

# DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

An Approach to  
Resilience Building

ISRAID 

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## An Approach to Resilience Building

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*Writing* | Eitan Goldberg & Victoria Hill

*Editing* | Sam Kaplan

*Graphic Design* | Talina Design

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Natural, climate-related, and man-made hazards have devastating impacts on communities' wellbeing, challenging the individual and collective capacity of government service providers, community structures and civil society at large. These hazards bring to the fore and exacerbate a range of social protection, health and other concerns that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities and individuals.



IsraAID's "Safe Schools Model" is a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach that builds on two assumptions: (1) schools can play a central role in supporting communities in hazard preparedness and response; (2) local schools and school communities can serve as a focal entry point to many communities as they can be leveraged to produce long-term societal changes and engage with government institutions.

The model relies on the "Ready, Set, Go" framework, which has guided our interventions in the three countries.

## READY

Raising awareness at the individual and school levels about tools for a multi-risk approach and emotional resilience

## SET

Training teachers and students on ways to respond effectively in an emergency

**GO**

Adopting and implementing new practices and structures: drills in schools, changes in curriculums, and more.

**BEYOND GO**

Availing of community capacities to advance social change – increased community engagement, stronger networking within and across sectors, community leadership.

The Safe School program aims at obtaining four main desired outcomes: (1) Schools and education centers systemically adopt DRR strategies and incorporate them in operational plans and curriculums, including regular review of plans, implementation of drills, and maintenance of equipment; (2) School communities in which learners and educators are emotionally resilient, and are more capable of withstanding shocks and uncertainties; and (3) a greater school community (parents, learners, teachers, PTAs, emergency personnel and community focal points) who are actively engaged in emergency preparedness and response. This in turn has a ripple effect on wider communities, enhancing their ability to improve their wellbeing despite stresses and uncertainties, primarily by strengthening community capacities and social capital.

In the three case studies of IsraAID programs in Dominica, Mexico and Guatemala from 2018–2020, the potential of the model, as well as challenges in its implementation, were evident in the progress achieved:

- There are schools and education centers that adopted DRR strategies and took steps toward incorporating them in operational plans and curriculums.
  - There are indications of individuals becoming more emotionally resilient, although this varies widely within and between different locations, and is more difficult to discern at the community level.
  - Some progress was made in assisting school communities (educators, pupils, parents, community focal points) engaging in emergency preparedness. The assistance took place during (direct) interventions, but the extent to which a community is evidently prepared by mid-2021 is more limited.
  - The program's relatively short duration and modest resources, especially in Mexico and Guatemala, limited its contribution to larger systemic change, beyond the scope of emergency preparedness.
- Lessons learned pertain to issues such as the importance of collaboration across all levels of society – community, school, and government.
- Work with government agencies and local community mobilizers, integrating feedback from local actors with strong connections with the government.
  - A train-the-trainers model that takes into account mechanisms to support graduates' transference of knowledge.
  - Holistic approach in strengthening the capacities of local partners (e.g., CBOs) is critical when promoting sustainable changes in systems, institutions, community structures, social norms, and take years to materialize.
  - Participatory and community-based methodologies were positively received and helped build a solid foundation for effective implementation.

# 01 INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region has been the second most disaster-prone region in the world, with 152 million people affected by 1,205 extreme natural events from 2000-2019. This reality was further highlighted in 2020 through Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Guatemala, ongoing earthquakes in Mexico and the intense storm season in Dominica, whose repercussions were then compounded by COVID-19 challenges.

Natural (including climate-related) hazards can have a devastating impact on communities' wellbeing, given the challenges they present to government service providers, community structures and non-governmental organizations. They disproportionately affect communities and countries in the Global South, where capacities to address protracted social protection, health and other concerns, which disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, may not suffice. In this context, a range of interventions seek to enable exposed communities to more effectively engage with and mitigate the adverse effects of destabilizing events.

This report lays out IsraAID's DRR in Schools intervention model. It further assesses the implementation and outcomes of IsraAID's most sizable projects in this area, as implemented in Dominica, Guatemala and Mexico between 2017-2020. The overall aim is to clarify the model that

was designed and adjusted during programmatic implementation in order to make it accessible to internal and external audiences and identify best practices and methodologies for future initiatives. This document, then, provides a theoretical framework that is informed by an internal evaluation of IsraAID's implementation of the work in three countries.

The report is structured as follows:

1. Literature review consisting of a brief exploration of the current state and context in which DRR in Education programs are implemented;
2. IsraAID's DRR in Education model;
3. Case studies of IsraAID's DRR interventions in the three countries;
4. Conclusions and recommendations for future DRR work.



**THIS REPORT LAYS OUT ISRAAID'S DRR IN SCHOOLS INTERVENTION MODEL. IT FURTHER ASSESSES THE IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES OF ISRAAID'S MOST SIZABLE PROJECTS IN THIS AREA, AS IMPLEMENTED IN DOMINICA, GUATEMALA AND MEXICO BETWEEN 2017-2020.**

## 02 LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewing the DRR model entails understanding and clarifying key terms, concepts and contexts, specifically: natural hazards; resilience; regional and international DRR in education frameworks and local integration; and the Safe Schools approach and its adoption.

### 2.1 Natural Hazards in Latin America & Caribbean & Repercussions

The LAC region is experiencing an increase in the frequency and scope of natural hazards, which are expected to worsen with the [impending effects of climate change](#). High-risk profiles for LAC countries are compounded by increasing ocean temperatures, earthquakes, and mudslides as well as annual hurricanes affecting the Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea. Among the most affected LAC nations are Guatemala ([ranking in the top ten disaster-affected nations](#)) and the Commonwealth of Dominica.<sup>1</sup> Emergencies such as hurricanes and earthquakes frequently disrupt the functioning and safety of community members and community structures; lead to significant psychosocial issues among vulnerable communities and populations, such as children; and incapacitate the ability of central and local government bodies to provide needed services. Long-term humanitarian responses to emergencies necessitates developing *resilience* – strengthening local social networks or individual and collective capacities.

1. After the Hurricane Maria catastrophe, every aspect of Dominica's government, economy and society was under strain, wiping out entire neighborhoods and crippling businesses and social services for months. The hurricane also provided the country with a unique opportunity to review its regulatory and infrastructure systems, with the goal of advancing climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, all geared to ensure sustainable socio-economic development.

### 2.2 What is Community Resilience?

According to the [Disaster Resilience Integrated Framework for Transformation](#) (DRIFT), resilience is “the ability of women, men, and children to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses, and uncertainty.” Along similar lines, CARE International refers to the “capacity to anticipate, absorb and adapt to shocks, manage growing risks, address underlying causes of vulnerability and transform their lives in response to new hazards and opportunities.” IsraAID defines community resilience as **The ability [of a community] to cope with crises or adversities and continue to function in an adaptive way to address underlying causes of vulnerability, through leveraging of community assets and strengthening of the community's transformative capacity**

*Community resilience can be advanced through the consolidation of two building blocks:*

- *Social Capital: enhanced connections and links between community members, community-based organizations and NGOs, and government agencies. [Social networks that bring together a wide spectrum of persons provide the means for individuals to communicate and become informed of potential threats.](#)*



- *Developing overall capacity of communities, social systems and governance, which are critical in dealing with destabilizing events. This includes the capability to utilize shared assets and resources to solve collective problems and improve community wellbeing.<sup>2</sup>*

## 2.3 Development of DRR Education Frameworks and Local Integration

Active since 2005, The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES) is a cluster of 14 UN bodies, international and regional actors established to strengthen networking, identify challenges, promote knowledge and awareness, and advocate for global international frameworks. These include [The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030](#), which reinforces a move towards [proactive measures in DRR and resilience building](#), traditionally reserved for response and recovery phases of emergencies. [The UN noted in 2007 that incorporating DRR in schools can help connect people and institutions and share information to make informed decisions](#). The [Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency's](#) Disaster programs, for example, show that **schools are uniquely positioned to foster a “culture of safety and resilience”** within populations.

Countries of the LAC subscribe to many international conventions, treaties and platforms that promote DRR, including the INEE Minimum Standards, and the UNISDR and GADRRRES Comprehensive Safe School Framework. These initiatives set the standard on the

definition of a “safe school” – which has [three basic and essential elements of comprehensive school safety](#):

1. **Structural safety** – ensuring the existence of safe school buildings and facilities;
2. **School disaster management** – emergency preparedness systems, procedures and skills reduce risk to students’ lives and safeguard the continuity or immediate resumption of education during and after an emergency; and,
3. **Disaster Risk Reduction education** – promotion of a culture of safety and prevention, which together with a student-centered approach, informs IsraAID’s programs across the three case studies presented in this report.

To note, several training programs and manuals focusing specifically on DRR in school settings have been developed.<sup>3</sup> These trainings contain components pertaining to preparedness and inclusion of teachers, children and parents, as well as activities focused, inter alia, on psychosocial risk factors (e.g., Child-focused Psychological First Aid). Research supports the efficacy of preparedness training for teachers and community leaders as it increases community knowledge and preparedness. Moreover, schools and educational institutions can harness local, regional and national participation through [social capital interventions](#). For example, [recent capacity-building programs training community members and teachers in DRR tools, including manual development and drills— have shown increased community response and capacity to address mental health needs as the COVID-19 pandemic escalated](#).

