Structure of presentation

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- Understanding the concepts and related issues of psychosocial support by all Education Stakeholders
- Proposed principles of psychosocial support in education: Implementation model for Cameroon
- The role of government in promoting the psychosocial well-being of teachers
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Rationale and problem statement

- The COVID-19 crisis has disrupted education in an unprecedented manner.
- In order to contain the spread of the virus, the government of Cameroon on March 18, 2020 shutdown
  1. Public and private training establishments of the various levels of education from nursery to higher education.
  2. Technical and vocational training centres
- To meet with the demands of providing quality education, educational establishments were asked to revert to online and distance education
- NB: It should be noted that the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon are equally experiencing a separatists arm conflict in addition to COVID-19 pandemic
The government of Cameroon reopen schools by the 1\textsuperscript{st} of June, 2020 but only for public examination classes at the primary and secondary levels and Universities.

This means that teachers will be faced with a double challenge:
1. Providing onsite classes for pupils and students at public examination classes.
2. Providing online and distance education for the rest of the pupils and students.

Teachers can therefore be faced with psychosocial problems related health risks and the increased workload of teaching in new and challenging ways with inadequate training and resources.

Hence, education responses to COVID-19 need to ensure teachers and education support staff receive ongoing psychosocial support.
In March 2020, a needs assessment study on the provision of psychosocial support to teachers and school administrators was conducted by UNESCO head office, Younde in collaboration with UNESCO Chair at the University of Buea.

Twenty three (23) schools of the North West and South West Anglophone regions of Cameroon were selected for the study.
Findings

- Qualitative findings of the study highlighted the following psychosocial problems that need attention
  1. Presence of psychologically battered/depressed staff as a result of fear, anxiety and intimidation
  2. Inadequate health and safety measures
  3. Poor incentives for teachers and lack of resources to manage online/distance education
  4. Teachers and administrators lack skills to manage diverse learners especially those that are displaced
In order to provide teachers and school administrators with psychosocial support, it is useful to enable educational stakeholders to be familiar with eight basic concepts:

1. *Psychosocial development*— the development of thoughts, emotions, behaviours, memories and social competence.
2. *Psychosocial needs*— basic elements people need for a positive social, emotional and intellectual development.
3. *Psychosocial well-being*— a situation in which people’s basic social and emotional needs are sufficiently met.
4. *Barriers to psychosocial well-being*— things caused by the outside environment and other people that negatively impact someone’s psychosocial well-being
5. **Psychosocial support**– is about helping individuals cope with and overcome difficult life situations.

6. **Protective factors**– external issues that support psychosocial well-being and development

7. **Coping mechanism**– behaviors and thoughts that help a person to master, tolerate or minimize stressful or difficult situations

8. **Emotional resilience**– a person’s ability to cope with difficult life situations, adapt to change and have a positive outlook for the future
Proposed principles of psychosocial support in education:
Implementation model for Cameroon

Psychosocial Support Principles

Holistic
Consider educational, psychological, physical, social, welfare and safety needs

Enabling
Promote positive aspects of life, build coping mechanism

Rights-based
Uphold the rights to learning, participation and protection from harm and violence

Friendly
Create safe and stimulating schools with caring teachers and enjoyable learning experiences

Positive
Focus on the best interest, needs and abilities rather than problems and deficits

Comprehensive
PSS is not only counselling but a range of actions educators and other stakeholders can do
The role of government in promoting the psychosocial well-being of teachers

- Factors of a healthy and balanced development and well-being.
  1. Enable access to opportunities for healthy psychosocial development for the enhancement of professional engagements
  2. Provide intellectual and physical stimulation to reduce absenteeism at attrition.
  3. Ensure health and psychological security for hopefulness / optimism about the future
Government ‘s inputs and expected outcomes for teachers’ psychosocial wellbeing: Adopted from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943)

- **BASIC NEEDS**
  - provision of incentives and resources to help teachers cope with increased work load

- **SAFETY NEEDS**
  - teachers are protected from health and security risks

- **LOVE AND BELONGINGNESS**
  - teachers develop emotional support and advice, social interaction and acceptance, inclusivity

- **ESTEEM**
  - teachers develop a sense of unconditional positive self regard

- **SELF ACTUALISATION**
  - teachers become effective and efficient educators

- **SELF**
Recommendations for further action

- Provide legislations for ensuring teachers receive appropriate psychosocial support to enhance the professional engagements
- Put in place structures to develop teacher’s computer literacy skills for managing online teaching
- Create mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of psychosocial support and welfare services to teachers and schools administrators
- Establish modalities for teacher incentives