic, and the governmental response does not directly address this gap, although there were acknowledgements that this was a group that would face additional difficulties engaging in remote and online instruction.
- There is a need for empirical data collection and/or further research into the circumstances of vulnerable children and families accessing and not accessing remote teaching and learning; especially after all students have been given an e-learning device to allow for access. This is essential as other issues such as internet connectivity and support in homes and communities may affect access to learning.
- There is a need for further research into the prolonged impact of the school closure period or on students' academic performance at various levels;
- Research into appropriate alternative methods for standardized testing is also important; especially for allowing for flexibility using the online platform. Discussions also still surround the usefulness of the 11 plus exam, and how to best assess taking differentiated student abilities, and capacities to accommodate effective inclusive education.
- Research into teachers' experiences with and use and best practices as it relates to online and blended teaching and learning; this can be instrumental in supporting ongoing school level efforts to strengthen and sustain the integration of technology in education even in the post pandemic period;
- Research into any potential impact of remote learning on school dropout;

CHAPTER 3:

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The goal of this chapter is to provide a summary of the main policies and programs that shape the educational system in Grenada. It will also highlight key national priorities in terms of education, briefly describe the most important education reforms and programs that are currently being implemented.

3.1 ACTORS AND POWER DISTRIBUTION

The overall management of education in Grenada is centralized with limited decision-making authority assigned to the school level. All education services at all levels are under the control of the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Religious Affairs & Information. The Education Act (No. 26) of 2012 is the main legislative framework for the delivery of education services in Grenada. Under the current Education Act, it is expected that the government would “establish a varied, adequate and comprehensive education system ... which will foster the spiritual, cultural, moral, intellectual, physical, social and economic development of the community” (pg. 12).

According to the Education Act, the broad goals of education include the following: (a) to encourage the development of basic knowledge and skills in all persons; (b) to develop a sense of self-worth in all persons through a positive educational environment; (c) to promote understanding of the importance of the family and the community; (d) to provide opportunities for everyone in Grenada to reach their maximum potential; (e) to promote understanding of and respect for the Constitution, laws and national symbols of the State; (f) to promote the principle and practice of gender equality; (g) to promote knowledge and understanding of the history, language, culture, rights and values of Grenadians; (h) to increase awareness and appreciation of the natural environment of Grenada and the need for its protection by all persons; (i) to promote a Caribbean identity by encouraging regional co-operation and integration; (j) to develop an understanding of the historical and contemporary role of labour and business in society; and (k) to prepare students for participation in Grenadian life and in global society, having regard to the changing nature of that society.

Several key individuals and organizations play a key role in the development and implementation of education policies and programs in Grenada. These individuals and organizations are specified and their roles briefly described below.

THE ROLE OF THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

The current Minister for Education is the Hon. Emmalin Pierre. As the appointed Minister for Education, Human Resource Development, Religious Affairs & Information, she has responsibility for the general oversight of the education system across the tri-island state of Grenada.

As specified in the Education Act 2002 (Amendment 2012) the responsibilities of the Minister for Education includes the following: (a) to make provision for the professional training of teachers for the entire system of education, and to specify standards for the recruitment of teachers, their training, professional development and conditions of service; (b) to prescribe the grades or classes of teachers; (c) to provide for special programmes to be offered in public and assisted private schools; (d) to prescribe by regulations the forms and notices required for the administration of the Education Act; (e) to constitute committees or other bodies in addition to the councils established under the Education Act, to provide advice from time to time on educational and related matters; (f) to recommend lists of textbooks for public and assisted private educational institutions so as to ensure conformity with national standards of education (with some limited exceptions for religious schools); (g) to determine the level and nature of assistance to assisted private schools and to regulate such assistance; (h) to establish or disestablish public educational institutions and to inaugurate classes or discontinue classes in those institutions when necessary; (i) to prescribe curricula for educational institutions; and (j) to address other educational important matters which may arise from time to time.

THE CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

The current Chief Education Officer (Acting) in Grenada is Mrs. Angela Finlay. The Chief Education Officer (CEO) is responsible for the day-to-day administration of education, and is subject to the directions of the Minister of Education. The Chief education officer is supported by a team of senior education officers with responsibility for key areas such as testing and measurement, curriculum development, and schools' administration, and students support services. There are currently four Deputy Chief Education Officers who provide direct support to the Chief Education Officer:

- Deputy Chief Education Officer, Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- Deputy Chief Education, Schools Administration & Management (SAMU)
- Deputy Chief Education Officer, Educational Testing & Measurement
- Deputy Chief Education Officer, Curriculum Development

Each senior education officer provides support for the management of subsequent officers under their division. District education officers have direct responsibility for providing support to schools for the management of education concerns under their jurisdiction.

As supported in the Education Act 2002 (Amendment 2012) The specific responsibilities of the Chief Education Officer include the following: (a) to ensure that all educational institutions are administered in a proper and efficient manner; (b) develop and direct the training of all professional education personnel; (c) initiate, organise and conduct courses of induction and training for untrained teachers; (d) initiate, subject to the provisions of this Act, curriculum innovation and reform and the establishment of appropriate procedures for evaluating the instructional programme at all educational institutions; (e) ensure that public educational institutions are provided with the necessary tools, equipment and supplies; (f) ensure the observance of the provisions of this Act and the regulations pertaining to the conduct of educational institutions; (g) advise the Minister as required on matters affecting education in Grenada.

This report notes that although the Education Act makes allowance for a permanent Education Advisory Committee to advise on the making of education regulations, advising on the training of teachers, listing of textbooks, curricula, and other matters which may arise at the request of the Minister, this body is not currently in place or utilized. The Education Act specifically advises that although not bound by the decisions made therein, it was expected that the Minister for Education would consult with and be guided by an Advisory Council comprised of a representative from the T. A. Marryshow Community College; a representative of the UWI School of Continuing studies; two representatives of the Grenada Union of Teachers; a representative of the Conference of Churches; five representatives of the Grenada Chamber of Commerce; a representative of the Council on Early Childhood Education; a representative of the National Parent Teacher Association (if any); a representative of the National Student Council (if any); a representative on the Council for Special Education; the Permanent Secretary or a senior technical officer in the Ministry of Environment; a representative of the Grenada Association of Professional Social Workers; and the Chief Technical Officer of the National Training Agency. Rather, the common practice is for the Minister for Education to appoint a special committee from time to time, or as considered necessary, to advise on specific matters which may arise in education. Interviews with ministry personnel support that current practice is that these committees are usually comprised of key ministry personnel, but utilize consultation groups comprised of education stakeholders across the country for input into plans or programmes.

DIVISIONS WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

There are number of units and departments which are located within the Ministry: the Administrative Unit (inclusive of the Administration, Accounting and Finance, the Registry and the Drug Control Secretariat departments); the Curriculum Development Unit; the Materials Production Unit; the Information Technology Unit; the Personnel Unit; the Planning and Development Unit (inclusive of both the Planning and Statistical departments), the Project Management Unit; the Public Relations Unit; the Registry; the Testing and Examinations Unit; the Scholarship Desk; and the Student Support Unit (please see the annex for further insight into the organizational structure of the Ministry).

A Research Officer was recently employed at the Ministry of Education to build a research agenda for the Ministry of education. This position falls under the Ministry of Planning and Statistical development which generally has responsibility for the annual collection of school level education data, submissions to the OECS education statistical digest, as well as the preparation of the education statistical digest at the national level.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MOEHRD

The administrative head of the MOEHRD is the Permanent Secretary. The Administrative division has responsibility for all financial management (related to budgeting and accounting) and for personnel administration. The following key personnel also report directly to the permanent secretary: the senior administrative officer for personnel, the senior administrative officer for administration, the director of libraries, the principal of TAMCC, the public relations officer, the financial analyst, and the project management officer.

School Management Boards are generally in place and provide some limited assistance to principals in the overall management of schools; the identification of special education projects at the school level; identifying sources of funding and technical assistance for various educational programmes and projects; shortlisting of candidates teaching; advising on general school organization, reform and development, and providing support for the establishment and maintenance, rebuilding, and extension of the school. They are generally not involved in the pedagogical aspect of the school operations.

The Principal, supported by senior staff or heads of departments, is the main administrator at the school level, with responsibility for the implementation of the Ministry's policies and programmes.

Student Councils are generally in place across many secondary schools, and are intended to provide opportunities for students in the administrative process in schools as they are allowed to gain some experience in promoting and maintaining the discipline, objectives and standards of the school. The scope of actual involvement of student councils in this regard are however generally weak or non-existent. One subregional report (UNICEF, 2009) which looked at the actual participation practices of student councils in twenty (20) secondary schools across four countries of the Eastern Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada and St. Lucia) for example found although many schools had student councils appointed, these councils struggled to thrive, and were most often perceived by students as a waste of their time in terms of involvement. Fifteen out of the 16 secondary schools in Grenada had student councils.

Other ministries such as the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Youth Development, Sports and Culture, and the Ministry of Finance, also provide some support for children. The Ministry of Social Development especially provides support for the day care services which cater to children ages 0-2 years of age. The Ministry

of Youth Development, Sports and Culture collaborates with the Ministry of Education on programmes affecting children and youth. The Ministry of Finance generally collaborates with the Ministry of Education in the annual determinations of budget allocations for education activities.

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

In addition to some of the education partners who sit on specific boards and committees, other local, regional and international agencies and non-governmental organizations also play a key role in supporting education reform efforts in Grenada through a consultative approach when invited.

Local interviews revealed the following organizations to be some of the most frequent partners in this regard: the OECS Education Development Management Unit (EDMU), CARICOM Secretariat, the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), the University of the West Indies, the St. Georges University, Grenada Schools Incorporated (GSI), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Development Fund (EDF), OPEC Fund for International Development/Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OFID/OPEC).

These education development partners specifically assist in the following ways: the development of educational supportive programmes; the provision of educational funding; the development and administration of standardized examinations; the development of education sector strategies; education training support; support for the development of drafts policies; and the review of documents through consultations.

Civil society groups and societal movements such as interest groups, parent associations and community groups, may also be invited to provide input in the development of some education policies as deemed relevant.

It was highlighted from field data collected from the ministry level that support from education partners and donor agencies is a significant source of funding for the implementation of education programmes in Grenada.

3.2. EDUCATION POLICIES/PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIES

THE CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT FOR EDUCATION IN GRENADA

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development will provide equitable access to quality and relevant education to all citizens of Grenada regardless of sex, race, colour, creed, ability or socioeconomic status.

THE CURRENT STATED VISION FOR EDUCATION IN GRENADA

A well-managed educational system that promotes the principles of morality, equity, relevancy, accountability and lifelong learning opportunities that will produce an educated and skilled citizenry capable of making a meaningful contribution to society.

As such, Education in Grenada is recognized as being an important instrument for reducing poverty, contributing to individual wellbeing, and developing communities. Grenada is also committed to several regional and international conventions and agreements which shape its education policy reform, programs and priorities. These specifically include the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child; the United Nations' Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action; the CARICOM Human Resource Development Strategy 2030; and the OECS Education Sector Strategy 2012-2021 (recently extended to 2026) which will continue to guide public policy in education at least over the next five years.

THE BROAD EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Broader education policy frameworks such as the CARICOM Human Resource Development Strategy 2030; the OECS Education Sector Strategy 2012-2021, and the National Sustainable Development Plan 2020-2035 all generally inform education planning, and programme development across the OECS member states; the most clearly observable policy framework evident being the OECS Education Sector Strategy 2012-2021.

While the CARICOM framework is not clearly articulated within the existing but most recent but dated education sector plans (specifically the SPEED 2006-2015 and the Ministry of Education Corporate Plan 2015-2017), there is some alignment between the CARICOM framework and the National Sustainable Development Plan 2020-2035 (NSDP), as well as with the MOE Corporate Plan 2015-2017.

THE CARICOM POLICY FRAMEWORK AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY CONTEXT

The general philosophy of achieving the Ideal Caribbean Person (CARICOM 1998) is clearly highlighted in the last comprehensive education sector plan as a key part of the policy framework for education. This philosophy was reiterated in previous education sector plan - SPEED 2006-2015 as well as the CARICOM policy frameworks for action on education.

Additionally, both the previous and most recent CARICOM framework for action - the Caribbean Community Strategic Plan (2015-2019), and the CARICOM HRD 2030 strategy however, also provide some guidance for the current regional and national context. Both documents highlight regional human resource development as a key focus for education investments, and view education and human resource development as being vital for social and economic prosperity, regional integration,

building resilience and sustainable development. The current CARICOM 2030 Strategy for example is intended to i) establish new priority areas for the Region's HRD; ii) facilitate regional convergence of HRD policies and initiatives by Member States for effective transformational change and actions; and iii) address the measures in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with particular reference to SDG 4 which targets inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (as well as SDG 8 - which addresses education and training of youth and adults leading to sustainable employability and employment (CARICOM, 2017).

The four Strategic Priorities which give direction to the CARICOM 2030 Strategy - namely, Access, Equity, Quality and Relevance - have been specifically targeted to address the significant inefficiencies and wastage in education and training systems throughout the region. Specifically, schools and learning communities have been identified as one of the key pillars in the process of attaining the targeted outcomes. Focus areas for emphasis under the CARICOM 2030 HRD Strategy include: Universal Access and participation in Schools; Multiple Curricula Pathways; Student Support Services; Equitable Access Policies; Managed Gender Disparities; Special Needs Education; ICT in Education; Learning for Migrant children; Displaced & Refugee Children; and other areas which are clearly reflected in the other subregional policy frameworks, as well as national policy frameworks.