2. According to Oxfam, capacity can be broken down into three overlapping capacities: **absorptive capacity**, the ability to ‘bounce back’ after a shock. It involves anticipating, planning, coping and recovering from specific, known shocks and short-term stresses; **adaptive capacity**, appropriate changes to better manage or adjust to a changing situation; and **transformative capacity** helps to stop or reduce the causes of risk, vulnerability, poverty, and inequality, and ensure the more equitable sharing of risk so it is not unfairly borne by people living in poverty or suffering from discrimination or marginalization. **The three capacities are essential for building up resilience**; the three are interconnected, reinforce one other, and exist at multiple levels (e.g., household, community, district, national, and within social-ecological systems).

3. [Usami 2019](#); [Save the Children 2017](#); [Elangovan and Sekar, 2015](#)

## 03 SAFE SCHOOLS APPROACH

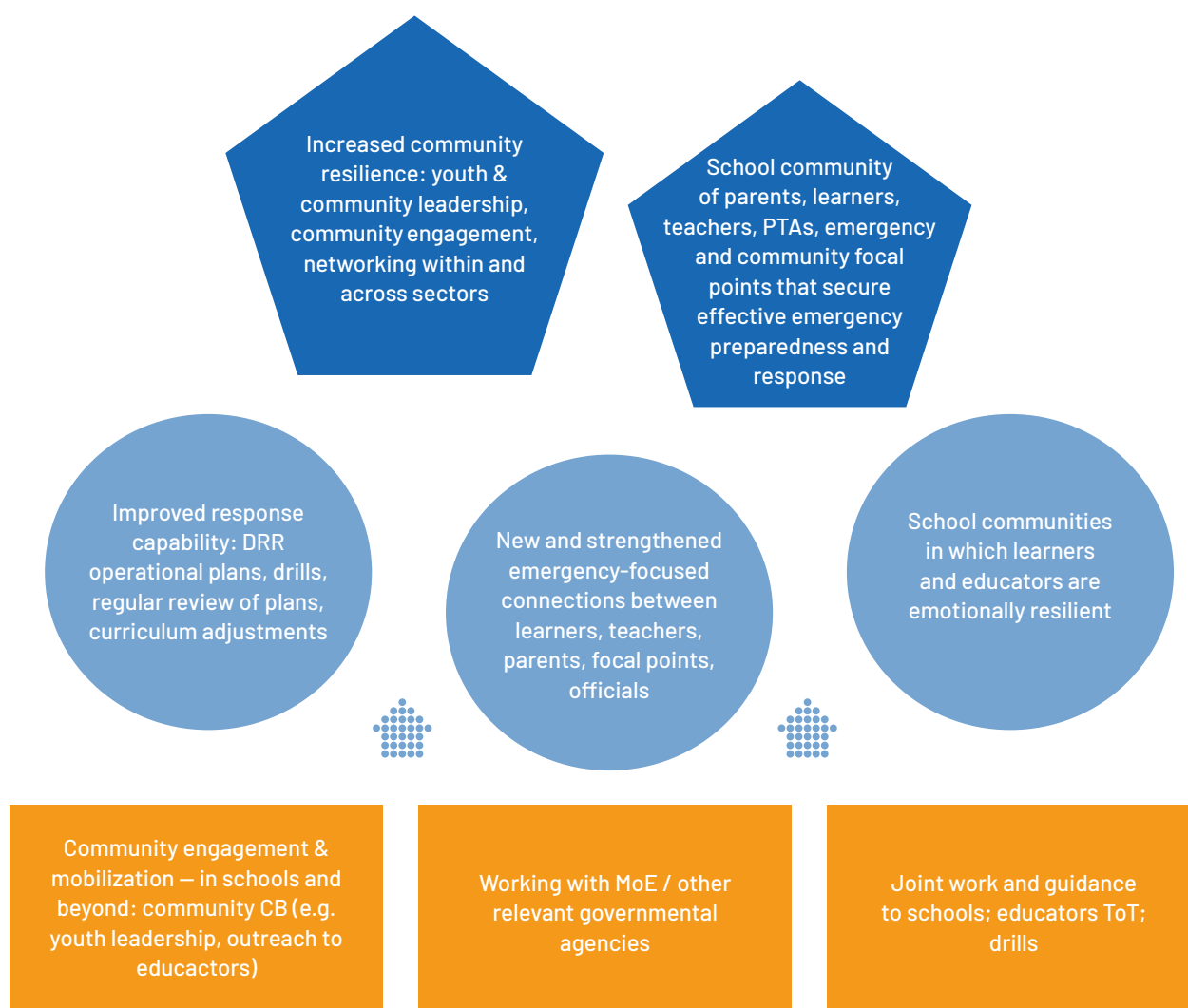
IsraAID's broader theory of change centers around the creation of sustainable impact through three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars:

1. Working with local communities to develop community-centered structures and organizations;
2. Partnering with and strengthening civil society organizations, including their capacities and services they may offer;
3. Engaging with government institutions and enhancing the provision of quality services to vulnerable communities.



*The Safe Schools model aims to integrate these pillars, with the school as a key entry point to building resilience. The model's implementation entails employment of the three mentioned strategies, as well as the strengthening and connecting of educational institutions and potential change agents within and across government institutions, community structures and CSOs. Engaging schools in DRR preparation, response and recovery, emergencies are deemed as opportunities in reorganizing and potentially transforming individuals, practices and systems.*

Schools and educational frameworks can provide a sustainable platform for wider community change, leading to the creation of more cohesive communities and social capital. Institutionalizing disaster risk reduction through schools can also help to incorporate local knowledge into programs and policies, and translate local priorities into specific initiatives to meet community needs. This approach, then, goes beyond emergency preparation



and recovery to build up local systems that more effectively address some of the most pressing challenges in the affected societies.

Keeping in mind the desired long term impact, the model envisions (i) schools and education centers systematically incorporating resilience-building strategies in operational plans and curriculums; wherein (ii) norms and practices ensure regular review of plans, implementation of drills, and maintenance of equipment; (iii) school communities in which learners and educators are emotionally resilient, and are more capable of withstanding shocks and uncertainties; and (iv) a larger school community (parents, learners, teachers, PTAs, emergency personnel and community focal points) actively involved in emergency preparedness and response, with functioning mechanisms in place to increase the ability of wider communities to face emergencies.

The “Ready, Set, Go” framework, offered to educators, illustrates the emergency response intervention program. The model evolved with the respectively differential implementation of the program in each case. Each stage, detailed below, aligns with the desired outcomes outlined above:

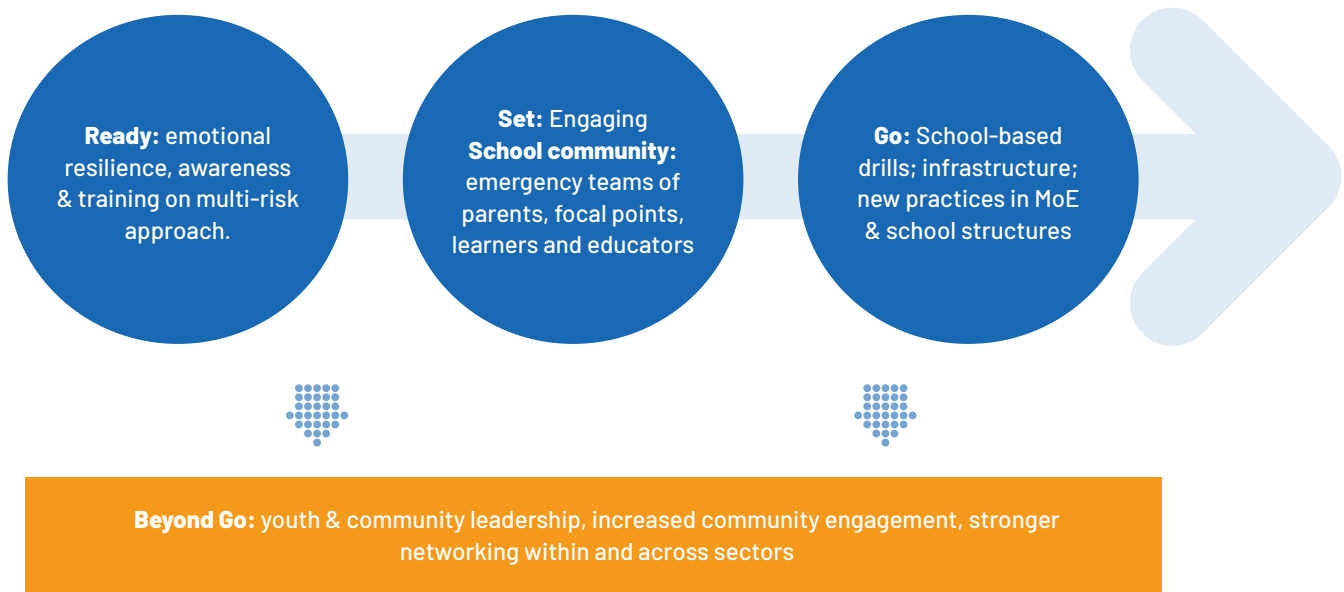
### READY

Individual and school wide awareness of multi-risk approach and emotional resilience including coping mechanisms and Psychological First Aid; hazard assessment; SOPs; Training of Trainers (ToT) for teachers and students on a multi-risk approach in schools.

