

A NEW WAY OF SUPPORTING SMTS DURING COVID-19

IPASA 2 JULY 2020



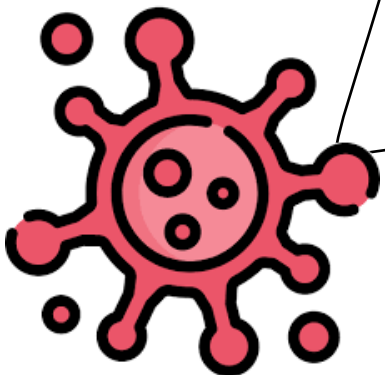


INTRODUCTION

PILO's core purpose of strengthening the education system continues to drive our work during lockdown as life attempts to normalize over the next year or two. Within that we will stick to two key principles:

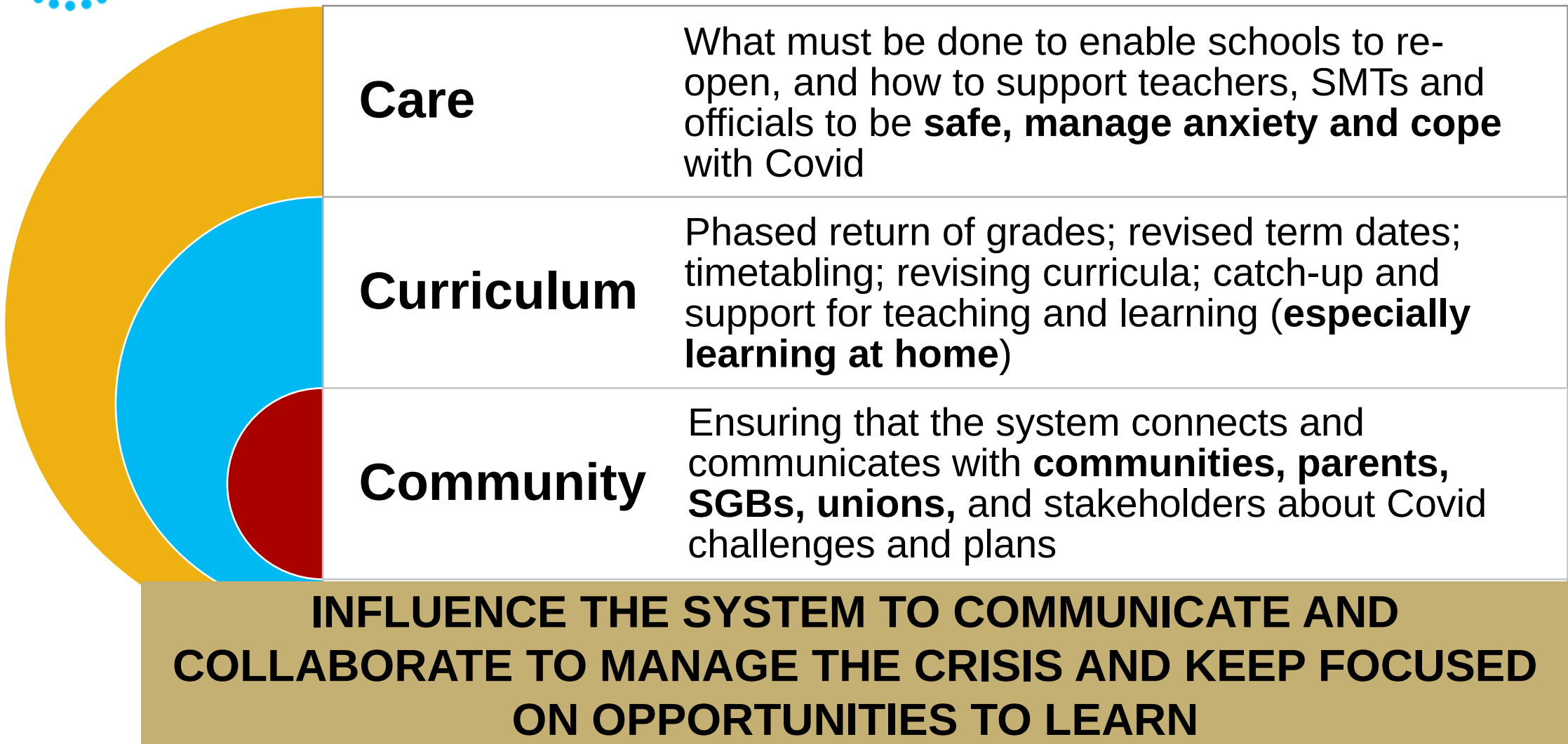
Responsiveness: We must always respond to the needs and challenges faced by the system. Therefore COVID-19 necessitated a redirection of our energies to using our resources to assist provinces, districts and SMTs where we work

Continuity: Our work is about strengthening the education system to improve its performance based on evidence-based decision making and professional judgement. With the onslaught of COVID-19, the system is under pressure to perform more than ever. For us in PILO, the strategy of what we have had to do has had to change - but not the method . We must adapt our work to the context – there are things we don't know, but we can help schools and districts to steer their way through focusing on care, curriculum and community.





THE COVID PIVOT





SMT SUPPORT NEEDS

- Schools have not opened evenly, many of our schools do not currently have a full staff complement, and many learners are not attending school
- With respect to **Care** (Health and Safety) Issues some examples include:
 - Lack of access to water and sanitation
 - Shortage of PPE (hand sanitizers and soap, masks etc.)
 - More positivity about screening
 - A good proportion feel ready for NSNP
- High levels of anxiety. We need to expect that there will be more time spent on the psychosocial needs of teachers and learners, which will result in less teaching time.