The CARICOM 2030 (CARICOM, 2017) also acknowledges the following policy frameworks as having informed its development: the Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015-19; the Regional Framework for Action for Children (2002-15); the Caribbean Joint Statement on Gender Equality and the Post 2015 and SIDS Agenda (2013); and the Regional TVET Strategy for Workforce Development and Economic Competitiveness (2013).

While the connections and application between the current CARICOM policy framework (CARICOM, 2017) and the national policy frameworks be described as tenuous at best of times, there is some loose alignment between some of the programmes highlighted for action in the CARICOM framework, and some areas identified for action in the MOE Corporate Plan 2015-2017. These include an emphasis on ICT in Education programmes for increasing global competitiveness; and improving access to quality education through an emphasis on student support programmes for vulnerable or at risk children.

The CARICOM 2030 framework report also noted that the sub-region has embraced the philosophy of education for sustainable development, SDG 4 which emphasis inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all and SDG 8, which focuses on youth and adult training for employability to support economic prosperity, as key pillars of Member States' development programmes.

THE NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2020-2035)

As referred to earlier, the NSDP (National Plan Secretariat, 2019) is currently one of the key policy documents guiding national reforms across all sectors in Grenada. As it relates to education, the NSDP (2020) makes reference to three (3) broad national goals which have implications for immediate and future reforms, programmes and projects in the education sector. These goals are:

1. Goal #1: Improved human and social development; with a focus on improved population health; more educated, productive, highly skilled, trained and conscious citizens; and a more resilient, inclusive, gender-sensitive and peaceful society.
2. Goal #2: A more vibrant, dynamic, competitive economy with supporting climate and disaster resilient infrastructure; with a focus on broadbased, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and transformation; a competitive business environment; and modern climate and disaster resilient infrastructure.
3. Goal #3: Increased Environmental Sustainability and Security; with a focus on climate change resilience and hazard risk reduction; and energy security and efficiency.

This policy document represents the national sustainable development plan geared at building a competent, agile, productive, and empowered workforce with the relevant knowledge, skills, and capacities required to do the work that will achieve the Grenadian Vision 2035, and is in essence a dynamic human resource development strategy that have at its core, education, training, skills enhancement, capacity building, and professional development.

There is an obvious greater alignment between the current CARICOM HRD 2030 strategy and the NSDP in the general focus on Education as a human resource development strategy which is evident in both documents; as well as the focus of both on areas of common emphasis such as: gender equality in education; and on digitization and ICT development as key on the pathway to development among other areas.

THE OECS EDUCATION SECTOR STRATEGY (OESS) 2012-2026

The regional policy framework which has the greatest influence on education planning, programmes and practices at the national level however is the OESS. As a Member State of the OECS, Education planning for the education sector in Grenada is guided by the regional OECS Education Sector Strategy (OESS) 2012-21 (recently revised to 2026). Over the last nine (9) years, the OESS has provided a common education framework for facilitating collaboration for the development of education across the OECS subregion. It is anticipated that over time all national education strategies and plans will be aligned to the regional strategy to allow for greater convergence in implementation of a common education strategy across the OECS region. The seven agreed areas of priority under the OESS are outlined in the table below.

Table 3.1: Strategic Imperatives and Supporting Outcomes (adapted from the OECS Secretariat, 2012)

	Strategic Imperative	Outcomes
#1	Improve the quality and accountability of Leadership and Management	<p>Qualified leaders in place across the education system supported by Boards (where applicable) and governing bodies.</p> <p>Education leaders and managers have access to continuing professional development.</p> <p>Revised legislation, knowledge management and accountability frameworks that devolve decision-making to schools.</p>
#2	Improve Teacher's Professional Development	<p>Improved teacher quality.</p> <p>Pre-service training and professional development programmes in place for all prospective and in-service teachers' and teacher trainers' respectively, relevant to each stage of their career.</p> <p>Regular and systematic teacher appraisal operates in conjunction with established teacher professional standards.</p> <p>Reduced numbers of out-of-field teachers in schools.</p>
#3	Improve the quality of Teaching and Learning	<p>Learners engaged with all learning and their expectations met.</p> <p>Achievement levels significantly improved, all learners acquire required levels of literacy, numeracy and technological skills, and are equipped to use relevant competencies at school, at college, at home and for future work.</p>

#4	<p>Improve Curriculum and strategies for Assessment</p>	<p>Flexible, learner-centred curricula with assessment at each stage which includes a wide range of learning outcomes targeting academic, technical and personal development skills;</p> <p>A relevant and comprehensive education and skills strategy operates nationally and across the OECS region with resulting curricula that are learner-centred and competency-based to meet the needs of all learners.</p> <p>All performance measures for learner outcomes indicate improvement year-on-year at each stage and match comparable international benchmarks.</p> <p>All learners can demonstrate core knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies needed to be successful 21st century Caribbean citizens, and can confidently contribute and progress at school, college, in their communities and at work.</p>
#5	<p>Increase access to quality Early Childhood Development Services</p>	<p>National operational plans developed and implemented to pre-primary education for all learners aged three to five.</p> <p>Formal Early Childhood Development Services meet required minimum standards.</p> <p>A sustainable funding strategy for ECD, supported by both public and private sectors investment in place and operational.</p> <p>Functioning inter-sector, parent and community collaborative mechanisms in place in all Member States made up of a variety of stakeholders.</p>
#6	<p>Provide opportunities for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for all learners</p>	<p>Primary school curricula, teaching and learning incorporate exploratory learning experiences that develop basic technical competencies and an appreciation for the world of work.</p> <p>Competency based curricula linked to CVQ framework established across secondary and tertiary education and in all other educational settings in work and in community.</p> <p>A Qualification Framework established that enables learners to move seamlessly between academic and vocational qualifications in formal and informal educational settings.</p>

#7	Increase access to and relevance of Tertiary and Continuing Education	<p>Sustainable funding mechanisms for tertiary and continuing education to meet the economic, social and labour market needs of the OECS and learners can access affordable tertiary education.</p> <p>A legal and institutional framework that improve the status, sustainability and outcomes of tertiary and continuing education institutions across the OECS.</p> <p>Accredited tertiary and continuing education institutions in and outside the OECS produce high quality relevant programmes and research results fostering creativity and innovations.</p>
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The OECS Education Development Management Unit (EDMU) has been a key agency in facilitating the coordination of education planning among the OECS member states as it relates to implementing the common agenda of the OESS policy. The Chief Education Officer and education planner for each OECS member state is part of a subregional working group which meets annually to report on national progress towards the achievement of education outcomes related to each of these above seven strategic imperatives and their outcomes with funding support from regional and international education development partners. This coordination and collaboration have been critical to achieving a common agenda among most member states on key strategic imperatives.

An overview of the annual reports on regional progress on the various strategic imperatives show a predominant emphasis on the implementation of programmes and activities related to improving leadership and management; improving teacher’s professional development; improving the quality of teaching and learning; increasing access to quality Early Childhood Development Services; and providing increased opportunities for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for all learners. The weakest area of progress has been on strategic imperative 7 - increasing access to tertiary education (Knight, 2018).

In the sixth year of implementation a mid-term review report on the implementation progress on the OESS (OECS, 2019) revealed the following as inhibiting factors affecting national and regional progress on implementing the seven imperatives: budgetary constraints which have not always been able to meet the needs of existing education sector plans and by extension funding for addressing the priorities identified in the OESS; understaffed ministries of education; natural disasters which are often detrimental to the infrastructure as well as the social and economic context of affected countries; and frequent changes in education leadership and management at the ministry level, among other challenges. The report recommended an extension of the current implementation timeline (from 2012–2021 to 2012–2026), and a five-pronged phased approach to continued implementation efforts at the national level. The five-pronged approach included 1) prioritization and determination of relevant strategies

and activities to be undertaken; 2) costing of inputs for all planned activities to assist with the budgeting process for OESS initiatives; 3) budget inclusion of these planned activities; 4) consideration of innovative approaches to achieving targets (such as working with other member states and maximizing the use of existing structures and systems); and 5) replication of best practices in other countries.

The findings from the report noted that generally national education sector plans were found to be aligned with the OESS, but funding was often either unavailable or unallocated for OESS priorities during the annual budgeting process. Although countries like Dominica and St. Lucia were highlighted as showing specific line items in their annual budgets reflective of OESS priorities, Grenada was not one of these countries that reflected this practice. Most of the funding for OESS priorities came from donor agencies which engaged directly with countries, and at other times with the OECS sub-region as a whole through the EDMU office. In recent years these agencies have included CDB, UNICEF, OAS, and Global Partnership for Education.

The mid-term review report on the OESS noted has estimated that achieving the remaining agreed education reforms across Member States will cost approximately US\$44.5 million. Development finance and expertise from key development partners and donor agencies will therefore be critical in supporting the reform efforts earmarked for countries such as Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

A further additional inhibiting factor for progress on implementation of the OESS has also been incomplete reporting by countries on the OESS performance indicators, and generally a weak monitoring and evaluation framework and mechanism for the OESS. Of important note also is that at least 30 percent of the gap in reporting was from the school level.

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION POLICY PLANS

A 2019 educational audit of the Ministry of Education in Grenada (Miller, Forde & Hordatt-Gentles, 2020) provides some general insight into recent policy planning and development efforts in Grenada. The following can be noted.

A Strategic Plan for Educational Enhancement and Development (SPEED): 2002–2010, was developed for Grenada following a previous 2000 audit, and was guided by the OECS long-term strategic plan – Pillars for Partnership, 2000–2010, the World Declaration of Education for All in 2000; this education sector plan was revised after the passing of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, and was known as the Strategic Plan for Educational Enhancement and Development (SPEED 2): 2006 to 2015. Evaluations of the previous SPEED (completed as part of the development of SPEED II) had revealed that the original plan was described as sound and well-conceived, but overly ambitious and too complicated in some regards. Key limitations of the previous education sector plan (SPEED 2002–2010) noted by the consultant conducting the 2019 education audit included the lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation implementation over the entire duration of SPEED II; the lack of ownership by the Ministry of Education where

practices are more consultative than participatory; and limited availability of required data.

Finally, the report noted that the Ministry of Education had developed a short-term plan – the MOE Corporate Plan: 2016 to 2017 – which succeeded SPEED II. This Corporate Plan was developed through a consultative process which began in 2014.

THE MOE CORPORATE PLAN 2015-2017

When SPEED 2006–2015 expired, a Corporate Plan 2015–2017 was developed to guide education administration during the interim which plans were put in place to begin the review and development of the new Education sector plan. The Corporate plan focused on six (6) priority areas: 1) The Integration of ICT in service delivery; 2) Increased focus on educational opportunities; 3) Equitable access to quality education; 4) Strengthening the literacy and numeracy capability of teachers and students; 5) Enhancing professionalism and quality in the education sector and 6) Rehabilitation and maintenance of educational institutions. With the exception of the last one, all of these areas can be related to one more areas of emphasis under the OESS, as well as the NSDP.

3.3 EDUCATION REFORMS AND INNOVATION EFFORTS

Based on details from both the last education reform effort (SPEED II 2006–2015) and the MOE Corporate Plan 2015–2017, several education initiatives were highlighted as reforms or innovations which were either introduced or already existing initiatives strengthened. Some of these identified programmes include the following outlined below.

THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) PROGRAMME

Technological progress is perceived as being a considerable driving force behind economic growth, citizen engagement and job creation, and as such. Developments in this area has been ongoing across all of the education sector plans observed. The current programme includes: a paperless initiative to encourage greater use of technology in the transmission of documents; the piloting of an Educational Management and Information Systems (EMIS); a “One Laptop/tablet Per Child” initiative, that is inclusive of the introduction of ICT as a Teaching and Learning Tool; An ICT Centre for teaching Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM); Teacher Preparation in Classroom – Management of Tablets; Development and or purchasing of suitable content; Consultation with stakeholders, in particular parents; Improvement in connectivity and enhancement of computer labs in schools; Development of storage facilities and power operating systems; and Development of a central library facility with the incorporation of ICT.

Since the onset of the COVID 19 Pandemic the Ministry would have rolled out its MSTAR Learning Platform. Efforts have since been targeted towards the enhancement of this platform to facilitate and strengthen opportunities for remote learning between teachers and students, and among students.

NATIONAL TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING (TVET) PROGRAMME

TVET is currently part of a broader strategic vision in areas related to employment driven training and is being emphasized in an effort to narrow the skills gaps to promote a seamless educational infrastructure which better prepares students for the workplace. The Grenada National Training Agency (NTA) is a certifying body, while the competency training is done by a group of private providers.