### SET

Training teachers and students on ways to respond effectively in an emergency and involving parents and communities in emergency situation logistics.





## GO

Drills in schools and evaluation of these drills to understand what is needed in school infrastructure; Ministry of Education and schools' adoption of new practices, structures, and roles in school routines; incorporation of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) contents in the academic curriculum.

## BEYOND GO

Each of the above stages feeds into building broader community capacities; e.g., increased youth leadership, stronger engagement of parents and

community institutions with schools and beyond; milestones in what could become a long-term process of advancing societal change through increased community engagement; stronger networking within and across sectors; and community leadership.

The holistic, gender-sensitive approach in the model is designed for collaboration with local, regional and international program partners and stakeholders throughout all decision-making levels. Given the respectively different needs of the community in Dominica, Mexico and Guatemala, the content and objectives of the educational interventions were accordingly differently applied.



**THIS APPROACH, THEN, GOES BEYOND EMERGENCY PREPARATION AND RECOVERY TO BUILD UP LOCAL SYSTEMS THAT MORE EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS SOME OF THE MOST PRESSING CHALLENGES IN THE AFFECTED SOCIETIES.**

## 04 EVALUATION FOCUS & METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the implementation and outcomes of three key IsraAID DRR in schools interventions implemented in Dominica, Guatemala and Mexico between 2017-2020. The overall aim is to improve the model and identify best practices that can be adopted in similar initiatives.



The evaluation was conducted with the intention of answering the following questions:

**1. *What is the Safe School Model and what is its theory of change?***

- How did the model make use of IsraAID's pillars – strengthening community structures, building capacities of civil society, and engaging with government institutions – in Dominica, Guatemala, and Mexico?

**2. *To what extent were the intended outcomes of the programs in each of the countries achieved and how sustainable are these changes?***

- Increased capacity of schools and of the education sector to plan and implement DRR strategies
- DRR mechanisms are integrated into schools' annual operational plans and curriculums
- Increased community involvement, including youth and parents, in disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, thereby contributing to the resilience of local communities.

### 3. *What can be learned from the implementation of the model, and variations thereof, in the different countries?*

- What tactics and activities, including partnerships within the Ministry of Education, were most (and least) conducive to the achievement of the outcomes, and why?
- What can be learned from the implementation of different versions of the model, particularly in Mexico?
- To what extent and how did the model evince a multi-risk approach? For example, was it relevant in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How do the different stakeholders perceive the effectiveness and efficiency of work processes?

To address these questions, data collection including program documents were carried out primarily during April-July 2021:

- **Dominica:** 9 interviews of past and current IsraAID staff; 4 with government and local officials; and 4 with school principals; and a survey that the MoE distributed in October 2021 and received responses from 33 school principals.
- **Guatemala:** A total of 12 interviews, of which 9 interviews that the project coordinator conducted with public officials and school principals; and 3 with program staff and supervisors. A survey in which 9 program participants responded.
- **Mexico:** A total of 8 online interviews with public officials, teachers, and school principals. Additionally, an interview with the program director.

The evaluation draws on elements from several approaches, including a case study approach describing and assessing implementation of the model in each of three locations to deduce wider lessons learned, and an outcome harvesting approach that seeks to identify changes in conditions, capacities, or policies, and analyze whether the program contributed to their achievement.

Several limitations in data collection should be acknowledged. This is an internal evaluation with several structural biases. All interviews were conducted by IsraAID staff member presenting themselves as such. Interviewees were generally individuals with whom IsraAID had established a close relationship. The interviews in Guatemala were conducted by the project's director and only 9 program participants provided response to a questionnaire. As there is no longer an IsraAID Country Office in Mexico, obtaining information was a challenge. No survey was distributed and interviews were conducted via video conference.



**HOW DID THE MODEL MAKE  
USE OF ISRAID'S PILLARS –  
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY  
STRUCTURES, BUILDING  
CAPACITIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY,  
AND ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENT  
INSTITUTIONS – IN DOMINICA,  
GUATEMALA, AND MEXICO?**



## 05 CASE STUDIES

This section presents three case studies on IsraAID DRR programs in schools across Dominica, Mexico and Guatemala. In all cases the model emphasized the importance of preparedness and inclusion of children, implementation of activities pertaining to local and national drills, standard emergency operating procedures (SEOPs), and recommendations for preparedness strategies. While programs varied in specific target audiences within the school communities (e.g., child protection actors, teachers and educational staff, social workers), IsraAID's programming in the area includes building emergency preparedness within a broader DRR and resilience-building context for the community.



### 5.1 DOMINICA

#### Context and Objectives

In September 2017, Category 5 Hurricanes Irma and Maria pounded the Caribbean Island of Dominica. The storms compromised Dominica's power and water supply lines, agriculture, telecommunications, hospital, health centers, schools, bridges, hotels, and other critical infrastructures. Shortly after the storms, IsraAID entered Dominica to provide hurricane relief, facilitating child friendly safe spaces, surveying and renovating physical structures, and conducting an assessment of local needs and assets with a view toward recovery.

Looking beyond physical structures, IsraAID identified a need for local communities and service providers to be better prepared for the next hurricane season,

in particular addressing pressing needs in the areas of Disaster Management and Disaster Risk Reduction Education. IsraAID approached the leadership of the Ministry of Education as a key stakeholder. With the support and in collaboration with UNICEF, IsraAID formulated a work plan with the overall aim that the Ministry of Education take ownership of the process as well as train a cadre keyed on institutional change – develop relevant curriculum, align standards, support schools in developing contingency plans – all in line with the DRR resilience education goals of (i) increasing the DRR capacities of schools and of the education system; (ii) strengthening the emotional resilience of learners and educators; and (iii) increasing community engagement in emergency preparedness and response mechanisms.

IsraAID partnered with the Ministry of Education, the East Dominica Children's Federation and UNICEF to support each of the island's 73 schools in developing a Standard Emergency Operational Plan (SEOP). Recognizing the need to prepare for future hazards, local schools, community stakeholders, and the Ministry of Education participated in a simultaneous bottom-up and top-down process (respectively with school communities and with the Ministry) to increase community resilience. Starting mid-2018, IsraAID worked on developing collective community impact with 73 primary and secondary public schools (some 11,000 children, teachers, and education professionals).

## Activities

Key activities in the program included:

### READY

- Capacity Building Training for the education sectors: A 12-sessions training workshop for local teachers, counselors and principals. Training was done through a HVCA program focused on PSS and led by community stakeholders such as local fire departments, counselors and government personnel, and covering activities such as Disaster Risk

Management, Search and Rescue, Fire Safety, First Aid and Early Childhood in Emergencies. Too, IsraAID trained regional/area supervisors as “champions” to oversee and ensure implementation across the region.

### SET

- Distribution of emergency kits and school projects: As part of the intervention, emergency kits and DRR procedure posters were distributed to all participating schools, with the majority of schools displaying the posters in prominent areas. In tandem, students participated in developing small safety-related projects in their schools.
- Schools and teachers developed SEOPs for disaster response for their area, which then inform the work with the Ministry SEOPs for overall curriculum development.
- Technical Support to the Ministry of Education with an emphasis on developing, reviewing, and planning to mainstream the national DRM contingency plan, as well as activities such as a national drill exercise for 17 participants from MoE, Emergency Response Team, Office of Disaster Management (ODM), and Climate Resilience Execution Agency (CREAD). A workshop for ministry staff on DRR Curriculum Integration was held as well.

### GO

- School Based Drills supported by East Federation, a local NGO.

### BEYOND GO

- A week-long ‘Safety and Resiliency Bootcamp’ for students & replica in the community – geared toward engaging children in safety procedures, with a focus on awareness, preparedness and leadership capacities at times of emergency. 124 students and an additional 56 youth volunteers completed the three-day training conducted by IsraAID,

MoE, CREAD and Golden Opportunity on HVCA, Emergency Response Protocols, Climate Change, Leadership and Child Protection. Thirty-six, five-day summer camps were organized by IsraAID and led by trained students (ages 16-18) from secondary schools. A total of 812 children (ages 9-14) participated.

- Annual conferences for DRR knowledge exchange across the Eastern Caribbean: Education authorities and technicians from Eastern Caribbean, shared knowledge and skills strengthening the design and implementation of Education in Emergency Plans Including practices and know-how.
- The CAP (Child Assault Prevention) training took place after DRR training was concluded and was a collaboration with the Child Protection unit facilitated in the schools.