SMT SUPPORT NEEDS

With respect to **Curriculum** issues:

- Constructing a timetable for when the next grades return that allows a 1.5m distance between learners in classrooms;
- Understanding the **the curriculum guidance** received from national and province for the returning grades
- Planning of lessons for return to class
- Planning of work for what children should do at home

With respect to **Community** issues:

- Parents are afraid to send their children to school
- Parents do not know how to mediate learning at home



PILO'S RESPONSE

- Our core purpose of strengthening the system to make good judgements and decisions daily remains the same
- The content of our strategy has had to change to address COVID-19 specific realities
- PILO had to develop and implement new modalities for implementation:
 - Physical workshops with district officials/replaced by Teams meetings
 - Support to SMTs and teachers done through easy communications via whatsapp video and written messages



PILO'S PROGRAMME

Programme	Activity	Modality/Mode of Delivery
District	• District Leadership sessions • District extended Manco sessions	Teams
SMT Support	• SMT Toolkit • Whatsapp messaging series (video and written) on Care and Community	CM Training on toolkit and messages Teams Whatsapp video and written messages
Teacher Support	• Linking the trimmed curriculum to revised ATPs • Prepare and develop a guide for Teachers in Supporting Learners' Independent Study	Subject Advisor training Teams Written Manual Whatsapp video and written messages



**LEADING
LEARNING**
IN UNCERTAIN TIMES



"We all need care and community to stay well - so we can teach and learn safely"

THREE Cs

What are the three Cs?

- **COMMUNITY** is everyone around you who is influenced by you, or cares about what you do.
- **CARE** is treating everyone as valuable, so being kind to yourself and others.
- **CURRICULUM** is the organised space, time, and planned "content" for teaching and learning.



What can you do?

- Revise your expectations.
- Support people who are struggling.
- Listen! Ask: "What's troubling you?" - then listen!
- Affirm: "It makes sense to feel like that..." IF and as appropriate, ask "How can I help you?" - then pay attention.
- Resist the temptation to (promise to) fix everything.
- Live up to "Safety first" and "Keep each other safe!"
- Stay home if you're sick or you've been exposed.
- Manage risks for transport, cleaning, screening, movement (school break times and spaces) and nutrition for all learners.
- Display relevant contact details for further support and/or referral in all classrooms and the foyer.





What can you do?

- Communicate, then communicate more!
- Share clear messages about health and safety.
- Support public health education like washing hands and wearing masks, and non-negotiable steps like social distancing.
- Collaborate! Have conversations about uncertainties in person, by phone or online.
- **Be trustworthy: do what you say; speak what you think; and walk your talk.**





What can you do?

- Work together carefully to create and adjust a timetable and space plan for your context. The schools can only operate at 50% capacity with 20 learners per class.
- Allocate staff according to who must work from home and who can teach what.
- Use professional communities and networks more! Expand network(s) you're in such as area or subject WhatsApp groups or formal PLCs. IF you aren't part of a group, find one to join (ask colleagues) or start one.
- **Build key practices: (Re)plan (guided by national guidelines); teach (starting with diagnostic assessment); monitor; reflect; respond; and collaborate.**



EXAMPLE: MESSAGES TO THE COMMUNITY



PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Take care of yourselves

- Ensure that you have other adults to talk to if you are anxious and unsure, or if you just need to talk.
- There are many helplines that you are able to contact as well.
- Understand Covid well. Get in touch with information easily available.
- Make your home a safe space so children feel heard and supported.



PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

After school routines

- Ensure that you have other adults to talk to if you are anxious and unsure, or if you just need to talk.
- There are many helplines that you are able to contact as well.
- Understand Covid well. Get in touch with information easily available.
- Make your home a safe space so children feel heard and supported.



EXAMPLE: DAILY RITUALS

RI TUAL WI TH SMT

Meet SMT every morning to ensure that all members are safe. Allow space for members to voice their fears and anxieties.

- Discuss any challenges and look at support processes.
- Engage stakeholders (SG Bs, NG Os) and keep them informed on daily of the status of the school and challenges that may occur through WhatsApp, emails.
- Have regular communication with schools around the area as well as the broader school community to discuss challenges, support needs.
- Set up communication with local clinics, Social workers, law enforcement.
- Set up communication challenges with community around the school.
- Ensure that time tabling allows for classes to go to single teacher every morning for at half an hour.
- SMTS establish a WhatsApp group with all teachers in their department.
- Principal has a WhatsApp group with all SMT members.
- Support learning in the classroom.
- Support teachers in curriculum.





EXAMPLE: DAILY RITUALS

RITUAL WITH TEACHERS

Meet teachers every day before the start of the school day.

- Have a process where teachers feel free to report on their fears and anxieties
- Ensure that families are safe.
- Reinforce support processes.
- Create scenarios that teachers can use with their learners for support.
- Teachers meet with the same learners every morning. This creates a sense of care and belonging for the learners.
- Discuss with teachers strategies to ensure that they keep in touch with every learner in this time to ensure that they can identify learners in distress.
- Teachers have a WhatsApp group with teachers and with SMTs
- Teachers have a WhatsApp group with their morning class learners.





EXAMPLE: DAILY RITUALS

RITUAL WITH LEARNER

Get learners to express how they are feeling each day. Have they eaten? Are they feeling safe at school and at home? Are they able to study and do their homework. etc

- One such ritual maybe to have one learner bring a symbol of something they hold dear and share this with the class. It allows the shy learners to speak. It also allows teachers to get to know their learners better.
- Allow learners to write a short piece (in a book provided) everyday . This allows them to express themselves freely. Only they read their writing. If someone wants to share allow this.
- Make sure that every learner know where s/ he can get support.
- All relevant phone numbers of support is available in the classroom.
- Teachers have a WhatsApp group with their class learners.