Training for TVET are introduced as early as primary school grades 5 and 6 as optional subjects (the courses consist of classes in Clothing and Textiles, Woodwork, and Food and Nutrition), and are included in the general education curriculum, and continues as technical skills component embedded in core general education programmes in lower secondary (in areas such as Woodwork, Home Management, Electronics and Electrical Technology, Clothing and Textiles, Food and Nutrition) and upper secondary education levels (in areas such as Building and Furniture Technology; Mechanical Engineering; Electronic and Electrical Technology; Technical Drawing; Food & Nutrition; Clothing & Textiles; Home Management; Auto Mechanic and Air Conditioning & Refrigeration; Visual Arts; Commercial Food Preparation; General Construction; and Furniture Making), and can be further pursued at the post-secondary level, and at varied skills training options in skills training institutions such as the T. A. Marryshow Community College and NEWLO.

Reports from the National Training Agency (NTA) indicates a current trend which sees an increasing number of females subscribing to these programmes to the extent that female participation in these TVET programmes are often three times as high as that of male participation. CVQs introduced in secondary schools create the opportunity for students to have the option of graduating with an additional certification. Students who fail to access upper secondary education (Grade 10 and 11) to sit the CVQ exams, can obtain a School Leaving Certificate (SLC). This provides them with the opportunity to pursue further TVET programmes at TVET training centres or gain a certification for a profession (UNESCO, 2020).

The government has been focused on expanding access to the TVET programmes in an effort to increase the provision of specialized training for in school & out-of school youths, as well as employed and unemployed persons desiring specialized training for entrepreneurial or employment purposes. This programme incorporates the delivery of equipment to schools, adjustments to physical facilities to accommodate equipment purposes and other areas of reform. It is intended to engage as training providers, primary and secondary schools, post-secondary and technical colleges

and training institutions; as well as firms and other institutions providing or seeking to provide technical and vocational education and training.

As such, key initiatives in this programme included: 1) Increasing the number of technical programmes offered for all schools; 2) Expansion of the Certification Capacity for TVET training areas; 3) Occupational Standards Development; 4) Implementation of the Enterprise-Based Training Programme; 5) Increases in TVET opportunities; 6) Commencement of CVQs at secondary schools; and 7) Raising finances to administer the Curriculum Vocational Qualification (CVQ) & the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ).

Two specific sponsored programmes were identified as part of the government's efforts to increase TVET opportunities for training: the Skills for Youth Employment (SKYE) and the Smart Agriculture Enterprise Programme (SAEP).

The SKYE programme which started in Grenada in 2019, is a four year programme funded by aid from the UK under that government's programme of assistance to promote economic growth and sustainable development in the Eastern Caribbean. It targets young people between ages 15–30, and is also run in Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SKYE, 2019).

The Smart Agriculture Enterprise Programme (SAEP), also known as the Climate Smart Agriculture and Rural Enterprise Programme, is managed by the Ministry of Finance in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and contains multiple elements which extend beyond education, but is inclusive of TVET and Entrepreneurial training for vulnerable youth (IFAD, 2019). The service providers for these programmes include NEWLO, the T. A. Marryshow Community College and the Grenada National Training Agency. Information on the number of trainees under these programmes at NEWLO was provided earlier (in Chapter One).

Despite progress made in increasing the TVET programme opportunities, issues which remain include the following:

1. Lack of a specific written policy documents for guiding the TVET programme;
2. The need for increased emphasis on building competency in existing programmes (a weakness that was reported as being influenced by the current CXC curriculum which encourages teacher-controlled teaching and learning strategies, while limiting opportunities for students to build competencies). As such timetabling in schools only allow limited time for skills practice;
3. A related problem of student assessment being mostly paper based rather than competency based;
4. Only lower-level skills training is offered in schools and by existing providers;
5. There is no specific school/center/institution with optimum facilities/laboratories dedicated to TVET teaching and learning for specific skills in demand industries, such as construction, hospitality, and related industries;

6. Demand for specific skills training currently exceeds supply;
7. A limited number of certificated workers;
8. Gender-sensitive career education and guidance are limited, and
9. The need for additional funding for TVET programmes

In relation specifically to the last concern regarding funding, currently, the majority of TVET programmes are solely financed through government and project funding. The GNTA would have noted in its strategic development plan 2014–2016 the establishment of a contributory national Enterprise Training Fund. A feasibility study for this proposal has already been completed, and the subsequent development plan 2018–2020 hopes to implementing this fund (UNESCO, 2020).

STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

The Ministry along with Government saw it imperative to focus on a students' support programme to significantly reduce and ultimately eliminate achievement gaps especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This programme is built on the philosophy that no child should be excluded from access to a free education simply because he/she is naturally disadvantaged.

This programme seeks to provide for children mainly in the following ways: school feeding assistance, special needs accommodation, free school books, and guidance and counseling services. The school feeding aspect has been in operation in Grenada since the year 1950 and continues to grow yearly. It provides hot meals for students at the pre-primary, primary and secondary schools so that no student should be in school hungry or malnourished. The ministry continues to build on this programme. The Government of Grenada, in 2008, enunciated a policy of free text books for all students. This programme has continued however current review has been focused on increasing the efficiency in delivery of the text. E books are currently being explored as a possible option to replace the physical hard copy texts. Additionally, there is the National School Uniform Assistance Programme, and assistance for special needs students as needed. Access to guidance and counselling sessions are also available through each school for vulnerable students.

The Student Support Services program generally seeks to:

- Provide daily meals to students at all primary, selected preschools and secondary schools;
- Provide support for student with special needs;
- allow equal access to the required textbooks for children at all schools;
- free up more disposable income of parents so that they may be better able to provide equally important things such as balanced nutritional needs and health care for their children;

- assist in alleviating the financial challenges of unemployed/low-income families through the provision of basic school accessories to deserving students; and
- deliver a comprehensive guidance and counselling program at the school level that addresses academic, career, social and personal development for all students.

Key Initiatives under this programme have included: Early vision screening; assessments of students with, or suspected of having special needs; distribution of textbooks to schools; extensions of the School Feeding initiatives to more pre-primary and secondary schools; collaborative work with Ministry of Social Development to increase the number of students with needs who are benefitting from these programmes; and extension of the Guidance and Counselling initiative to more at-risk students in across schools. This support is provided at the school level through a network of guidance counsellors managed under the student support services programme.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROGRAMME

This programme seeks therefore to address weaknesses in both Mathematics and English. Once students can be functionally literate and numerate, this will boost business performance across Grenada's economy. The programme will therefore, maximize the use of data on students' performance to cater for deficits identified. Teachers will be trained to efficiently differentiate instruction that will ensure that every child can learn. A checklist will be used for every child from the early childhood stage to monitor achievement of the necessary standards that emphasizes problem solvers, effective communicators, competent and confident individuals and critical thinkers. The programme will cater for an improvement in overall performance of our students at all levels. Its objectives, strategies and activities have been carefully crafted and calculated to correct the crisis of the current condition.

This program seeks to:

- Improve the implementation and delivery of the Curriculum in every school Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development;
- Strengthen the training, monitoring and supervision of teachers in every school
- Maximize the use of assessment data in schools
- Improve and strengthen practices for supporting mental wellness of all students particularly those who struggle with learning
- Strengthen the involvement of parents and the wider community in the education of the nation's children.

Key initiatives for focus under this programme include the following: sensitizing the entire nation on the new thrust literacy thrust; developing and launching a Research and Development unit at the Ministry of Education; strengthening the semi specialization in schools, central library development; utilization of existing tools for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum; training in the screening and diagnosis

of disabilities and in the teaching of reading at the primary level; on-going monthly training, use of existing TAMCC arrangement In-service training to be provided by local experts (teachers); on reviewing assessment data by teachers and Head of Departments; and Neurodevelopmental or neuropsychological testing of students.

SCHOOL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

This programme is centered around preventative and ongoing maintenance of schools across the island. It includes an annual assessment of all schools (especially those utilized as hurricane shelters), to provide for the rebuilding and rehabilitation of schools deemed as being in “critical need”. The Ministry continues to engage donors for funding in this area. Over the years many school repair needs had gone unaddressed and constituted urgent areas for renovation. Several school repairs and rebuilding efforts have already been completed, but many other schools are either ongoing or awaiting repairs.

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION SERVICE PROGRAMME

This program is focused on improving the professional service delivery among all teachers, and has been ongoing across the last three national education sector plans. The current emphasis is on implementation of pre-service and in-service training initiatives. Professional development sessions will continue to be organized for all levels in relevant areas of need and levels of the education system. educational organizational structure in areas of relevant need or interest. Standardized monitoring instruments will be developed and or revised to assess and evaluate the implementation of the curriculum at all levels. The goal is to prepare all teachers for greater competence in their delivery of the curricula, in an effort to hold teachers accountable for the performance of students placed in their care.

Key initiatives emphasized under this programme includes: improvements in the teacher education programme; introduction of pre-service training and other in-service training programmes; certified staff development programmes for all educators; development of national professional associations; and the Roving Caregiver’s Programme to provide for early stimulation for children and education support for parents.

Progress is still ongoing for most of these initiatives which were highlighted in the MOE Corporate Plan (2015–17). A significant challenge has been the monitoring and evaluation of these programmes and activities related to them.

CURRENT EDUCATION PRIORITY AREAS

The following were directly specified by education ministry officers as immediate areas of education for priority action:

- Enhancing literacy development across schools and classrooms to improve student performance in these areas;
- Strengthening support for Special Education Needs education in the education system;
- Improving school maintenance by completing needed renovations, and facilitating more consistent maintenance of school plants moving forward;
- Completing needed curriculum reviews;
- Strengthening Values Based Education in schools;
- Improving and institutionalizing school safety as a practice in schools;
- Strengthening the integration of ICT in schools in schools for instructional purposes as well as school management purposes;
- Reexamining the placement of Grade six (6) students upon completion of primary education; and
- Special emphasis on strengthening Early Childhood Development (ECD) as the foundational level in the education sector.

These priority areas were confirmed from data collected through interviews and open-ended surveys administered among several key education administrators and key stakeholders, as still being the current focus for the next 2-3 years.

3.4 POLICY CYCLE AND PROCESSES

Policy Development is facilitated and developed centrally. These activities are generally supervised and managed by MOE Planning Unit in collaboration with the Cabinet Office. Policy drafts are developed by internal officers along with other external subject matter/technical experts. Once completed, all education policy documents must be approved by the Cabinet before implementation. As such, decisions related to the development process for policies are generally spearheaded by the Minister of Education, the Permanent Secretary for Education, and the Cabinet Office.

Policy development usually arises from the need to have systems in place for any given area as a result of inefficiencies or implementation gaps which may have been identified. Some policies are also developed following directives from Cabinet Office. Other policies may arise from suggested areas for development by the technocrats who need governance systems in place for implementing changes in education. All decisions to proceed with the formulation of relevant policies however must first have the approval of the Minister.

The process of policy development is subsequently managed by the Planning Officer and Policy Development Officer from the Cabinet Office, and any other technical/subject experts. The process would normally engage an initial level of consultation

with any relevant stakeholders. A working group will then be commissioned by the Planning Officer for the development of each section of the policy. Once a first draft is prepared, the Policy Development Officer (Cabinet Office) then reviews and provides feedback. Thereafter, stakeholders review the official draft, feedback is recorded and incorporated, and the draft edited. Additional consultation may proceed as needed. Once the document is completed, it is submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Once the relevant policy is approved by Cabinet, it becomes the responsibility for implementation is assigned to the education unit or internal/ external stakeholders with direct responsibility or connection to the policy. For example, for Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy, the responsibility for implementation is assigned to the Officers in the Special Education Needs (SEN) Unit, Teachers, the Planning Unit; and any other relevant party identified to hold direct responsibility. The relevant unit is expected to lead the implementation of the policy according to the steps outlined in the document, and the Planning Unit is expected to monitor implementation based on established tools/templates or frameworks.

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN PERIODIC EDUCATION REVIEWS TO INFORM RELEVANT EDUCATION POLICY PLANNING

Although the Education Act makes reference to the need for periodic education reviews every five (5) years, this remains a current area of weakness in terms of actual implementation. Observations of the current dated education sector plans are supportive of overdue education sector reviews and planning. Specifically, the Education Act (Section 178) specifically states that every five years or as soon as practicable, the Cabinet, on the recommendation of the Minister must appoint an Education Review Committee of eight members to review and report on the education system of Grenada. The Ministry has strong links with statutory bodies and private organizations that govern or manage education related institutions or agencies, and representatives of these agencies are included in the required list of stakeholders to be consulted in the development of national education policies and programs.

The last review was noted to have been in preparation of the last comprehensive education sector plan – SPEED II 2006–2015.

Gaps in Education and Research

1. Weak monitoring and evaluation of policies; within the education sector, there is little monitoring to ensure adherence to strategic plans and policy statements;
2. Limited competence with respect to strategic planning for policy implementation; for almost six years or more the MOE was without a senior education planner (an education planner has since been employed);
3. Limited collection of education data and use of education data in education planning, and monitoring of implemented programme and projects; This creates

difficulty for assessing and or reporting progress on due to limited baseline data, indicators and targets;

4. Lack of ownership by senior education officers for initiatives and policies where these are externally funded and or implemented; and
5. Weak meaningful integration of existing education plans into day-to-day work across the education sector; Miller, Forde and Hordatt-Gentles (2020) for example noted that while the ministry has had strategic plans, corporate plans, and medium-term action plans, and is required to submit quarterly reports on progress on key indicators in these plans, these documents were not meaningfully integrated into the work of the units of the ministry. Much of the work of the ministry is predominantly completed following traditional patterns and procedures, as well as by responding to crises; and meeting the requirements of current projects and consultancies. Decision-making that was based on evidence and data was often very limited.
6. Inadequate funding; the 2019 audit report (Millet, Forde & Hordatt-Gentles, 2020) for example revealed that the proportion of the national budget allocated to education and the proportion of national expenditure on education has been in decline over the last ten years (2008/09 to 2017/18). Of comparable note is the period 2008–2018. While Grenada spent 18.62% of the national budget on education in 2009, this fell to 11.92% in 2018. Recurrent expenditure on education also fell from 19.52% of total national expenditure to 12.98% in 2018, and capital expenditure on education fell from 15.52% of national expenditure in 2009 to 4.46% in 2018.

ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR EDUCATION IN GRENADA

Education as a percentage of GDP is reported to be 3.2 % for Grenada, and one of the lowest in the region when compared to its OECS member states and the overall Latin America and Caribbean average of 4.5 percent (World Bank, 2020). The percentage of total government expenditure on education has been averaged at 14 percent which although relatively higher than other North American, European or OECD averages, falls below the Latin American and Caribbean average of 17 percent (World Bank, 2020). The Exchange rate (per US\$) is \$2.70.

Table 1: A Comparison of the Caribbean Governments' Investment in Education as a Percentage of GDP based on World Bank Statistics Updated Between 2017–2020

Caribbean Countries	Education as a Percentage of GDP (%)	Education as a Percentage of Total Government Expenditure
Grenada (most recent updated year 2017)	3.2	14
Dominica (most recent updated year 2019)	5.6	9.4
St. Lucia (most recent updated year 2018)	3.3	14.4
St. Vincent and the Grenadines (most recent updated year 2018)	5.7	18.8
Barbados (most recent updated year 2017)	4.4	12.9
Haiti (most recent updated year 2018)	2.8	14.4
Jamaica (most recent updated year 2019)	5.2	17.3
Turks and Caicos Islands (most recent updated year 2018)	2.9	12.1
Latin America and the Caribbean Average (most recent updated year 2017)	4.5	17

3.5 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS

While the connections and application between the current CARICOM policy framework (CARICOM, 2017) and the national policy frameworks be described as tenuous at best of times, there is some loose alignment between some of the programmes highlighted for action in the CARICOM framework, and some areas identified for action in the MOE Corporate Plan 2015–2017. These include an emphasis on ICT in Education programmes for increasing global competitiveness; and improving access to quality education through an emphasis on student support programmes for vulnerable or at risk children.

There is greater alignment between the CARICOM framework and the NSDP in its general focus on Education as a human resource development strategy, as well as the focus of both on areas of common emphasis such as: gender equality in education; and on digitization and ICT development as key on the pathway to development among other areas.

The CARICOM 2030 framework report also noted that the sub-region has embraced the philosophy of education for sustainable development, SDG 4 which emphasis inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all and SDG 8, which focuses on youth and adult training for employability to support economic prosperity, as key pillars of Member States' development programmes.

A summary of the challenges which remain priority areas of focus for the government of Grenada as it relates to policies and programs in education are provided below.

- Progress on the implementation of the OESS strategic imperatives have been constrained by budgetary limitations. Funding was often unavailable or unallocated by OESS and other education plans and programmes which may have been highlighted for action in a given year. As such donor funding and partnerships with education development agencies and organizations have been critical to enabling the progress on many of the OESS strategic outcomes, as well as national education programmes;
- Incomplete reporting by countries on the OESS performance indicators at the national level which limited the implementation of regional objectives;
- understaffed ministries and frequent changes in education leadership at the ministry of education have also presented significant challenges to implementation of education goals and objectives outlined in education plans at both the regional and national levels;
- Weak monitoring and evaluation of policies; within the education sector, there is little monitoring to ensure adherence to strategic plans and policy statements;
- Limited competence with respect to strategic planning for policy implementation; for almost six years or more the MOE was without a senior education planner (an education planner has since been employed);
- Limited collection of education data and use of education data in education planning, and monitoring of implemented programme and projects; This creates difficulty for assessing and or reporting progress on due to limited baseline data, indicators and targets;
- Lack of ownership by senior education officers for initiatives and policies where these are externally funded and or implemented; and
- Weak meaningful integration of existing education plans into day-to-day work across the education sector.

CHAPTER 4:

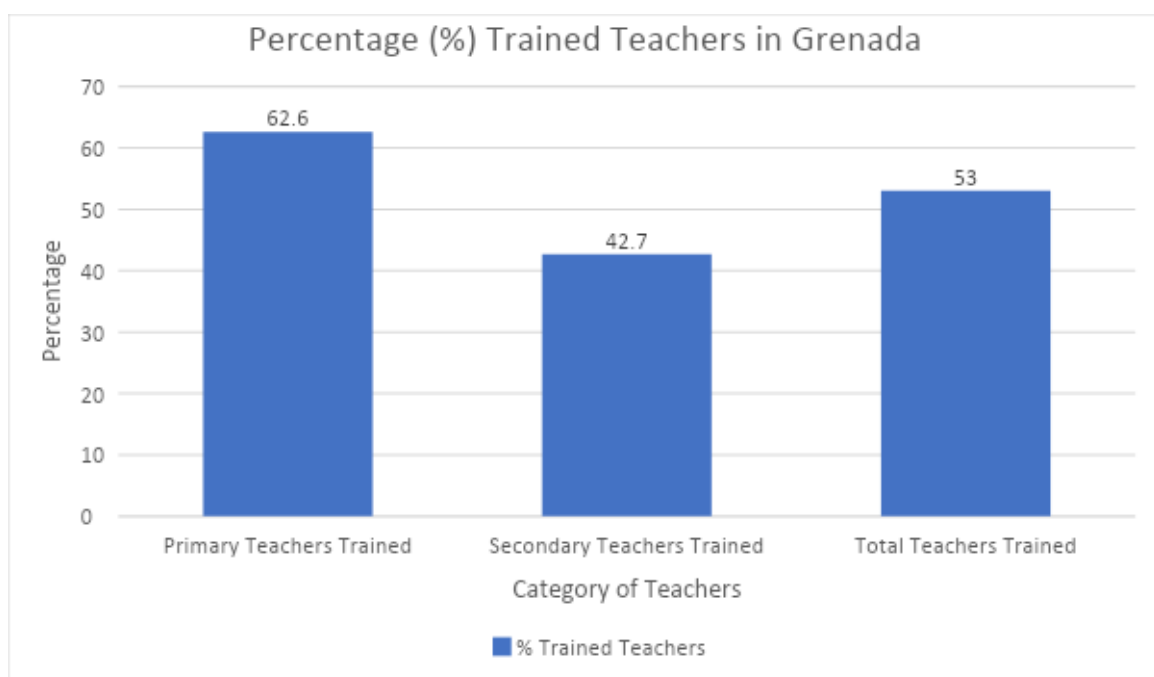
TEACHERS & EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

This chapter provides a summary on teachers and education leaders in Grenada. This included both a description of the teaching profession in the country, and its main challenges. It concludes with a discussion of current knowledge gaps which exist and priority areas for reforms.

4.1 TEACHER POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

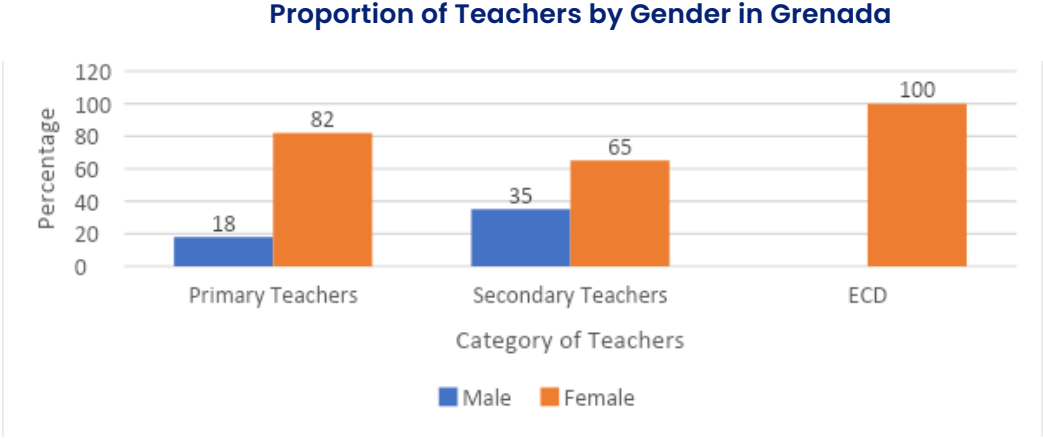
According to the latest available data (OECS Statistical Digest, 2017/18) there are a total of 1436 teachers employed in public schools across the tri-island state of Grenada. At the Pre-primary school level there are 299 teachers employed across all schools and centers. At the primary school level there are 807 teachers employed and at the secondary school level 713 teachers employed across all schools. Almost half of the teachers in schools across Grenada have not yet completed teacher certificate, as only 53 per of the teachers in Grenada have completed teaching certification. Specifically, at the primary school level the percentage of trained teacher is 62.6 percent; while it is 42.7 percent at the secondary school level (EDMU, 2019).

Percentage (%) Trained Teachers in Grenada



Source: OECS Education Statistical Digest (EDMU, 2019)

The teaching force is predominantly female. At the pre-school level all of the teachers are females (100%). At the primary school level approximately 82 percent of the teachers are females and 18 percent are males; while at the secondary school level it was 65 percent female teachers and 35 percent male teachers (EDMU, 2017).



Source: OECS Education Statistical Digest (EDMU, 2019)

4.2 PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION

Based on field data obtained for this report, the following were determined in relation to preservice education provisions in Grenada. There is no formal pre-service education training programme provided in Grenada. Teacher training is only available for in-service teachers. However, in 2019 the government reintroduced the option of a two-week induction training programme for prospective teachers after years of this programme being dormant. Prospective teachers apply for the induction programme; the ministry shortlists them based on qualifications; and the potential teachers are engaged in sessions on teaching methodology, assessment, lesson planning, guidance and counselling, technology integration into teaching, classroom management, and other related education topics.

4.3 IN-SERVICE EDUCATION AND CAREER PATH

The minimum entry requirements for teaching in Grenada differs according to school level. For employment as a teacher at the pre-primary, or primary school level, a candidate must have (a) attained the age of eighteen years; (b) obtained passes in at least four GCE or CXC 'O' Level subjects including English language, a science subject, a social science subject and mathematics, or any other subjects accepted by the Education Advisory Council. For employment in teaching at the secondary level, candidates must have (a) attained the age of eighteen years; (b) obtained passes in at least five GCE or CXC 'O' level subjects, including English language, and two 'A' level subjects or their equivalent.

Teachers are categorized based on their highest qualifications attained. For example, teachers who only meet the requirements for five GCE/CXC subject passes are employed under the category of 'Certificated II teacher'. Teachers who meet the requirement for a minimum of five GCE/CXC subjects and also possess at least two A' level subjects or its equivalent are categorized as 'Certificated I teacher'. A 'Qualified teacher' is a teacher who has obtained the certificate of trained teacher or an Associate degree in Education from a recognized college or university. A 'Graduate teacher' is a teacher who has obtained a degree from a recognized college or university. A 'Principal II' is categorized as being a teacher who has served for less than five years as a teacher, has obtained a certificate of trained teacher or a degree from a recognized college or university, and is appointed as the principal of a public education institution. A 'Principal I' needs to have at least five years of experience as a principal, a degree from a recognized university or college, plus one additional year of professional training or a second degree. A 'Vice-Principal' is a teacher who was served for more than three years as a teacher and has obtained a certificate of trained teacher from a recognized college or university, and is appointed as the vice-principal of a public institution. This qualifications framework for teachers is however noted by ministry officials as being currently under review (see below).

Teaching Staff Categorizations	Descriptions
Certificated II Teacher	Teachers who possess only the basic requirements of five GCE/CXC subject passes
Certificated I Teacher	Teachers who meet the requirement for a minimum of five GCE/CXC subjects and also possess at least two A' level subjects or its equivalent;
Qualified Teacher	Is a teacher who has obtained the certificate of trained teacher or an Associate degree in Education from a recognized college or university;
Graduate Teacher	a teacher who has obtained a degree from a recognized college or university;
Vice- Principal	a teacher who was served for more than three years as a teacher and has obtained a certificate of trained teacher from a recognized college or university, and is appointed as the vice-principal of a public institution
Principal II	a teacher who has served for less than five years as a teacher, has obtained a certificate of trained teacher or a degree from a recognized college or university, and is appointed as the principal of a public education institution;
Principal I	A teacher who has at least five years of experience as a principal, a degree from a recognized university or college, plus one additional year of professional training or a second degree

Teacher training certification is considered a valuable asset but is not a requirement for entry into teaching. As such it can be categorized as in-service training in Grenada. Training is generally provided through a two-year programme of study at the Teacher Education Department at the T. A. Marrayshow Community College, in Grenada. The programme is certified by the Eastern Caribbean Joint Board of Teacher Education (ECJBTE), whose Secretariat is located at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus in Barbados. The ECJBTE currently offers an Associate Degree in Education (ADE). There is an Associate Degree in Primary Education and an Associate Degree in Secondary Education currently being offered at the College. As noted previously the only certification training available is for in service teachers. As such, government covers the full cost of training for teachers accepted into the programme. Teachers continue to be paid a salary, and temporary teachers are recruited to replace them for the duration of their absence from classroom teaching during their study. Teachers who have been teaching for a minimum of two years, and possess the required five (5) GCE/CXC subjects, are eligible to apply for acceptance into the programme.