## Outcomes

Emergency preparedness and response were strengthened through a participatory approach targeting school communities and other community stakeholders and the MoE (as well as a local NGO). The program employed IsraAID's three pillars approach; the outcomes below were generated to a large extent through strengthening community structures and engaging with government institutions. What follows is an assessment of the results that were achieved, with an emphasis on building the DRR capacities of schools and the education sector, namely the MoE, and on the interaction, contribution, and effects on local

communities. See below further details on the extent and ways that the implemented program has met the aforementioned objectives of the DRR Education:

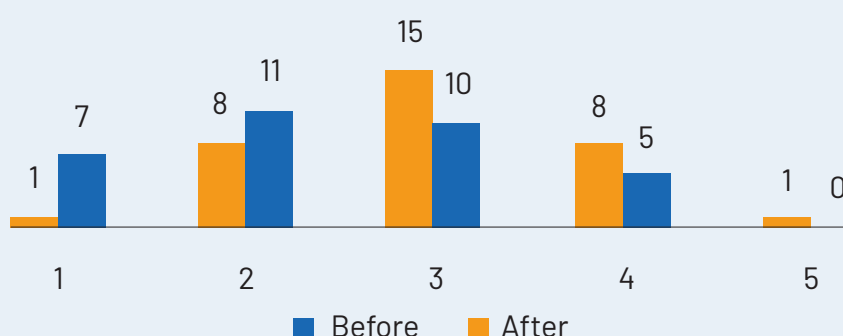
### ***Building the DRR capacities of schools and the education system***

(i) Perceptions of the program's contribution & increase in knowledge and awareness of emergency preparedness and response. School principals, education ministry officials, and the former staff of IsraAID at the East Dominica Federation all maintain that the program significantly contributed to an increase in DRR awareness of schools, the larger issue and specific behaviors taken in an emergency. One team member described the magnitude of exposure to DRR principles and the Safe School Approach as a key achievement of the program. Another described the project as successful since it "raised a lot of awareness in young people," contrasting his own knowledge as a youth with that of his son and his classmates. The latter, he said, are "quite knowledgeable" and can pinpoint specific responses to be taken in the event of an earthquake or a Tsunami, for example.

Responding to the survey, principals and teachers overwhelmingly – nearly 30 of 33 respondents – describe a positive contribution of the program to emergency preparedness, with several specifically addressing the issue of increased awareness:

- That [the program] was [when] the very awareness of emergency preparedness began
- They [IsraAID] played a pivotal role in getting staff and students and even parents alert and

On a scale 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest, how would you rate your school's level of emergency preparedness (N=33)





ready in the event of any disaster.

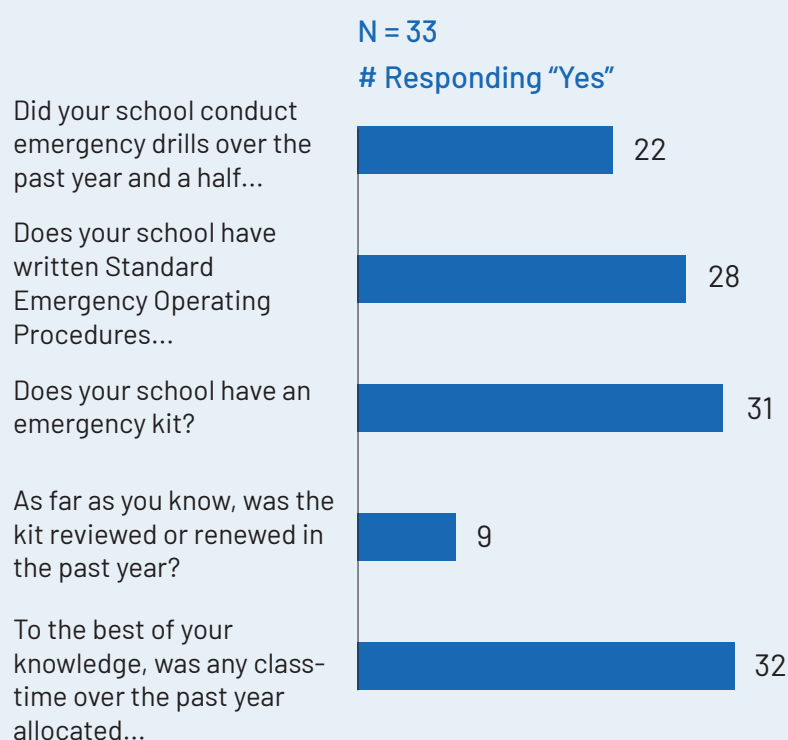
- [The program was] Extremely helpful in that it sensitized us to the various needs for preparation

MoE officials likewise assert a significant increase in the awareness of schools. This has practical implications as well. *"There is a change in awareness and protocols – how can we go to a safe space, how can the school withstand [an emergency], they are more aware..."* Several examples were provided as to how, in their view, increased awareness translated into change in practices. One official noted how, in 2017, before the storms and the subsequent IsraAID program, communication to the schools regarding preparedness-related issues had been challenging for the MoE. Furthermore, in the past, he added, the MoE would need to monitor and follow up to ensure anything would get done, but *"today we don't have to... they do it by themselves... people are highly sensitized."* He added that previously, at the beginning hurricane season, schools didn't review their emergency plans – *"they didn't even have plans, in many instances we'd ask schools for information about teachers [e.g. contact information] and they wouldn't have it readily available... The preparation and response [we see today] indicate a level of awareness"*. He then made a comparison with

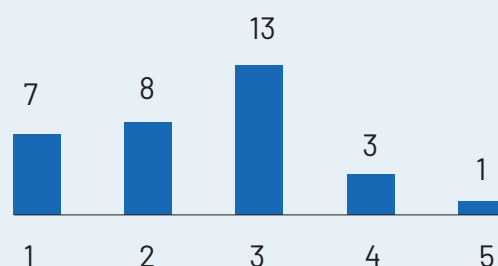
the current situation, wherein WhatsApp messaging groups established after the storms allowed for efficient communication at different levels (ability of school principals and parent groups, district MoE staff to communicate with school principals, senior staff to district level staff, etc.) for faster and more effective communication about emergencies, which, he said, proved effective during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A representative of the Fire Department, who had facilitated contents in the trainings and remains informed about the conditions at schools, said that on *"a scale of 1-10 in terms of knowledge – before Maria I'd give schools' emergency preparedness a 3; post-Maria [and post program], I'd give it a 6; there is still room for improvement, we need to reach 8-9, and I'll be satisfied. The knowledge and skill set were taught; teachers are in a better position. Ensuring continuity of what we began would bring it to 8-9."*

At the same time, principals and teachers responding to the survey see only a modest change in the overall preparedness and response state of their schools, despite their positive statements on the program's contribution. While 6 (18%) of the respondents give a high score (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) to the state of their school preparedness 3 years ago ("Before"), 9 (27%) did so when relating to the current situation



On a scale 1 to 5, 1 being lowest, 5 being highest, how familiar are you with your SEOP? (N=33)



of their schools ("After"). While 18 (54%) feel that emergency preparedness was poor or low before the program, the number is halved when relating to the current situation of the school. The overall average rating of principals for the preparedness of their schools increased from 2.4 to 3.0.

*(ii) Some schools integrated new practices and mechanisms – but sustainability is clearly a challenge.*

The outbreak of COVID-19 and the consequent disruptions has challenged the assessment of the extent to which schools adopted new DRR practices or mechanisms. Yet some initial integration can be identified.

During the program itself, nearly all schools developed SEOP, conducted emergency drills, and installed or renewed emergency kits. But as the effectiveness of these steps relies on follow up and continuation, there remains a question regarding the extent to which schools continue to conduct drills, and are aware, familiar or have reviewed the SEOP and emergency kit.

Observations demonstrate obvious and at times stark differences in the preparedness level of schools. Some principals report regular drills, review, and adaptations in SEOP, and in few cases active SERT teams. Others report few or none of those things. Notably, 22 of 33 (66%) survey respondents did at least one emergency drill following the program, despite the Covid-related limitations and infrequent learning in class. Nine of the principals (27%) reviewed and/or adjusted the kit, although many more pointed out a need to do so. One respondent typically wrote, *"I have to check the kit again. In the process of moving equipment etc., it appears that a few pieces of equipment were stolen. I will work at it in the coming week."*

Merely 4 of the 33 (12%) reported having an active emergency response team and students have been reported to be active in one or two of them. Overall, survey respondents – the school staff, most of whom were principals who participated in training, are clearly aware and content with the SEOP, but they have limited to moderate familiarity with the contents. It is very likely that the COVID-19 pandemic influenced

both the "positive" and "negative" responses, as social distancing protocols and online learning were mentioned as obstacles. This may explain why nearly all schools invested class time to discuss emergency preparedness despite limited changes in the curriculum so far (see below).

