



Saint Vincent and the Grenadines - Preparing for compounding emergencies

Context and Objectives

On April 9, 2021, La Soufrière volcano in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines started a series of explosive eruptions that prompted significant ashfall and pyroclastic flows. The ashfall damaged housing, infrastructure, agriculture, and critical public utilities such as water and electricity; and the pyroclastic flows – dense, destructive masses of hot ash, lava fragments, and gases ejected explosively from the volcano – further destroyed everything in their path, with yet undetermined impacts on the ocean and coastal areas. The advent of heavy rains on April 29 caused subsequent flooding, landslips, and mudflows, which increased the impacts on persons, infrastructure, and agriculture.

This project is supporting the government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in its efforts to respond to the volcanic eruption. It aims to focus on enhancing emergency preparedness in the country by improving the operational frameworks for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and climate resilience. Specifically, the project focuses on strengthening the operational framework for school infrastructure resilience in order to allow for education continuity in light of the volcanic eruption and the COVID-19 crisis.

Main Activities

- Strengthening the National Emergency Management Organization's (NEMO) operational framework for disaster management by revising its National Disaster Response Plan in light of the ongoing volcanic eruption and COVID-19 pandemic and providing capacity-building opportunities to NEMO and its key stakeholders.
- Bolstering the operational framework for school infrastructure resilience by supporting education continuity and enabling select schools to serve as both educational institutions and emergency shelters.
- Developing communications and knowledge management materials to capture and disseminate lessons learned and best practices.

Results

Activities have firstly supported NEMO in developing an emergency communications campaign, days following the first eruption, to build awareness of the potential harmful impacts of volcanic ash. Public service announcements video and social media content, including three videos (see below), were rapidly produced to provide useful tips on ways to safely interact with ash and protect children, homes, and vehicles. These were disseminated by NEMO, the CDEMA, the World Bank/GFDRR, and local media via television, radio, and social media channels. Several social media cards were also developed to disseminate important messages to the population from various government and stakeholder accounts about how to enhance preparedness and the population's protection in the midst of this disaster event.¹

In addition, the project is supporting NEMO in updating its *shelter management policy*. Liaising with a regional expert, a draft policy has been developed and is currently under review and revision. The policy aims to strengthen the legal framework for emergency preparedness and response in the country. Part of

¹ The social media cards are available at: <https://bit.ly/3vzdHIR>.



this work includes the development of school assessments with the Ministry of Education and the development of school disaster response plans.

Partnerships and Coordination

This project is being implemented by the World Bank in close collaboration with NEMO, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, and Information Technology.

Useful links

A Feature Story was published highlighting the support provided by the Caribbean RRB Facility to the government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in its efforts to respond to the volcanic eruption. The Feature Story is accessible at <https://bit.ly/3gkoLUK>.

Three videos were rapidly produced to be used as video public service announcements and social media content. The three videos are available at the following links: *Breathing Ash* available at <https://bit.ly/3zk6GyZ>; *Protect Home* available at <https://bit.ly/3zsNaQC>; and *Local Calypsonian* available at <https://bit.ly/3wnYBqR>.

Country

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Caribbean Regional Resilience Building Facility component

Regional Technical Assistance Facility to Mainstream Resilience

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04/2021-03/2022