The Department of Teacher Education, at TAMCC, Grenada, works closely with the ECJBTE in ensuring that the standard of training provided to teachers is of the highest quality. The department offers training in Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education. The duration of each programme is two (2) years and requires students to successfully complete sixty-six (66) credits. In terms of content, emphasis is placed on core courses in child development, educational psychology, the social and cultural foundations of education, curriculum, and assessment. All trainees also take mandatory seminars in Technology in Education (although no credit is assigned for this aspect). Courses in special needs education/inclusive practices are available but optional for trainees. Each programme culminates with a Practicum where teachers are placed at a school(s) and observed for a period of 10 weeks. The first three (3) weeks (weeks 1-3) of the Practicum are used to provide developmental guidance; no grades are assigned. During weeks 4-8, the students are observed by college staff and grades are assigned for five (5) lessons. In the final weeks, weeks 9-10, the students are observed by External Examiners and are graded on three (3) lessons. Students must successfully complete the Practicum component to be awarded the Degree.

Other means of in-service training usually take the form of professional development workshops and seminars organized by the Ministry of Education (and occasionally at the sub-regional level) for varying categories of teachers. These often span one day to a week in duration (although a few may span several weeks). Occasionally teachers may also attend regional training sessions of the same duration. Over the last decade most of these training activities have been centered around improving teachers' skills for more inclusive educational practices, teaching for the holistic development of students, early childhood care and education, and ICT training. Training for principals, education officers, and other ministry of education staff have also been similarly structured and provided for through periodic workshops and seminars at the local and sub-regional level. Over the last decade these have included training in school leadership and management. Longer training opportunities (extending from 2 to 3

years) are often pursued through external universities such as the University of the West Indies.

Promotion opportunities are generally limited for teachers. It is believed that this is due to both a fairly low attrition level and the promotion of senior staff to leadership positions when these become available. Latest available data on the percentage of teacher leavers between 1998/99 and 2012/13 (due to resignations, terminations, retirement and other reasons) ranged from 1.6 percent to 8.5 percent. There is therefore a fairly low teacher attrition level in Grenada (Ministry of Education, 2014). Most senior staff tend to remain in the system and are promoted to serve in senior administrative roles such as heads of department or as principals or vice principals when these vacancies arise. The average principal or vice principal also generally serves until retirement age.

4.4 TEACHER SALARY AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Teachers in Grenada are paid based on their professional scale or category which is generally determined by their highest qualifications obtained (for example whether the teacher is Certificated II, Certificated I, Qualified, Graduate etc.). As such it is difficult to specify an average salary by school level. However, if one considers the total expenditure on teacher salaries by level in relation to the total number of teachers employed at that level, an estimate can be provided. According to the last 2020 estimates of expenditure on various categories of teachers in Grenada, average annual salary paid to teachers at the Preprimary level amounted to an average of \$46,106.94; for teachers at the primary level the average spent on salaries per teacher was \$44,381.91; and the average at the secondary level was \$55, 513.92 for that year. Civil service jobs such as teaching (at the primary or secondary levels) are generally perceived as mid-level professions across the Caribbean (Barrow & Reddock, 2001). Data is insufficient to make relative comparisons of teacher salaries across OECS member states as salary scales and conditions and categorization of teachers differ.

There are no special incentives, or programmes which target the recruitment of teachers. The Ministry of Education usually recruits teachers through advertisements of vacancies. Once shortlisted these individuals are interviewed by the school and recommendations made for their appointment to the Ministry of Education and or the relevant school management board (for government assisted schools). Short induction training courses for prospective teachers are provided annually, and can span almost two weeks in duration.

The Education Act provides for teacher benefits such as annual vacation leave (minimum of 10 weeks per year spread across three semester breaks); maternity leave; study leave with up to six (6) months' pay; sabbatical leave; and pre-retirement leave. Retirement age for teachers is 60 years, however a teacher in a permanent position can also elect to retire after serving twenty-seven and two thirds years of service.

Teacher appraisals are required annually for all teachers but are often not regularly administered. Additionally when they are done it is often for reporting purposes rather

than as a developmental tool for strengthening teaching and learning. These are often administered by the principal or a senior teacher.

4.5 TEACHER UNIONS

There is only one trade union representing teachers in Grenada – the Grenada Union of Teachers (GUT). The GUT, like the other national teachers' unions across the Caribbean are all part of the Caribbean Union of Teachers (CUT), which is a federation of teaching trade unions in the Caribbean.

The GUT was established on the 20th of June 1913, and provides advice and support for the professional development of teachers. It is also the main agency representing the interests and concerns of teachers in consultations, meetings and negotiations with the Ministry of Education and other related agencies on any education reforms which may have to occur. Generally, in Grenada teachers frequently look to the GUT for guidance any recommended changes in the education sector before buying into the new ideas.

Over the last few years, the union has been in negotiations with the government over increased benefits for teachers. In late 2018, there were protest actions regarding the reinstatement of pensions for teachers. As a result of those protest actions government docked salaries of teachers who were engaged in protest, which led to further protests from the Union. The Union initiated a 'Work to the Rule' strategy in reply, and teachers abstained from all extra-curricular school activities. These actions impacted students' participation in national sporting competitions during 2019 and 2020.

The Government and the Union finally negotiated and agreed to a collective bargaining agreement on salaries at the end of 2019. This agreement provided for a 4 percent salary increase. At the end of 2020, however the government unilaterally stated that they are unable to pay the 2021 percent increase. As a result, the teachers' union is currently engaged in conflict with government over this issue. Negotiations continue in the hope that government will agree to honor its commitment to the 4% salary increase previously promised.

Two other challenges identified by the union as persistent challenges which continue to face teachers in Grenada are uncertainty surrounding job tenure, and the prohibitive cost associated with tertiary education. Many teachers in Grenada are very concerned about not being appointed to a permanent position on their jobs. This not only affects their ability to be sure that teaching is a career, not just a job, but it also creates uncertainty due to persistent fears of future job loss and the potential inability to meet financial obligations.

The following are areas identified by the union for further research according the Union includes the following:

- The need for comparative research on salary scales of teachers across the OECS and wider Caribbean; and the subsequent construction a salary scale in Grenada

that is comparable with teachers in other Caribbean islands. This can increase motivation and support for higher professional service delivery in education at the national level.

- The need for further research and training for teachers aimed at strengthening teachers' ability to analyze student assessment data (especially using computer applications and models) as it relates to performance trends and issues at various level of the system (in classes, schools, districts, and at the national level) for informing improvements in teaching and learning.

4.6 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Key challenges as it relates to teachers in Grenada include:

- The need for continuous provision of relevant Professional Development training programmes for teachers and principals; a need for establishing low-cost, consistent, but highly effective ways to support school-based teacher professional development to enhance teacher capacity schools and across the education system.
- The need to establish a pre-service education programme to allow for the training of prospective teachers prior to entering the class room;
- The need for strengthening systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching practices in classrooms – to identify good teaching practice that can be shared; to identify and provide relevant training and support for teachers who need it; and to assess and support the use of various technologies and other learning resources in schools;
- The need for comparative research on teacher salaries and benefits across the Caribbean region so as to ensure equitable provisions across the region.

CHAPTER 5:

VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the main educational gaps in terms of access, attainment, completion and achievement. Furthermore, special attention should be given to diversity and intercultural education both in practice and in the curriculum. Besides, this chapter should illustrate any potential gender inequality as well as any other phenomenon contributing to threaten identities or reproduce unfair situations for any group.

As it relates to vulnerable and disadvantaged children in Grenada, five main categories emerge:

1. Children living in poverty or in homes where they may not have access to quality early childhood care and education. These children are most at risk to physical and emotional neglect, abuse and malnutrition which can later manifest into harmful behavioral patterns, slow cognitive development and poor socialization processes.
2. Children who may have been removed from their biological homes because of the need for protection and care;
3. Children who may be in conflict with the law;
4. Children with special education needs (this will be discussed in more detail under inclusive education concerns).

These children often face further risk to sexual violence and abuse; dropping out of school without attaining any CXC certificates; and engaging in harmful and risky behaviors; These vulnerabilities can manifest later into teenage pregnancy, unemployment, marginalization, non-participation in education, substance abuse, crime, and a number of other problems.

5.1: GENDER GAPS: TRENDS AND POLICIES

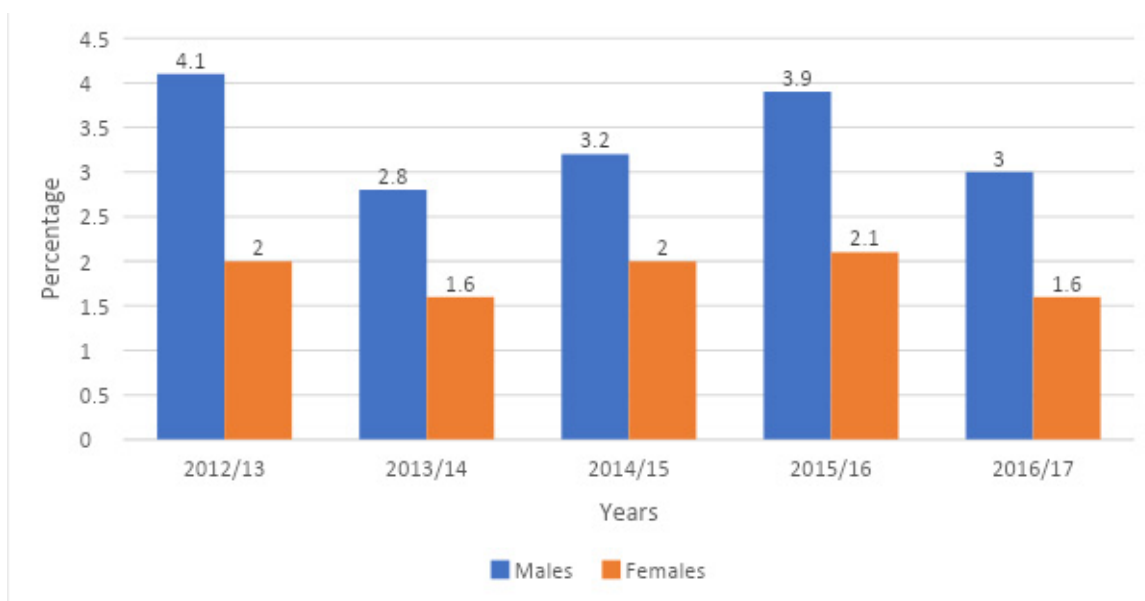
Although there is generally gender equality evident across the education system in Grenada, student performance data shows that females do exhibit a slightly higher level of engagement and success in school relative to male students.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SCHOOL REPETITION RATES

National data on repeaters at the Primary school level for the years 2012–13 to 2016–17 revealed a higher percentage of male students repeating than female students

(ranging from 1 to 2 percent higher). See Figure 5.1 for the data on repetition rates at the Primary school level for the years 2012/13–2016/17.

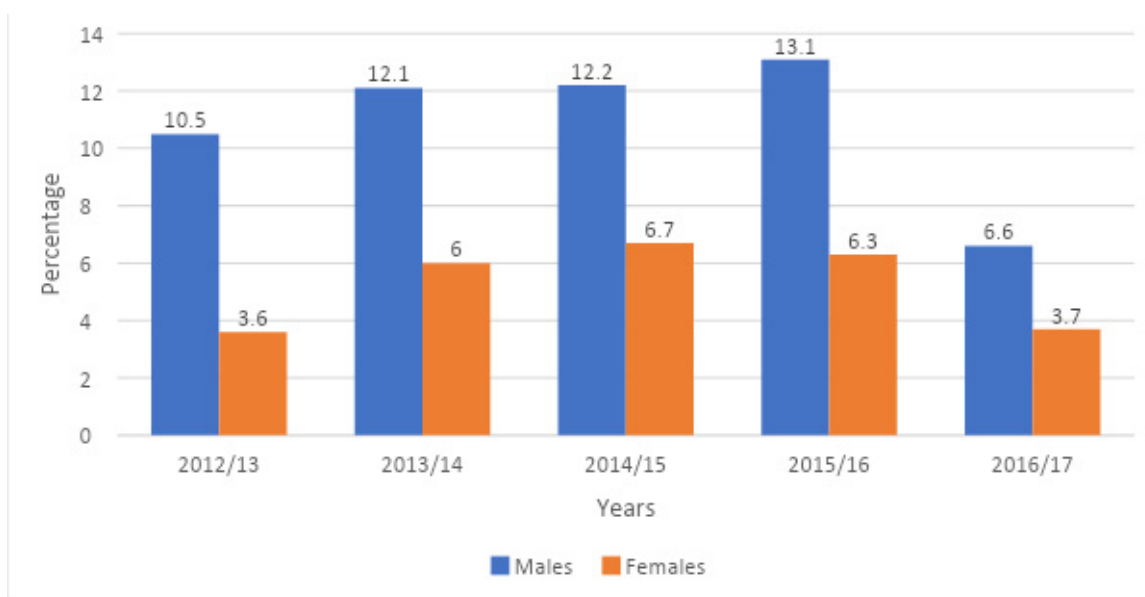
Figure 5.1: Repetition Trends in Primary Schools by Gender 2012/13 – 2016/17



Source: OECS Education Statistical Digest (EDMU, 2019)

At the secondary school level, the males also reported higher repetition rates, almost twice as high as the female repetition rate in most instances. See Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2: Repetition Trends in Secondary Schools by Gender 2012/13 – 2016/17



SCHOOL DROP OUT RATES

School dropout rates also show some gender differences. School dropout rates for primary school students between 2012/13 and 2016/17 ranged from 2 to 1 percent for males only – as no drop outs were recorded for female students. At the secondary school level the dropout rate for male students was also slightly higher than that for female students; it ranged from 0.9 to 1.9 percent for male students, and 0.7 to 1.2 percent for female students.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Students' achievement scores also generally show a trend of male underperformance relative to female students. At the secondary level more females than males tend to pass at least 5 CSEC subjects or more (Ministry of Education, 2014; EDMU, 2019). Table 5.1 provides a brief reflection on CSEC passes five or more subjects between 2014–2018. With the exception of the year 2018, female students outperformed male students in each instance.