A critical challenge that has been mentioned by virtually all stakeholders (personnel in the MoE, principals and teachers, emergency services and the implementing team) is that the training needs to take place on a regular basis to be sustainable. This is particularly true because of high teacher turnover. For example, among survey respondents in 8 schools 4 (12%) or more teachers have been replaced and in 22 (66%) at least one, yet 5 (15%) report that new teachers receive regular instruction in emergency preparedness during their onboarding.

As noted by different actors:

- "Some of the students left, some are about to leave. I think junior students should be given the same opportunity... it makes it easier for us emergency responders – that people have basic knowledge to know what should be done in an emergency." (Emergency Services Representative)
- "Since Maria – at least a third of principals changed, in the eastern district out of 12 principals at least 5 changed, and 3 moved to other schools.... given staff turnover, MoE budget constraints and more – drills and simulations vary widely among schools – we need to do a lot more – a challenge with the drills is that it requires technical assistance." (MoE official)
- "My biggest concern is continuity – once the funding was finished the onus was on the MoE... principals told me they have plans but there's a lot to do on their end, I think they [MoE] have to make it mandatory." (East Fed representative)

## The Ministry of Education

### **Several themes emerge from interviews with MoE officials and external observers: Overall DRR focus, finalization of national SEOP, integration of contents in the curriculum**

The MoE standardized and mainstreamed the Safe School program.

A former senior official in the ministry who retired at the end of 2019, notes that DRR at the Ministry was definitely “at a better place” than when she entered some six years earlier. According to her, after the devastation caused by Storm Erika (2015) the Ministry initiated efforts to develop a school safety policy, began a process and developed a draft – but it “really wasn’t going anywhere.” When Hurricane Maria came, she says, “we saw all the deficiencies and understood that each school really needs to have its own plan.” Given the progress and challenges outlined below, she sees the Ministry’s present role as paramount – the MoE is *definitely in a better place than after the hurricane, but some things need to happen at the Ministry level* – financially and otherwise. In early 2020, the national School Emergency Operation Plan that the Ministry developed in the framework of the project during its final months was nearly complete. As Covid shifted the focus, the Ministry delayed, and the program was presented in 2021.

#### **Integration in the curriculum**

The Ministry has been conducting a comprehensive review of its educational curriculums with the aim of incorporating DRR contents (for example, integrating emergency preparedness in Science class). An MoE official notes, “We are reviewing our curriculum now. We look online and try to harmonize DRR contents in the curriculum as much as possible. It has taken a long time to do, so many things were around Covid, so many conflicting activities, and then Covid came. A challenge would be the actual incorporation in the classroom. Normally we do teacher training to show them how to incorporate. One of the key issues when a teacher returns to classroom – is that they do not practice what they learned, and sometimes principals don’t follow up, we are trying now to have a session with the principals. There were also indications that Curriculum Officers struggled with the integration of DRRs in teacher and school curriculums, “not because of the content but because of the lack of officers.”

#### **Limited oversight and enforcement capacities**

The ministry’s capacity to provide monitoring and oversight of DRR activities in schools remains limited, according to MoE officials. One official noted that a new or existing position in the Ministry needs to be dedicated to overseeing the overall effectiveness and to providing feedback on drills and DRR programs.



**DURING THE PROGRAM ITSELF, NEARLY ALL SCHOOLS DEVELOPED SEOP, CONDUCTED EMERGENCY DRILLS, AND INSTALLED OR RENEWED EMERGENCY KITS. BUT AS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE STEPS RELIES ON FOLLOW UP AND CONTINUATION, THERE REMAINS A QUESTION REGARDING THE EXTENT TO WHICH SCHOOLS CONTINUE TO CONDUCT DRILLS, AND ARE AWARE, FAMILIAR OR HAVE REVIEWED THE SEOP AND EMERGENCY KIT.**

There is an agreement that that it is the MoE's responsibility, as other government agencies cannot take over that role. *"The ODM [Office of Disaster Management] office itself may be understaffed.... Due to the nature of what the fire service does, overseeing it may also be a challenge."*

### Regional component

As part of the Safe Schools Initiative in Dominica, IsraAID initiated the first conference for lessons learned from Hurricane Maria to all education ministries in the East Caribbean islands, establishing the Caribbean Safe School Initiative (CSSI) alongside UNICEF and UNESCO in 2018. Sharing their programming on a regional scale seems to have been another incentive for Dominica to further its focus on DRR programming, as it actively showcased the safe schools program. Consequently, Dominica launched the [CDEMA Model School Safety Programme for Caribbean Schools in 2018](#) – developed based on the IsraAID Safe Schools Initiative in Dominica.

The implementation of the program quickly expanded in the region – promoted at the regional Pre-Ministerial Forums. While implementation in all participating countries has yet to be evaluated, in March 2021, IsraAID partnered with organizations including CDEMA (Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency), the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNICEF, UNESCO, and GADRRES (Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction in Education Systems) to provide guidance and feedback during COVID and natural hazards at the [Caribbean Safe Schools Initiative Pre-Ministerial Forum](#).

### Increasing community engagement in emergency preparedness and response mechanisms

Identifying outcomes pertaining to increased community engagement was a greater challenge. In the framework of this evaluation, it was not possible to identify former students or youth, who had participated in training and implemented a summer camp for children.

A handful of the principals and teachers surveyed were able to pinpoint "activities taken by the school over the past year and a half to involve the broader community, beyond the staff and student body, in emergency preparedness" – those activities pertaining to COVID-19 prevention and preparedness or involving PTAs. There are schools where parents have specific roles as part of the SERT, but these have not been active since the completion of the project. Efforts to identify links between schools and local emergency preparedness and response teams did not yield results.

Yet work with the schools and with the MoE cannot be fully separated from communities' emergency and response mechanisms. The program clearly contributed to building relationships between individuals, between focal persons at schools and fire department representatives, for example. These links, however, have not always been sustainable and are much harder to track.

### The Model & Implementation: Lessons Learned

Several points for further exploration of the program model emerged from interviews:

- **Top-down and bottom-up parallel tracks that feed into each other.** Emergency plans were developed in schools and with the Ministry; students and teachers played a key role in the design of the process, but ultimately the MoE took a leadership role. Initiating the work with the schools went on to inform the work with the Ministry. Because SEOPs were developed by school staff and students, they felt a stronger sense of ownership via community-led development. This is in line with IsraAID's community-led approach, which sees communities as having internal assets and strengths to maintain its wellbeing and enhance resilience. In order to promote ownership and sustainability, we aimed to use community-led approaches to decision making, working closely and collaboratively with community members



and local organizations (CBOs, NGOs, national institutions). This collaborative process is focused on strengthening the ability of local actors in their efforts to prevent harm and safeguard vulnerable populations, essential in promoting resilience and self-reliance as well as the wellbeing of community members. Yet for an initiative, at this scale, mainstreaming change on a national level also requires work with government institutions and the identification of individuals in those organizations to “champion” the joint objective.

- **Utilization of community mobilizers.** Having a local person with community ties, who has a presence in the community, was instrumental in the interaction with school staff and high participation levels.
- **Collaboration with the government.** The joint work of the MoE and IsraAID was described by both sides as “close and supportive” and essential to driving change. The Ministry’s perception of IsraAID as “experts on education and DRR”, who have a supporting role, was critical, as were the regular consultations and demonstrated contribution to the Ministry’s work. Personal relationships were essential to the process.
- **Formal partnership with a small local NGO was challenging in terms of reporting and formal commitments but can provide an opportunity to build up capacities that aim for a local partner to continue building on what is achieved throughout the project duration.** This is vital when desired outcomes are institutional and on the policy level, and likely to take many years to materialize, and require deliberate activities and investment.
- **The training model: Some felt that the time allocated for the ToT was insufficient; there was a need for more intensive training over longer periods of time.** In addition, there is the question of whether the training model can better address the consequent issue of

staff turnover, perhaps through supporting graduates’ transference of knowledge to other staff members through additional activities or mechanisms.

- **Development of organizational memory amongst teachers, schools’ staff and MoE officials would likely help to maintain implementation of training and transfer of emergency planning practices.**

## 5.2 MEXICO



### Context and Objectives

More than 1,800 schools across the state of Morelos, Mexico, were damaged by the September 2017 earthquake. The earthquake struck approximately 140 km south-east of Mexico City, just two weeks after a previous lethal earthquake, magnitude 8.1, hit Mexico’s southern coast and caused immense loss. There were over 230 confirmed fatalities and thousands of structures (homes, churches, town halls, historical buildings and health clinics) as well as public infrastructure were damaged. In the state of Morelos alone 23,973 houses were damaged (of which 7,410 totally collapsed); 1,837 schools suffered damages (84% of the schools in the state); and 223 health clinics and 403 historical sites suffered severe damages.

IsraAID's Emergency Response Team arrived 48 hours after the earthquake to offer emergency relief, medical and mental health care, and to support the longer-term response strategy for the affected populations. (Mexico is one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world, and the chance of another disaster is ever-present.) Many preschool, elementary, and secondary school students were unable to return to full-day classes or safe educating environments. In response to the urgent needs, IsraAID supported the school sector through the installation of 534 temporary classrooms, provision of mental health and psychosocial support, and water, sanitation and hygiene assistance.