Table 5.1: Total Number of Students Passing at least 5 CSEC Subjects by Gender

Years	Male	Female	Total
2018	469	300	769
2017	292	436	728
2016	328	482	810
2015	324	470	794
2014	312	538	850

Data for 2018 however reflects an improvement in male performance. Specific performance by subjects in the same year also reflected a more equitable picture in terms of the percentage of students by gender passing various CSEC subjects (EDMU, 2019). See Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Percentage of Students passing Various CSEC Subjects by Gender (2017/2018)

Subjects Passed	Male Passes (Grades I–III) %	Female Passes (Grades I–III) %	Total Percentage Passes (Grades I–III) %
English A	73.2	64	67.3
English B	80	83.1	82.6
Mathematics	34.8	41.1	38.4

Agriculture Science	75	85.5	79.4
Integrated Science	30.9	42	36.9
Human and Social Biology	67.9	67.6	67.7
Biology	86.2	84.8	85.3
Chemistry	74.2	66.5	68.5
Physics	72.4	81.6	77

Students' Completion of Schooling

COMPLETION AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL:

Examinations of the students' performance in the Caribbean Primary Exit Examination 2019 show a satisfactory student performance, as the national mean score was 71.68 (which was a reported increase of 2.87 comparable to a mean student performance score of 68.81 in 2017). It was further reported that 92.4 percent of the students scored 50 percent and higher. The number of male students scoring less than 50 percent, were twice as high as the number of female students (Government Information Service, 2019).

COMPLETION AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL:

It is important to note that one of the issues in measuring student progress across the region based on CXC examination passes upon completion of secondary education is the fact that students' self – select the subjects they will seat, and standardized mandatory examination sitting is not practiced. As such the reports of student passes are among those who have selected to (and in many instances been pre-approved by their teachers for sitting these examinations), and does not reflect or capture data on those students who did not sit these examinations. As such, data on student passes is not comprehensive as it does not reflect those who did not sit the exam due to being unprepared for taking the examinations at the end of secondary schooling.

5.2 DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING ADHERENCE TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out the rights that must be realized for children to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and

abuse. The development of policies to strengthen the delivery of inclusive education in Grenada has been significantly supported by financing from development partners such as UNICEF (Eastern Caribbean Office). UNICEF's focus has predominantly been centered around child protection and care system reforms, violence against children, and supporting the continuity and recovery of education systems during national disasters and emergencies. Child Protection is generally used to refer to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children.

Grenada has been recognized as one of the most progressive OECS member state as it relates to the establishment of relevant legislative frameworks for protecting the rights of children, as there has been significant gains made in ensuring that national laws, policies and practices afford children protection from all forms of abuse. Grenada signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the 19th of April 1990, and it was ratified on 9th October 1990. The Optional Protocols on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (CRC-OP-AC) and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (CRC-OP-SC) were also acceded to on the 6th of February 2012. The government of Grenada was also among the pioneers in the OECS region to embark upon a Family and Child Protection Reform agenda further to the completion of the OECS Model Bills in 2007. The success of its concerted strategy towards the strengthening of child protection legislative framework is reflected in the list of Amendments and Acts introduced during the period 2010–2013. These include the following:

- Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 84, (No. 19 of 2010)
- Child (Protection and Adoption) Act, Chapter 44A, (No. 20 of 2010)
- Age of Civil Legal Responsibility Act, Chapter 4A, (No. 14 of 2011)
- Criminal Code, Chapter 72A (Amendment) (No.29 of 2012) Sections 19–31
- Juvenile Justice Act, (No. 24 of 2012) (not enforced)
- Education (Amendment) Act (2012)
- Civil (Birth) Registration Bill (2013)
- Electronic Crimes Act (2013)

(Sources: UNICEF 2015; UNICEF 2017)

STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: SPECIAL NEEDS AND GENDER EQUITY REFORM EFFORTS

According to a recent assessment report (UNESCO, 2020) on inclusive education in Grenada, there is no official definition of inclusive education in Grenada, but rather inclusive education generally perceived as 'integration'; which refers to the placement

of special needs students into the mainstream school with little or no provision of support services which is required for the child to succeed.

One of the main goals in the NSDP (2020) speaks to inclusion – Outcome #3 – the need to build a resilient, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and peaceful society. Key to achieving this goal at the national level are three agreed actions:

1. Addressing gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training;
2. Reviewing the curricula and the culture in schools and other educational institutions to align them with the goal to promote the principle and practice of gender equality; and
3. Building, upgrading, and maintaining education facilities that are child-friendly as well as fully accessible for all.

Reflections shared by one senior education officer summarized the following as key factors contributing to exclusion for children with disabilities in the school system and in society. These included:

1. Attitudinal Barriers – such as cultural norms, and negative teacher and parent attitudes;
2. Socio-economic Barriers – such as poverty;
3. Organizational Barriers – for example school curricula, systems;
4. Limited skilled human resources –they are only a few qualified special needs personnel working in and with schools. This contributes to limited support services;
5. Financial Barriers – lack of funds to implement inclusion related projects;
6. Physical/Infrastructure School Barriers – to accommodate full access for students with special needs across the school plant (this places a limit on the extent to which special needs students can be mainstreamed into schools);

PROGRESS WITH IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GRENADA

Although the previous education sector plan (SPEED 2006–2015) sought to enhance support systems for children with SEN by 2010 – specifically: to “ensure that there is adequate provision for all children with special needs education in mainstream day-care centres, nurseries, primary schools and secondary schools as well as specialized centres for severe learning difficulties (deafness and visual impairment)”, progress has been slow in this regard. A discussion of some limited progress made within the last five three years are however outlined below.

A special Inclusive Education Policy has been drafted and is presently at the stage of submission to Cabinet. Currently, children with special needs continue to have access to some form of education through three (3) special schools, two (2) resource centers

and some mainstream schools. All students who are deaf and blind are currently being educated within the mainstream setting. There are about 75 students who currently receive such support. These students have assistive devices such as hearing aids, FM systems, Braille Kindles and E-learning books all provided through the Ministry of Education and cooperate partners (such as Sandals Hotel, the Church of Latter-Day Saints, and the Starkey Hearing Foundation).

Grenada has adopted more of a social model to inclusion, and as such the focus is on society and changing the social systems through advocacy/awareness and appropriate policies. The general perception from education officials and stakeholders interviewed is that education for special needs students can still be described as a 'pull out' programme. The special needs students are usually sent to special resource room which is attached to the mainstream school, and tutored by Special Education Needs Teachers (SENT), who usually collaborate with the school community to provide for the needs of these students. This structure is supportive more of integration of special needs students into mainstream schools for the main purpose of socialization in an effort to break down social barriers more so than depicting true inclusion.

The Government continues to invest in providing in-service training opportunities in special needs education for teachers. As such there is a current cohort of seventeen (17) teachers who are pursuing studies in special education so that they can work within the mainstream schools to provide additional support for students with special needs. Professional Development sessions are also frequently conducted with schools wherever they are children who are deaf and blind.

Additional measures which reflect some progress towards instituting inclusive practices include the following. Sign language is taught on Grenada's Government Information Station (GIS) daily since the onset of COVID 19, in an effort to allow students and the general public access to training to enable them to be better communicate with children who are deaf in the mainstream schools, as well as in communities. The Child Friendly Schools' initiative (also known as the Effective Schools initiative) sponsored by UNICEF is also one that has impacted many schools. Teacher Education training at the TAMCC now has a compulsory course in Special/Inclusive education, and there was also recently completed Inclusive Education training for trainers programme which targeted twenty (20) educators. There has also been a focus on the provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training for girls and boys with special needs. There has also been a Counselor appointment solely for special needs students. The special needs emphasis is generally managed through a Special Education Unit/department – which is staffed by special education officers and speech therapists.

It is the Ministry of Education's drive to develop inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices within all schools, and to continue to work on eliminating all current barriers to inclusive education, and success for every child.

CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

Child protection issues are one of the most dominant issues affecting vulnerable and at-risk students in Grenada. According to one UNICEF (2017) report, a total of 1,907 of child abuse cases were reported in 2011–2015. The most commonly reported were cases of sexual abuse (32 per cent), physical abuse (32 per cent) and neglect/abandonment (28 per cent). These abuses happen both in and outside of the school environment.

There are five residential care centers in Grenada. These are briefly described below:

1. The Father Mallaghan Home for boys – caters to boys ages 12–18 years;
2. The Government of Grenada Emergency Shelter for children – caters to girls ages 0–18 years;
3. The Queen Elizabeth Home – caters to children ages 2–12 years;
4. The Dorothy Hopkin Centre – caters to children and adults with special needs and/or disabilities; and
5. The Bel Air Home which caters to children (boys: 0–8 years; girls: 0–12 years old, and are allowed to stay until 18 years).

With the exception of the Father Mallaghan Home for Boys (which is located in the parish of St. Marks), all of the other residential care centers for children are located in the parish of St. Georges (UNICEF, 2015b).

Another UNICEF report (2017) notes that the Child Protection Authority frequently struggle with large, demanding caseloads and limited resources such as insufficient staff capacity (both in terms of numbers and qualifications) and lack of comprehensive written procedures to guide and standardize processes. Other reported concerns included the lengthy periods of time many children spend in care, and difficulties in placing children through adoption (especially older children).

JUVENILE DELINQUENT YOUTH

Another area of concern as it relates to vulnerable children relates to the need for additional support or intervention programs for delinquent children, or children at risk. Two educational reform projects which have been implemented in response to the need for support programmes for the protection of children at risk specifically include the Alternatives Diversion Programme and the building of the Bacolet Rehabilitation Center. These are described below.

The Alternatives Diversion Programme – This is a twelve-week psychoeducational programme which was introduced by an NGO – the Legal Aid and Counseling Clinic (LACC) in 2008. The programme offers alternative sentencing options for young offenders who have appeared before the Courts, and those who are at risk for committing offences against the law. The initiative is built on a partnership/

collaboration among LACC, the Ministry of Social Development, the Royal Police Force, and the Child's Protection Authority in an effort to improve supports for at risk youth. The programme is run at two locations in St. Georges and Grenville, St. Andrews.

The Bacolet Juvenile Rehabilitation Center is a 75-bed facility established for children who receive custodial sentences as a last resort. It was opened in 2016 to ensure that children aged 16 -18 who are incarcerated are no longer housed at the adult prison. This center also offer access to educational continuation programmes for youth.

As schools report an increasing number of behavioral challenges among children, especially at the secondary level, there is an increasing need for more preventative at risk intervention programmes that target the youth before they resort to committing offences against the law.

Other areas of reform include the need for a comprehensive review and overhaul of probation services, the need for a family court, legal aid and other important social services for children who do find themselves in trouble with the law (UNICEF, 2017). This same report notes that among 10 Caribbean countries submitting data on juvenile offences and arrests between 2009 and 2013, Grenada consistently reported the highest rates per capita, with boys being 5.8 times more likely to be charged with offences than girls. The top three reported offences were stealing, using obscene language and causing harm to others.

THE PROGRAMME FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS (PAM)

The challenge of high teenage pregnancy has been a concern over the years which contributes to the situation with poverty. The last poverty assessment report noted a consistently high but fluctuating Teenage Pregnancy rate of 36.7 - 46 percent between the years 2010 and 2014). The report showed that on average, forty percent of females had their first child between 15-19 years. The PAM programme has been valuable in providing for the continuation of education for some of these girls.

The PAM programme began as an initiative of the Grenada National Coalition for the Rights of the Child in 1994, through the support of UNICEF, UNFPA, and the Government of Grenada, and is now an independent NGO which provides an opportunity for young teenaged mothers to complete their basic education. As of 2014, over 500 young mothers between the ages of 11-20 had benefited from the programme and gone on further studies at the T.A. Marryshow Community College, NewLo, or the St. Georges University, or to find employment (PAM, 2018).