IsraAID Mexico's Disaster Risk Reduction in Education Program was consequently launched in response to requests from school communities as well as from the Secretary of Education of the State of Morelos.

In 2018, IsraAID Mexico directly reached more than 24,500 people in Morelos state schools. To scale up from the 20-school pilot, IsraAID switched from working directly with local schools and teachers, to conducting ToT workshops for inspectors of the education ministry. Trained inspectors then went out to local schools and trained staff. Each trainer had supervision from IsraAID Mexico to help them implement the program. Partnering with social workers and state-run institutions such as the MoE, the program was DRM-focused with a lesser psychosocial focus, responding to demand for more structure after the pilot was scaled up to a state and national level. Emergency institutes throughout Mexico (National Civil Protection Units) also started to learn and take on training from this program, such as implementation and training in Psychological First Aid (PFA) and protocols for various emergency response teams.

## Activities

The program in Mexico included several main activities, including:

### READY

- *Development of Emergency Planning and Preparedness:* An initial 20-school pilot, training teachers, counselors, and principals to build their schools' DRR capacity, including development of local school emergency plans. This included the production of a first and second version of a DRR guide, based on feedback from program participants and education officials, which addressed additional needs of schools as programming expanded to the state level.

### SET

- *Capacity Building training for schools:* As the Safe School Initiative was expanded to state levels, MoE inspectors were trained and then conducted ToT sessions for school staff, covering activities such as Disaster Risk Management, Search and Rescue, Fire Safety, and First Aid.
- *Technical Support to the Ministry of Education* with an emphasis on development, review and planning of a participatory DRR guide (adapted to a Mexican context by the Civil Protection Ministry and MoE); workshops and technical support for MoE staff on DRR Curriculum integration and training the trainer programs.
- *Establishment and facilitation of State Level Roundtable Forum* for undertaking a needs and gap analysis of DRR policies and programming in the education sector.

### GO

- *Partnership and Capacity Building of Emergency Personnel and Institutions:* After the initial pilot, partners from Mexican government agencies and emergency institutes, such as the National Civil Protection Units, also underwent training from IsraAID-trained MoE inspectors, implementing Psychological First Aid (PFA) and protocols for various emergency response teams such as Search and Rescue, Fire Safety, and First Aid.

## Outcomes

Emergency preparedness and response were strengthened through a participatory approach initially targeting school communities and expanding to MoE officials and state-set curriculum. The program employed IsraAID's three pillars approach; the outcomes below were generated to a large extent through strengthening the capacity of local schools by engaging with government institutions for expansion of DRR training at a state level and integrating DRR training into school curriculum and policy.

The following briefly assesses key results as seen by some stakeholders more than two years after the completion of the program, as well as some issues emerging during the model's implementation. An emphasis is placed on building the DRR capacities of schools and the education sector and on the interaction, contribution and effects on local communities. The extent and ways that the implemented program met above-mentioned objectives of the DRR Education Model are outlined in further detail below:

### Building the DRR capacities of schools communities

(i) *Improvements in emergency preparedness were shown across schools – given adoption of State curriculum.* Observations from IsraAID staff, school staff and MoE officials after the initial pilot and in the second stage of programming note an increase in the awareness of schools and integration of DRR activities in school routines, implementation of drills and creation of school disaster response plans. There are a few indications that the change wasn't limited to the school itself but had a broader impact. As an MoE official noted, *"In rural communities, the program stayed with them as a community, not just at schools. This created a deeper level of impact, as it reached the community at different levels. That was the goal. Not like technical and general schools where they have bigger populations and the program stays just inside of the school. It doesn't have an impact on the outside."*

However, later observations by school staff, MoE officials and IsraAID staff after scaling the program to the state level, demonstrate differences in the adaptation of DRR curriculum schools. Disparity was shown particularly between the pilot phase – which took place primarily in rural areas and emphasized PSS at community levels – and the later expanded programming – which was initiated from the state level in schools only, incorporating larger schools focusing on education personnel. One principal noted succinctly, *"There was a heavier top-down approach after the first pilot. They really loved the pilot program in the Ministry of Education and wanted to make it national for all schools, but it lost some of its ability to connect with communities on a local level."*

*The most evident changes were in attitudes, showing a growing community risk awareness, with nearly all interviewed school staff recalling a lack of awareness prior to IsraAID's programming. One teacher noted how, in 2017 before program implementation, lack of school protocols and teaching children how to respond during high stress times was a problem. "... the children had no idea; they ran, they screamed; a lot of disorganization.... [but] with the program we realized it is a real risk therefore we must be prepared.... And they are now more aware about the imminent risks which we live with and how to respond better."* They also shared that the practical improvements to schools to limit risk they had learned from the IsraAID program. Improvements include increases in visible signage, organization of school drills, clear assignment of roles during hazards and high-risk situations, indicating an improved capacity to respond to various emergencies. *"For example, there have been situations in one of the schools that is near a tortilla factory...there was a gas leak and we already knew how to deal with it; the kids already knew their job; the teachers acted quickly and correctly as it should be."*

The most positive feedback of MoE workshops were conducted by PTAs, as they had closer connection with their principals, teachers and communities. PTAs were able to raise awareness of the importance of DRR in their area. *"They [PTAs] were truly committed...since*

they were more aware, they could take this program to their school.”

(ii) Initial focus on PSS and emotional support was a large source of support for schools and communities, applying learned skills to address mental health challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several teachers and principals explained that the awareness of PSS, PFA and mental health responses changed their perspective of their roles during disaster scenarios and equipped them to support their students. “We teachers learned to be able to speak, not to be only an image. We learned to let them see our inner feelings. To bring out some of the feelings we had in the past. To review everything...to be able to move forward in situations like this in natural disasters.” They also pointed out the relevance to students, who normally find it difficult to discuss to express their feelings and emergency preparedness allowed them to broach the issue. Several teachers and principals noted the relevance to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. With their DRR guides and handbooks for PFA on-hand during distance learning, several teachers remarked that they put programming into practice during the pandemic as they noticed students struggling. They planned to use it when in-class learning resumed.

- **“Now, [when a student] suddenly gets a little crazy and we can say, ‘come on, tell us how you feel.’ So we start applying these [PSS] techniques and strategies. It’s useful and it’s going to be even more useful when we return because there’ll be a lot to do and reorganize but now we have the know-how.”**

## **The Model & its Implementation: Lessons learned**

- **A top-down approach from the government, without established partnerships at a local level, made programming less connective at local levels, even when there is a solid DRR foundation on the governmental level. Local**

partners and local knowledge are needed to best integrate DRR programming in schools and their wider community. Lack of relationship between trained MoE implementers and local schools staff contributed to these challenges; the former were perceived as outsiders lacking an understanding of local needs and perspectives. As one MoE official said, “I had three schools that are not from my region... there we didn’t achieve much because of this [idea] that ‘as you are not from my area, I don’t know who you are or what you’re doing here;’ there was a sort of closed attitude there.”

- **Person-centered approaches were helpful in reaching schools and their communities in the initial pilot but became more rigid as the program was integrated into the State-wide curriculum.** A few MoE officials said they were encouraged by philosophies of teamwork adopted in the pilot schools, seeing them operate out of a sense of community resilience and ownership of their ability to overcome emergency scenarios as they went through IsraAID programming.
- **PSS skills are key to fostering resilience and should be emphasized in training.** While some school staff report connecting well with the material, regular drills, review, and adaptations in SEOPs, and application of PSS tools, others reported few or none of those things, noting that students and teachers seemed less engaged in the materials as it felt to be an impersonal top-down method unresponsive to the specific needs of each school. One MoE official noted that some of those who didn’t implement the program “as it is”, missed elements of psychosocial support that contributed to better resilience.”
- **To sustain disaster preparedness, continued training and support for teachers and students is necessary.** Emergency response is not always at the top of educators’ agendas, given the range of challenges with which they continuously cope – lack of funding,



staff shortages and time poverty. As in the other locations, educational personnel felt that *“the accompaniment needs to continue and more support needs to be offered...I feel there is a long way to go, I don’t think that this really means a 100% change, but rather, that it created awareness of what really has to be done in the event of a disaster, but the mentality has not changed yet.”* – School Principal, State of Morelos

- **Though participants at all levels acknowledged a positive contribution of DRR training and its integration into curriculum, some MoE trainers and IsraAID staff said continuation of ToT workshops was unsustainable for a few reasons:**
  - » insufficient number of sessions provided in most schools;
  - » limited oversight by MoE officials as there were too few staff to oversee implementation as the program scaled up to include all schools in the state;
  - » and, lack of MoE trainer relationship with teachers and local communities could show weak emphasis on civil society in scaled-up program design. Stronger emphasis on localized, civil society partnerships could strengthen programming.
- **Some teachers and schools staff felt MoE officials did not initially recognize the DRR plans already in place when coming to train or evaluate efforts, remembering, *“When they arrived, they [MoE implementers] would not let us speak...[They said] it was the school’s turn to create a work plan [to] collaborate and support us, [but] we had all this already coordinated and practiced.”***

## 5.3 GUATEMALA



### Context and Objectives

On June 3rd, 2018, the active volcano El Fuego (Volcan de Fuego) located 40 kilometers southwest of Guatemala City, erupted and swept away at least 5 of its surrounding communities in the areas of Chimaltenango, Sacatepéquez and Escuintla. An estimated 165 people were killed, 13,000 internally displaced, and 6,000 hectares of crops destroyed. People of some of the country’s most vulnerable communities lost their homes and livelihoods. The eruption of the volcano raised serious concerns about the capacity of Guatemalan communities and institutions in terms of risk reduction. Moreover, due to its geographical location, Guatemala is highly

vulnerable to natural hazards with high destructive potential such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, landslides and drought. The country is ranked fourth in the list of places that are more likely to suffer continued impacts from natural hazards, according to the [World Risk Index of 2017](#). In this context, both national authorities and members of school communities recognize the urgent need to take action, to foster a culture of prevention, to strengthen risk management, and increase the preparedness of local communities.

During the first phase of the emergency, IsraAID provided direct supplies and offered psychosocial support to more than 1,000 people affected by the Fuego volcano eruption. Additionally, health and psychosocial support training were imparted to more than 300 psychologists, nurses, shelter coordinators and volunteers. The 300 trained individuals went on to work with an estimated 10,000 people in PSS contexts during June–August 2018. Identifying a need for DRR capacity in the education sector – including a lack of local emergency preparedness plans for schools – IsraAID, together with the MoE (Mineduc) and Department of Education (Dideduc) of Escuintla, implemented a Disaster Risk Reduction program – the “Safe Schools Initiative” – in the country’s education system in September 2018.

The DRR program was designed to enhance the resilience of communities by providing orientational tools to promote “prevention culture” – a culture in which there is intervention in identifying and addressing underlying root causes of risk through preparedness and response activities, and to elaborate School Security Plans. Five schools from Escuintla Department were selected together with Esucintla Dideduc to go through the DRR pilot program, which was consequently replicated in 22 additional school communities of Escuintla department.

The program was based on a train-the trainers (ToT) model with seven participatory learning sessions aimed at assessing and strengthening the capacities of the school community. At least 3 representative members of each school – the principal, one teacher

and one parent– were trained as facilitators of the program and then implemented the sessions in their schools involving a group of 15 adults (teachers and parents) and 15 students in each school.

The ToT seminars were accompanied by the establishment of local School Emergencies Teams (S.E.T), through which the teams received tools on how to reduce psychosocial risk and increase protection and security for better risk management. As the program aimed to strengthen the capacity of schools to foster prevention and protection culture in communities, the ToT seminar included a training session on MHPSS elements, which are essential for the process of identifying risks, threats and vulnerabilities, as well as capabilities and strengths of the community. Through this pilot program, IsraAID’s team also developed a DRR Facilitation guide for training and implementation through local authorities to improve disaster preparedness, consolidating information gathered by a DRR Round Table.

Programs in Guatemala had stronger emphasis on the emotional/psychological side – a result of partnering with community-based organizations and local volunteers who made PSS a priority. *“[This focus] was dependent on lead partners. We had locals and volunteers, which made it more locally driven and innovative. They made card games with kids that taught them about emergencies, what could happen, who they could get help from, etc. They made it very applicable and creative.”*

Community involvement was incorporated into the program’s work model, mainly by facilitating the involvement of parents of students involved. Parents of schoolchildren were brought in to help renovate the school and fix up dangerous areas. They worked with students and teachers on emergency response, with the aim of shoring up community knowledge about emergency response. IsraAID also trained social workers and psychologists on Psychological First Aid (PFA), focusing on trauma in the schools, using the school as a “meeting point” wherein people of different professions and backgrounds become more aware of mental health needs and are educated in practical responses.

## Activities

The programming was implemented through several activities, including:

### READY

- *Establishment of School Emergency Teams (S.E.T)*, made up of parents, teachers and student leaders. They were trained on how to reduce psychosocial risk and increase protection and security for better community risk management through MHPSS and PFA tools, which are essential for the process of identifying risks, threats and vulnerabilities, as well as capabilities and strengths of the community.

### SET

- *Capacity Building Training* for the local schools, communities and the education sector: seven participatory learning sessions given in each school, aimed at strengthening the capacities of the school community. At least three representative members of each school were trained as program facilitators, then implemented the sessions in their schools involving a group of 15 adults (teachers and parents) and 15 students.
- *Development of a DRR Facilitation guide* for training and implementation through local authorities to improve local disaster preparedness. Information for the guide was gathered and consolidated through a DRR Round Table made up of officials from MoE and State Department of Education, teachers, principals and parents.

### GO

- *School-based drills, supported by CONRED*: Ongoing drills throughout the school year provided time for evaluation and improvement to the protocols based on local context and needs.

- *Safety renovation projects* were implemented at schools as end-of-the-year projects, led by students and parents. Many chose to make drills more effective, such as adding school signage and paint maintenance, showing where to go during an emergency.

## Outcomes

The extent and ways that the implemented program in Guatemala met the aforementioned objectives of the DRR Education Model, are outlined in further detail here. Facilitators trained by the IsraAID team in the first ToT demonstrated a commitment to the program, which was reflected in their thorough replication and performance of the sessions in their schools. The pilot program allowed the IsraAID team to get involved in national spheres and create strong relations with the Ministry of Education and the International Agency for Disaster Reduction (CONRED). This was evident with the increased support from MoE authorities through regular coordination meetings involving local emergency service personnel, and updated contact information for points of contact at the MoE and CONRED's departmental and municipal levels. Both institutions have shown high interest in getting support from IsraAID to improve DRR processes in the Education sector at the national level.

Teachers and educational staff also reported positive changes in school preparation for disaster, with many school principals reporting their school's preparedness improving significantly. Most principals further reported that teachers and students who participated in DRR training had increased understanding of hazards, learned to look for information on prevention, to use the resources available to them according to their context and continue learning to support each other. Sustainable and relevant emergency plans gained importance in schools as well, with one principle in particular stating, *"Because of the program, we renew our emergency plan [every year], which in previous years was mostly 'copy and paste' from previous plans."*

The benefits of programming were evident at the beginning stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, as schools' physical spaces required shifting due to public health requirements. Teachers used structures and mappings they had learned from program training to designate isolation zones, implemented Internet computer labs for remote learning, trained teachers with the use of audiovisual programs for the distance educational process, and leaned on community connections made during the trainings with local firefighters and police. Contact lists created during the programming also became useful, allowing teachers and school staff to communicate with students and parents remotely.

Principals describe the PSS component of the program as meaningful. *"[Before the training], we did not see emotional care as something that was linked to emergency response. With the trainings, we realized that we could give emotional support to all people without any cost."* Several teachers noted the psychological first aid component was the most important aspect of their training, now feeling more prepared to take care of people in case of a disaster. *"The subject of psychological first aid has helped me a lot to strengthen the bonds of communication and emotional support towards my students. Doing it precisely, briefly and immediately after a disaster event."*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, planned programming came to an unexpected halt as a result of public health restrictions, which stopped further training, drills and engagement with local communities and the MoE. Family preparedness continues to be a challenge because there is little to no schooling as a result of pandemic restrictions, so content is not transmitted from students to their homes, and regular drills are not conducted.

Overall, local schools and school communities reported positive changes in school emergency preparedness, particularly when it came to more clearly established drills and engagement with mental health and PFA elements of programming by local communities. However, sustainability and continuity are an ongoing

challenge, as the MoE has had limited success integrating DRR at a state or national level to ensure local authorities carry out DRR training and drills.

## The Model & its Implementation

- **According to the implementation team, a main challenge was that the program was based on a IsraAID Mexico team's prior work in Mexican school systems and communities.** While a helpful starting foundation, the programming for Guatemala was not planned with enough time to address local context and needs.
- **Participatory methods implemented were innovative for the participants, and the most successful sessions were those that included proactive participation of the students.** The facilitators noted that the sessions involving PSS elements were the easiest to approach and conduct, given that the volcano eruption impacted the mental health of students and teachers. The latter quickly realized the importance of emotional support in their work with students. Their quick response was due to the fact that the pilot was launched in August 2018, less than two months after the eruption.
- **Lack of DRR specialists in the country also made training difficult at times because trainers/educators did not initially understand the protocols.** Sustainability of DRR knowledge was also found to be a challenge, as the model did not include methods for teachers and educational staff to continue drills and transmit DRR knowledge beyond initial training.
- **Another challenge was the more limited involvement of MoE supervisors during the implementation process of the program, due to limitations of financial support for travel costs.**





- Programs in Guatemala heavily emphasize the emotional/psychological dimension as a result of partnering with community-based organizations and local volunteers, who made it a priority.
- Needs to adapt capacity building:
  - » a longer training process than seven sessions;
  - » in-person involvement of additional agents or DRR experts; and
  - » and a stronger training of the local team.
- Increased time of programming recommended by interviewees revolved around three months on empowerment of students and PSS, and three months on more technical preparedness and drills, etc.
- There is a need for the staff to come with a “baseline knowledge” of the issue and the intervention model; the staff reported that training prior to the pilot and technical guidance could have prevented gaps and barriers in planning and implementation.
- Lack of continuity was a repeated challenge raised by past participants and MoE staff.