CHILDREN USING ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

Marijuana is one of the main controlled substances used in Grenada. One 2017 report (UNICEF, 2017) notes that approximately 20 per cent of secondary students reported a lifetime prevalence of cannabis use, 13 per cent reported a one-year prevalence and 7 per cent reported a one-month prevalence. Males were further reported as using

Marijuana more than females. Alcohol consumption is also a problem among children in Grenada. The prevalence of heavy drinking was reported to be 8 per cent among those aged 15 and older and notably higher among males (8 per cent) than females (1 per cent).

THE ISSUE OF MIGRANT CHILDREN

According to one regional report (UNICEF, 2017), Grenada has an estimated net migration rate of -3.13 migrants per 1,000 population. The net outward migration rate is generally considered to be moderate, and it has been consistent over the past two decades as a result of volunteer emigration of skilled labour particularly among the educated elite. As it relates to inter-regional and international migration however, the inflows into the country have included economic migrants from Jamaica and Guyana, the latter made up mainly of East Indians, and being the most distinctive group in the context of Grenada. The report further notes that the migrant population in Grenada totaled 12,957 in 2010, a 37 per cent increase over the 2000 total of 7,943.28.

The CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), signed in 1989, and the 2011 OECS Revised Treaty of Basseterre established a political and legal framework for intra-regional movement of skills, labour and travel in the Caribbean but several administrative, labour-related challenges continue to slow implementation progress. Concerns most often revolve around the movement of women and children and the weaknesses in and inconsistencies of social protection systems among the Member States. Grenada is one of several Caribbean countries that have yet to sign/ratify the International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of the Their Families.

Interviews with Ministry of Education personnel reveal no special provisions in place for migrant children, but note that they have similar access to all education services and provisions as do any other Grenadian child.

Outstanding areas for reform also include:

- the need for the introduction of legislation to reduce discrimination against persons living with HIV and AIDS and protect LGBT rights;
- the need for improvements in the data collection capacity with regard to statistics on child victims of child sexual abuse as well as juveniles charged with offences (disaggregation of data by sex and age is essential);
- the need to maintain funding of projects addressing troubled children and dropouts, particularly targeting residential care for children in need of care and protection.

SOCIAL SAFETY NET PROVISIONS FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS IN GRENADA

Social safety net programmes in Grenada include the National School Meals Programme (latest data available showed that 7780 students were benefitting from this programme in 2017/2018 with a total spent of \$3,100,000); this is representative of 34 percent of the total enrolled primary and secondary students. The Uniform and Transportation Allowance had 2100 students benefitting, representative of nine (9) percent of enrolled primary and secondary students in 2017/18. The Text book Initiative had 17,918 students benefitting in 2017/18) – representative of 80 percent of enrolled primary and secondary students. The Needy Assistance Programme had 715 students benefitting in 2017/18); this was representative of three (3) percent of the total enrolled primary and secondary students. The Support for Education, Empowerment and Development (SEED) programme had a total of 16, 560 students benefitting in 2017/18 which is representative of 74 percent of the total enrolled primary and secondary students. Scholarship opportunities for post-secondary education on averaged benefitted approximately 360 students in the same year.

The Support for Education, Empowerment, and Development (SEED) Programme is the flagship social safety net programme of the Government, which makes monthly payments to the poorest and most vulnerable households. Beneficiaries include households with older persons, persons with chronic illness, school children living in poverty, and persons with disability. The SEED programme was introduced in 2011 by combining three previous social safety net programmes into a more efficient conditional cash transfer programme. The conditions associated with this programme are rates of school attendance for households with school-aged children and periodic healthcare checks for all members of the household (NSDP, 2019).

5.3 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS

A summary of the challenges which exist as it relates to vulnerable children include the following:

CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO CHILDREN WITH VULNERABILITIES

Challenges which exist include the following outlined below.

Special Needs Students:

- the lack of an official definition and policy to actions to improve efforts to remove or reduce barriers to inclusive education across the education system; inclusion is generally perceived as integration, often with very little additional support. A Special Education policy has been drafted but not yet passed by Cabinet.
- the need for outfitting education facilities to ensure they are child-friendly as well as fully accessible for all;

- slow progress as it relates to the adequate provision of access to education for all children with special needs;

Child Protection Issues:

- Insufficient residential care centers and facilities for vulnerable children and youth;
- large and demanding caseloads and limited resources such as insufficient staff;
- lack of comprehensive written procedures and policies to guide and standardize procedures for staff working for and on the behalf of children;
- The need for additional support and intervention programmes for delinquent children or children at risk;
- the need for a comprehensive review and overhaul of probation services as it relates to children; inclusive of a family court, legal aid and other important social services specific to children and child protective care;
- insufficient measures to address the high teenage pregnancy rate;

Social Safety Net Provisions

The government currently provide support for a number of vulnerable children and their families. These support provisions include: the national school meals programme based at primary and secondary schools; the uniform and transportation allowance; the textbook initiative; the needy assistance programme; and the SEED programme. A few scholarship opportunities are also provided annually for postsecondary and university level education.

Gender Equity in Education:

- The need for further research and actions to address the challenges impacting boys' performance in education;
- The need for strengthening general learning or remedial instructional support in schools for struggling learners;

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the main educational challenges associated with the prescribed themes that were explored in the report. A summary of the conclusions and knowledge gaps that require further investigation is provided. Finally, several implications and recommendations are put forward.

CONCLUSIONS

Although Grenada is classified internationally as an upper middle class income country, it faces significant challenges to achieving its national sustainable development goals due to previous debt and fiscal challenges which have limited its capacity for supporting growth and job creation. Reported high levels of poverty (reported at 37.7 percent), and unemployment (inclusive of youth unemployment rates of 45 percent) are especially significant challenges to note. Low education levels; incidences of poor health and chronic disease complications; dependence on remittances from abroad (30.7 percent of households within the lowest quintiles); gender inequity, and high levels of teenage pregnancy (which fluctuated from between 36.7 percent and 46 percent between 2010–2014) are important factors which continue to exacerbate the overall situation with poverty. State sponsored provisions such as school meals programmes at the primary and secondary school levels and free textbooks, have been part of the support provided for students from vulnerable families as part of the government's poverty reduction programme.

Education is perceived to be a key mechanism in the fight to improve the poverty and unemployment situation in Grenada. A free and compulsory education is provided for all children between the ages of 5–16, through a network of public primary and secondary schools. Early childhood education is not compulsory but is generally expected that all children will begin pre-school by the age of three (3). Sixty-two percent (62%) of the preschool centers in Grenada are publicly owned and managed. Data is unavailable as it relates to how many children are of age but unable to access early childhood education due to lack of space in government pre school centers and inability to afford enrollment in private ECD centers.

The present government is committed to maintaining universalized access to both primary and secondary education for all children. A reduction in primary school enrollment has been especially integral to government achievement of universalized access at the secondary level. The decrease in the enrolment in primary schools is partly due to a deliberate policy of the Government, as it endeavored to increase the number of students assigned placed in secondary schools upon completing the

11+ examination, while simultaneously reducing the number of overaged children at the primary school level. The percentage of students who gained placement at the secondary level post primary education increased from 50 percent in 2001 to the highest of 100 percent achieved in 2012. Last available statistics show a slight drop to 99.3 percent in 2017.

The government's commitment and strategy to attain universal access to secondary education however has not been without its challenges. Studies of Grenada's strategy towards universalized access to secondary education (which placed greater emphasis on the age criterion in contrast to the traditional student performance scores on the grade 6 11+ examination), have shown that many students who were transferred had not yet sufficiently developed the required competency levels in literacy and numeracy, and had difficulty engaging with the curriculum at the secondary school level.

The result has been an increased number of students repeating and/or dropping out at the 3rd, 4th, and 5th form levels, and a gradual disengagement with classroom instruction as many chose to avoid classes even though they were present on the school compound. Grenada continues to grapple with the implementation of universalized access and the improving teaching quality across all sectors of the education system.

CHALLENGES:

- There is an obvious need for a comprehensive review of poverty and unemployment levels in Grenada to update current projections, and specifically to inform relevant planning moving forward especially given the clear emphasis on education and training as a means to addressing issues of poverty and unemployment.
- Given that low education is one of the identified factors impacting high unemployment levels, the current disruptions to schooling caused by the current COVID-19 pandemic presents an additional risk to achieving its planned sustainable development goals, and specifically disrupts current efforts to improve the circumstances of the poorest and most vulnerable. There is a need for early planning to address subsequent learning loss experienced by students.
- Data is unavailable as it relates to how many children are of age but unable to access early childhood education due to lack of space in government pre school centers and inability to afford enrollment in private ECD centers. Support is needed to address this data gap.
- A need to maintain continued stability in leadership and management at Ministry of Education for strengthening the ministry's capacity for timely implementation, monitoring and evaluation of planned reforms and programmes critical to education development.
- There is a need for government to continue to manage the process of universalized access to secondary education to ensure that quality programmes are in place at all levels of the education system to help children develop or address any gaps they

may have as it relates to their literacy and numeracy competencies by completion of the required number of years at the primary school level, and subsequent to their transfer to secondary school (where such support may remain necessary).

SCHOOLS AND INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

A recent 2021 report on schools and internet connectivity across the OECS, confirms that as it relates to schools and internet connectivity, all government owned or government assisted primary and secondary schools currently have access to internet connectivity. The status as it relates to pre-schools and private schools is currently unknown. This especially have implications for access online for teachers and students, for facilitating EMIS, as well as the capacity of schools for facilitating blended instruction, or fully online instruction from or at the school plant during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHALLENGES:

- Outstanding concerns exists as it relates to the effective use of the internet in schools; specifically the predominance of non-pedagogical uses of the internet (mostly for administrative purposes rather than for enhancing teaching and learning) due to lack of access extended to classrooms;
- challenges exist with uneven internet coverage across the school which limits the utility of the internet in classrooms; and a broader challenge of network congestion due to varying levels of download speed, and subsequent complaints about poor connectivity service overall.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Although the first confirmed case of the COVID-19 virus was only recorded in Grenada on March 23rd, 2020, the threat of the virus led to closure of schools as a precautionary measure on March 16th 2020, and the transition to remote teaching and learning began on March 18th, 2020. Efforts were made to facilitate the subsequent launch of the government's new elearning platform – The MSTAR Learning Support on March 25th, 2020. This platform however was not originally designing for facilitating instructional delivery, but rather to provide useful teaching and learning resources to support teachers and students across the education system. The MSTAR platfrom is currently being reconceptualized to expand its current capacity to further support remote teaching and learning.

The physical closure of schools in Grenada lasted for an initial nine month period (March to September 2020). The only students who were allowed limited access to schools were those secondary students completing preparations for and sitting the CSEC examinations. All schools were granted permission to reopen on September

7th, 2020, with strict protocols that included the universal protocols such as social distancing, and the wearing of masks. Teaching and learning took on a blended format in many instances as Schools that were unable to accommodate all students in face to face instruction under the new protocols were given permission to establish specific days for face to face instruction, with the remaining days being reserved for remote teaching and learning. On October 9th, 2020 Cabinet gave approval for the return to regular face to face instruction based on regular seating arrangements but with the continued use of face masks.

A spike in new cases of the virus between December 6th, 2020 and January 7th, 2021 led to a subsequent two week delay in the reopening of schools for the second semester. Schools were finally reopened on January 18th, 2021, but again under strict adherence to current health protocols.

Over 24, 035 students (across pre-schools, primary, secondary and tertiary school levels) in Grenada were reported by Ministry of Education data as having been affected by the initial school closures between March and September 2020. One Ministry survey showed that 63 percent of students across the tri-island state were unable to access their class instruction during the initial school closure period.

Government also provided monthly allowances for food and transportation to 5079 vulnerable/needful students and their families through the SEED programme (SEED – Support for Education, Empowerment and Development programme) via the Ministry of Social Development;

Government Preparations for Reopening of Schools and Management of Education during the Pandemic included the following:

- the preparation of protocol guidelines for each school level;
- the hiring of additional cleaners and security personnel;
- the procurement of additional cleaning supplies;
- the conduct inspections and schools maintenance and repairs;
- the dissemination of tips and published guidelines for parents;
- the provision of psychosocial support for teachers and students; and
- the strategic placement of information posters around the school as reminders for students.
- dissemination of elearning devices to all teachers, and to all secondary school students. 9600 e learning devices were distributed to the teachers and students; useful apps were also provided for all teachers, along with e- text book content added. All parents were expected to pay a small annual fee of \$50 ECD. The students who were already benefitting under the national textbook support programme were allowed a further discount to \$25 ECD per student – per device.

- Some training also commenced for teachers and students in the use of the devices for classroom instructional purposes. Training is ongoing and generally managed by the District IT officer which has been appointed for each school district.

Other actions taken which relate to adjustments for standardized examinations, included the following:

- the cancellation of the 11+ examination for 2020; instead, a composite score was derived for each student based on past work completed, as well as students' past performance on prior national minimum competency tests in Grades 4 and 5.
- Additionally, the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) was deferred to 2021, but the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examinations were administered with deferred arrangements for student with underlying conditions, or special circumstances .

Key Challenges:

- There is a need for remedial and supplemental instructional sessions for students whose completion of learning was limited due to the school closures; and further inability to access provisions for remote or online instruction (especially Grade 6 students who are of age but were not promoted to secondary schools this year);
- The need for completion of distribution of eLearning devices to students at the primary school level;
- The need for continued training for teachers, students and parents in the effective use of the e-learning devices;
- The need for continued upgrades and renovations to school plants;
- The need for strengthening the capacity of school leaders to better manage education response at the school level during crises;

IMPLICATIONS

School closure typically create a massive loss in the development of human capital with significant long-term economic and social implications (OECD, 2020). Furthermore, the adverse consequences of school closures mainly impact the most vulnerable and marginalized boys and girls. These consequences include:

- Interrupted learning:** children and youth are deprived of experiences and opportunities to grow and develop in healthy ways.
- Social isolation:** schools are places for social activity and human interaction, so when schools close, many children and youth are not able to enjoy social contact, which is an important aspect of learning and development.

- c. Parents unprepared for distance and homeschooling:** most parents find themselves struggling to facilitate learning at home; this is especially true for parents with limited education and resources.
- d. Gaps in childcare:** in the absence of alternative options, parents often leave children alone or with various individuals and this may lead to risky behaviors and various forms of abuse.
- e. Increase exposure to violence and exploitation:** when schools shut down, there can often be an increase in early marriages, gang recruitments, sexual exploitation of girls and young women, teenage pregnancies, and child labor.
- f. Challenges measuring and validating learning:** the assessment process, particularly high-stakes examinations that are important for admissions to new institutions or advancement to upper levels, are not easily administered under COVID-19 health protocols. Issues such as the postponement, unfamiliarity with examinations online, and other serious concerns about fairness, and overall access continue to present challenges.
- g. Poor nutrition:** many schools provide children with free or discounted meals that are prepared according to dietary standards and when school closes, nutrition is compromised as well.
- h. Confusion and stress for teachers:** due to the emergency lockdowns, teachers are often unsure about their obligations and how to maintain connections with students to support continuous learning. Given the professional backgrounds and circumstances, transitions to distance learning platforms may be daunting and frustrating.
- i. Increased pressure on schools and school systems that remain open:** when several schools remain open due to more space or appropriate infrastructure, the schools may be pressured by the governments and parents who redirect their children to these schools.
- j. The unintended strain on health-care systems:** Frontline workers either are away from their children for long periods due to quarantine practices or cannot easily attend work because of childcare obligations that result from school closures.
- k. High economic costs:** parents who work are more likely to miss work when schools close, primarily to take care of their children at home and this results in wage loss, increasing the tendency to negatively impact productivity (UNESCO, 2020).

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

To help address the challenges and by extension, the implications, several recommendations are forwarded:

- 1. Early education sector planning to bridge learning & achievement gaps:** the implementation of strategic plans to address post- pandemic learning loss will require research efforts—after data are collected, organized, and presented to the relevant stakeholders, more efficient solutions can be formulated. Access is the first issue that needs to be addressed; it is important to forge ways to provide various resources, for example, support materials in different formats (physical/digital) to help keep the students aligned with daily lessons. Readily available handbooks/ guides (that give instructions about creating goals, adhering to schedules, resisting peer pressure, enjoying rewards, and applying resilience during a crisis) can be presented in appealing and fun ways. These are important tools to not only facilitate flexible learning but also *nourish the soul*, catering to the psychosocial wellbeing of each student. Most importantly, these guides should be accessible in print, digital, television, radio, internet, and any other innovative format.
- 2. Strengthening support for teachers:** there is need for utilizing a centralized outlet or platform for teachers to share their experiences with the new mode of teaching. A safe space can be created for this form of communication. The information can then be used within the education sector to categorize the emergent factors of blended learning. Officials and policymakers can use the information to inform the strategic planning processes, particularly where they concern teachers' wellbeing and efficiency; comfortable and happy teachers create better learning experiences and nurture healthier young minds.

This may be one aspect for consideration in exploration the expanded capacity of the MSTAR Learning Platform.


- 1. Strengthening the parent-teacher relationship:** more than ever, parents will rely on teachers, and teachers will rely on parents for providing support for the holistic well-being of the children during the COVID-19 crisis. There is need for building stronger partnerships given the need for additional learning supports during and post Covid.
- 2. Access to additional financial support for educational reforms and innovation:** more stakeholder participation is required to plan the way forward, as well as to strengthen systematic capacity for adapting to the needs presented by the pandemic, and post pandemic. This will require additional resources. Support from donor agencies as well as other education development partners become more critical in this regard.
- 3. Technical assistance** in policy development, evaluation, monitoring, and additional human resource capacity is the expertise needed to improve policy planning and implementation.
- 4. Building Crisis Leadership Capacity and Strategies:** There is a need to increase and build human capacity—more counselors and leaders who will need to apply crisis leadership strategies are required to help students to cope with various psychosocial issues that they are experiencing as a result of the pandemic.



- 5. Innovation in Teacher Training:** flexible modes of teacher education delivery are required, especially during the pandemic; but even post pandemic. For example, the residential component of training can be creatively combined with a distance/online or virtual component to strengthen teachers' capacity and skills for integrating ICT into teaching and learning. Teacher quality can be enhanced by effective teacher support, regular professional development, and mentoring with more novel/practical principles and models such as crisis leadership, transformational teaching strategies, virtual learning trends, and sustainability education frameworks.
- 6. The need for provision of Preservice teacher training opportunities:** this is necessary to raising the standards for teaching and achieving goals for the professionalization of teaching. Increased sponsorship of tertiary education for teachers is also critical to improving teaching quality in core subject areas.
- 7. Negotiating Benefits:** There is a need for a comprehensive evaluation of teacher remuneration and benefits relative to other Caribbean countries to ensure equity and to address current concerns raised by the union. It is also important to consider revisit the current compensation and benefits package to further incentivize individuals to consider pursuing the profession.
- 8. Increased provisions for tertiary education:** This was raised as a general constraint in terms of access to current tertiary education programmes. Many persons are interested in tertiary education but unable to afford it.

S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

To provide a holistic picture of the status of Education in Grenada, a S.W.O.T. analysis was conducted. The results are displayed in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: A S.W.O.T Analysis of the Education System in Grenada

Strengths 	Weaknesses 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government’s commitment to improving education across the tri-island state; • Universal access to both Primary and Secondary education; • Strong Government’s participation in and support for the provision of early childhood education (62 percent government owned ECD centers); • Membership in the OECS, and commitment to a common regional education policy agenda; • Commitment to and ongoing efforts to strengthen TVET; • Government’s commitment to support for students from indigent homes; • Government’s commitment to strengthening inclusive education; • Grenada has been recognized as being one of the most progressive OECS member state as it relates to the establishment of relevant legislative frameworks for protecting the rights of children; • An established programme for the re-integration of teen mothers into education; • A strong and active Teachers’ Union; • A low student dropout rate (1-2 percent at primary school level, and less than 2 percent at the secondary school level); • A strong, collaborative relationship with local, regional and international education development agencies and organizations; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of innovation in various subsectors in education; • Inadequate number of trained teachers – especially at the secondary school level; • Inadequate infrastructural support systems for students with special education needs; • Skills-deficit in the use of technology among teachers; • Unequal access to technology for students; • Weak monitoring and evaluation of education policy initiatives; • Inadequate remuneration and benefits package for teachers; • Challenges in attracting highly qualified teachers; • Low qualification criterion for entry level teachers; • Slow progress on implementing Inclusive practices in general education; • Poor student performance in STEM subjects such as Mathematics and Integrated Science (less than 40 percent CSEC passes); • Poor educational research culture • Shortage of male teachers at the primary and secondary levels; • Failure to fully capture or reflect the proportion of students not sitting CSEC examinations at the end of secondary schooling (data calculations are based on total number of students sitting exams); • High reports of child abuse/and or general child protection issues;

Opportunities 	Threats 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased educational funding from international and regional organisations; • Current ongoing pedagogical training in the infusion of technology in education; • A newly launched online learning support platform; • The COVID 19 pandemic has mandated the use of technology for education in the home, and provides an opportunity for strengthening parental involvement and partnership with teachers in support of children’s education; • Improvement in ICT infrastructure throughout the country; • A Special Education (Inclusion) Policy for supporting the strengthening of inclusive practices in education has been completed and awaiting approval from Cabinet; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to coronavirus vaccines • Continuation of the coronavirus pandemic • Poor ICT infrastructure • Poor readiness of teachers, students and families for technology integration in education/and or online teaching and learning; • Growing number of unemployed individuals • Slow economic recovery • High teenage pregnancy rate; • High poverty rate; • High unemployment levels;

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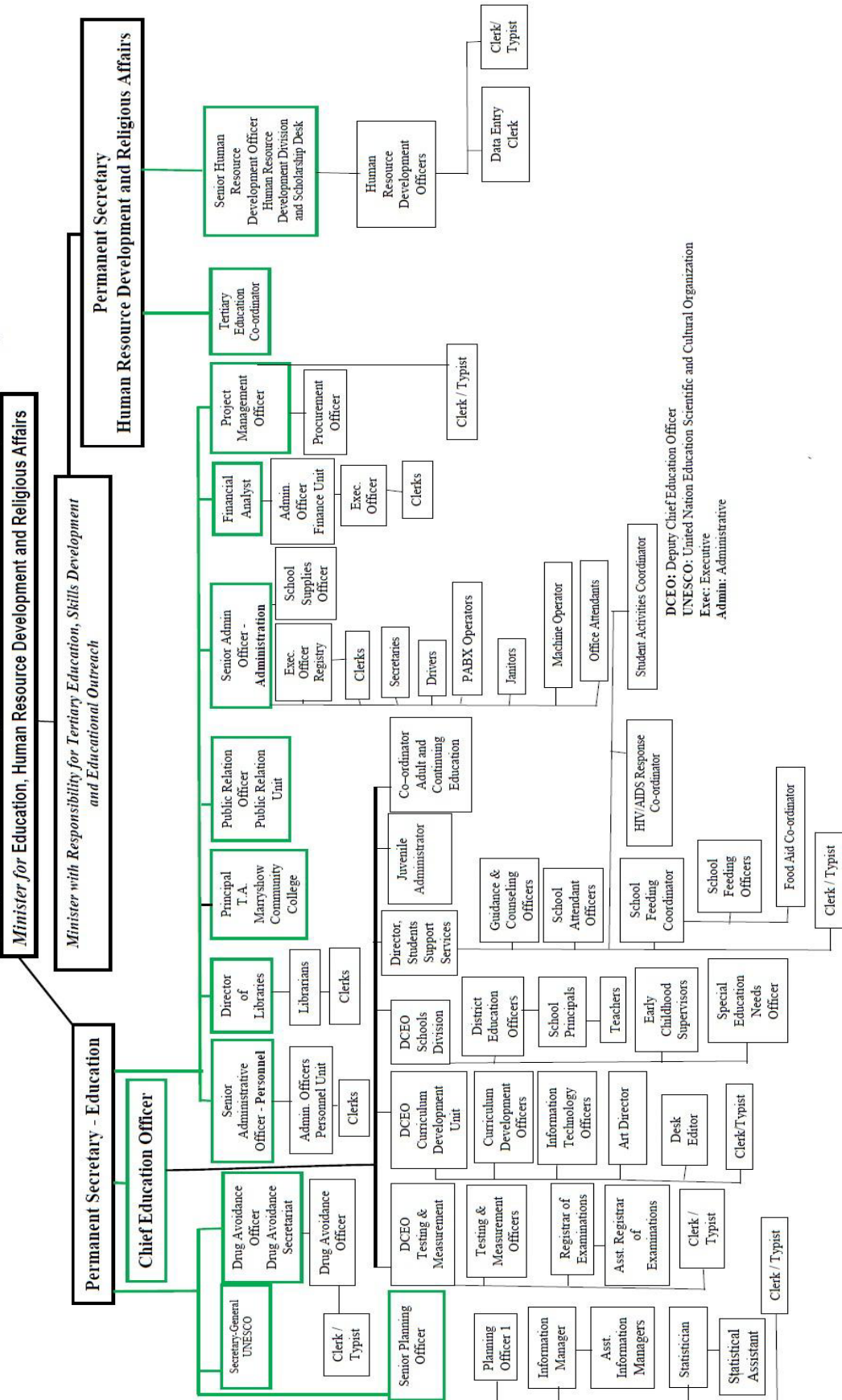
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Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development & Religious Affairs

Functional/Reporting Structure of the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Religious Affairs



DCEO: Deputy Chief Education Officer
 UNESCO: United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
 Exec: Executive
 Admin.: Administrative

NOTE CHANGES TO THE CHART ABOVE (AS RELEVANT TO THIS REPORT)

This chart was shared by the MOE as representative of the existing structure (dated 2011). Relevant changes to the structure since 2011 was related to the inclusion of a Deputy Chief Education Officer for Early Childhood Development.

Specifically, this change included:

1. the addition of a fourth DCEO position – the Deputy Chief Education Officer, Early Childhood Development;
2. The renaming of the post for DCEO – Schools Division, to DCEO, Schools Administration and Management (SAMU); and
3. The DCEO – Early Childhood Development now supervises teachers in-charge of pre-primary Schools and centers, and as such the post of Early Childhood Supervisors has been omitted from under the DCEO – Schools Division;



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