## 06 FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The case studies demonstrate how the Safe School Model integrated collaboration with local school and school communities with engagement of government institutions. The potential of the two-pronged approach was evident, with work at the community level informing work with government agencies, the latter leveraged to promote broader, long-term change. However, while community-level work informed engagement with public agencies, a continuation of work may have helped promote long-term, systemic and sustainable change on the ground, both at community and government levels.



To note, COVID-19 restrictions, including cancellations of in-person classes, has impacted implementation of new policies or procedures at schools and other institutions. The challenges to the implementation of the program, however, allowed for assessment of the interventions in a (very different) emergency context.

### Achievements of programmatic outcomes

In all three cases, schools and education centers adopted DRR strategies and, moreover, took steps toward incorporating them in operational plans and curriculums, as evidenced by review of plans, implementation of drills, and maintenance of equipment. This objective was largely achieved, albeit to different extents in the different locations. Prior to these changes, the program succeeded in equipping teachers and youth with awareness, knowledge and abilities at the individual and organizational levels. Furthermore, many local stakeholders feel that the program contributed to individual and institutional capacity to deal with Covid-19 implications, both at

the practical and emotional levels. A systematic and wide scale adoption of DRR strategies, however, requires budgetary allocations, operational plans and overall conduct. Further work could have been carried out on securing government's long-term allocation of resources and commitment to adhere to new standards or regulations, which are requisites for a DRR program to be genuinely incorporated into lesson plans after IsraAID's departure; for example, support and oversight of drills require resources. Impressive progress toward such a change was made, but must be sustained after IsraAID's implementation.

*School communities in which learners and educators are emotionally resilient and are more capable of withstanding shocks and uncertainties.* This seems to have been partially achieved, with results varying widely between different locations. The emphasis of PSS in the program was more substantial in Guatemala and there are indications that the results are more significant there than in other locations. In Dominica, while officials and educators emphasize the importance of PSS and recollect its discussion, its impact is harder to trace and more limited.

A larger school community consisting of parents, learners, teachers, PTAs, emergency personnel and community focal points, who are genuinely engaged in emergency preparedness and response, and having functioning mechanisms in place to enable effective engagement. Progress was made in shoring up school communities' engagement in emergency preparedness. There were many indications to that effect during interventions themselves; but based on the collation of data (up to mid-2021), the extent to which the consolidation of such a community was more limited. There are a few indications that PTAs

and parents involved during the programs continued to be engaged in school emergency response and preparedness in the following year. Overall, changes in this area are more difficult to identify.

An underlying assumption of the model is that work in school ought to reverberate to the wider community increasing their ability to face emergencies, and to contribute to overall resilience and social capital. Some promising indications suggest that this had sometimes materialized, but sustainable change will require a longer intervention.

## **The Model & Implementation**

*What tactics and activities have been conducive to the achievement of the outcomes and in what ways?*

- **Collaboration across all levels of society - community, school, government - is essential to implementing programming for long-term integration and collective community impact**, such as parents' involvement in school renovation projects and involvement of local emergency groups in training, as was evident at the beginning of the Mexico and Guatemala programs.
- **The perception of IsraAID as bringing in professional expertise along with the nurturing of strong interpersonal relationships in government institutions was critical.** For an initiative at this scale, mainstreaming change on a national level requires work with government institutions and the identification of individuals in those institutions to advocate the joint objective.



**IN ALL THREE CASES, SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION CENTERS ADOPTED DRR STRATEGIES AND TOOK STEPS TO INCORPORATE THEM IN OPERATIONAL PLANS AND CURRICULUMS, AS EVIDENCED BY REVIEW OF PLANS, IMPLEMENTATION OF DRILLS, AND MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT. THIS OBJECTIVE WAS LARGELY ACHIEVED, ALBEIT TO DIFFERENT EXTENTS IN THE DIFFERENT LOCATIONS.**





- **Local actors with a community mobilization role were instrumental in the interaction with school staff and in ensuring high participation levels.** The role and leadership function of local partners is likely to vary in different contexts but maintaining community commitment and participation in activities requires investment and a substantial role to be played by a local partner.
- **Top down and bottom up:** Informing work with the government through on-the-ground implementation with local actors, such as CBOs or community leaders, contributed to the success of the model.
- **MHPSS programming is important for success.** Adoption of PSS elements were in every program and received positive overall feedback. There is a consensus that the MHPSS component was *the* added value of IsraAid's model.
- **Deliberately strengthening local partners in civil society can contribute to sustainability of the DRR work as well as advance the objective of increased community resilience in-and-by itself,** particularly if they proceed to build on the progress achieved during the project's duration. This is vital when desired outcomes are institutional and require sustainable changes in the community. This will take years to materialize and require deliberate activities and investment. In the three cases, particularly in Mexico and Guatemala, the program's shorter duration and the lack of committed staff resources invested in the DRR programming specifically may have limited the program's contribution to a larger, systemic change that can be replicated beyond the scope of emergency preparedness.
- **The training model: Further investment in the scope of ToT model may be necessary** but a sustainable model requires the framework, funds and skill within MoE personnel. A possible answer could be adding an extra year, in which partners fully implement activities with IsraAid offering remote oversight and support. In addition, there is the question of whether the training model can better address the issue of staff turnover, perhaps through supporting graduates' transference of knowledge to other staff members and selected advocates who can facilitate ToTs through additional activities or mechanisms.
- **Participatory and community-based methodologies** were positively received wherever implemented, contributing to the achievements of results and building a solid foundation for change.



# APPENDIX

## Illustrative DDR Outcomes & Indicators

Outcomes	Indicators
The capacity of schools to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved	<p>Percent of schools that have passed safety inspection</p> <p>Percent of targeted schools that have successfully conducted 1 emergency simulation</p>
Increased access to information and understanding of potential hazards and risk management capacity	<p>Development and maintenance of a central public repository of related DRR information (including information on effective psychological preparedness and coping, relevant MHPSS policies/guidelines, response information and mapping and hazard assessments).</p> <p>Percentage of affected people reporting awareness of and access to emergency-related warning system information, including vulnerable and at-risk groups and people living with disabilities</p>
Communities develop and implement DRR plans in collaboration with the government through a participatory process	<p>Number of DRR plans developed</p> <p>Percentage of approved activities in DRR plans that are implemented</p> <p>Percentage of planned DRR initiatives jointly undertaken by government and communities</p> <p>Percentage of most vulnerable households that report they have increased collaboration with government</p>
Local authorities develop disaster management plan with input and involvement of constituent communities	<p>Number of DRR plans developed to meet specifications of national and/or regional government</p>

Vulnerable households and communities adopt key preparedness measures to protect lives and livelihood assets	Percentage of activities in the action plans that are implemented
Vulnerabilities of persons with disability (PwD) in target areas related to emergencies are reduced	Number of PwD and their families able to cope with disaster
The capacity of communities to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved.	<p>Percent of people in targeted communities who practice 5 or more emergency preparedness measures identified in the community plan)</p> <p>Percent of targeted communities with identified response mechanisms in place</p>
Community members utilize appropriate MHPSS services following emergencies	Percentages of community facilities and emergency response agencies with staff trained to identify and support MHPSS needs, provide focused care to at-risk groups, and refer to more specialized care when necessary
Schools, community and social structures promote the well-being and development of all their members and reduce risks	Percentage of formal and informal inclusive social structures with specific activities that promote well-being and address MHPSS concerns
Enhanced ability of the schools and community to organize self-help and mutual support focusing on most vulnerable (elderly, disabled, young children and their mothers)	<p>Number of women and men of most vulnerable groups that participate actively in volunteer groups</p> <p>Number of community members recognizing importance of social solidarity and the right to appropriate assistance after disaster, protection from violence and participation in recovery planning/volunteer groups</p>
Enhanced capacity of schools and community to engage the authorities on DRR plans and/or social protection crises	<p>Number of community representatives (male and female) who know their rights</p> <p>Number of community members actively participating in discussion and decision making at administrative level</p>

## **Adapted from & Sources for DRR in Education Program Development: Log Frame Components**

[Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Indicator Bank FOR TECHNICAL ADVISERS, PROJECT MANAGERS AND MEAL PERSONNEL](#)

[DRR Indicator Toolbox: Swiss NGOs DRR Platform](#)

[The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery \(GFDRR\): New Logical Framework](#)

[International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: Logframe Template \(Example 2\)](#)

[Strategic Approach to Capacity Development for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction: Concise Guide; Proposed Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity Development for Disaster Risk Reduction \(Page 135\)](#)

[UNICEF Risk Informed Education Programming for Resilience: Outcomes, Outputs & Indicators \(Page 85\)](#)

