

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION IN
SRI LANKA**

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1 Introduction

1.1 PREPARATION OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Education is the prime factor for developing human capital, which supports countries' trajectory towards sustainable social and economic development and sustained peace. The global community has committed to the Education 2030 Agenda, which calls for countries' policy actions to provide equitable and quality education, ensuring quality learning and skills that will matter for the changing world of work due to Industry 4.0, represented by automation and digitization of work. The Education 2030 Agenda encompasses early childhood education through adult learning while underlining the importance of citizenship education, inclusiveness, equity, and gender equality. The realization of the Education 2030 Agenda demands that a better focus is given to curricular reforms.

As the government's national policy framework '*Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour*' aspires, Sri Lanka has been committed to providing free compulsory quality education for all children irrespective of their ethnicity and social status over several decades and thereby producing future generations of intelligent and skilled citizens. Indeed, Sri Lanka is one of the very few developing countries in the world to sustain this commitment for a long time. While the government has shown remarkable progress in achieving near universality in youth literacy rate, school enrollment, and primary education completion, the quality and relevance of education remain a significant challenge in going forward¹.

Following the Cabinet's decisions to its Memorandum², the preparation of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) has begun under the leadership of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the National Institute of Education (NIE). The new NCF provides a basis to formulate a new general education curriculum, reflecting on the lessons learned from the present curriculum and global good practices, as well as the priorities in the national development strategy.

The preparation of the NCF serves two objectives; (a) to implement new education reform proposals in response to the establishment of '**Task Force for Education**' under MoE and (b) to guide the forthcoming eight-year curriculum reforms cycle. Having set forth the highest commitment towards achieving the goals in the General Education Sector Development Program 2020-2025, MoE has already commenced the preliminary steps of designing the programs pertaining to the fresh policy initiatives, as also proposed in the government's national policy framework '*Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour*,' which has been anchored on '**A Productive Citizen and a Happy Family**'³ to impart advanced knowledge and skills for youth to create a knowledge-based society with productive citizens and progressive learners. A shift from the present examination-centered education through learner-centered education has been increasingly

¹ Government of Sri Lanka (2018). Voluntary National Review on the Implementing Sustainable Development Goals. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19677FINAL_SriLankaVNR_Report_30Jun2018.pdf

² Titled "Designing of a new curriculum and creation of an attractive secondary school network for creating citizens who can contribute to national development" dated August 20, 2020 by the Cabinet.

³https://visiongr.lk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Chapter_04_Eng.pdf

critical to producing vibrant youth with diverse backgrounds in sports, culture, values, and skills to join the workforce.

1.2 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Sri Lanka is a country with a written history of nearly 3,000 years and an unwritten history of more than 25,000 years of human existence which is scientifically and archeologically proven. When studying the rich repository of literature created over many centuries, it is evident that the country has made a significant effort to uplift education throughout the written history. A country rich in natural resources and natural beauty is still among the top Asian nations with high literacy rates and very strong social indicators, and health indicators achieved through a strong commitment to education.

Sri Lanka has demonstrated steady macroeconomic growth of over 5% per annum over the last decade, yet met significant economic and social challenges⁴. The national average unemployment rate has been maintained at around 4%, but the youth unemployment rate (ages 20-24) remains high at 17%⁵. Wide economic disparities exist across provinces, ethnic groups, as well as between rural and urban areas. Furthermore, a series of recent significant events such as internal political risks and the pandemic of COVID-19 have also impeded the country's growth, at least for the short-term.

Sri Lanka has fallen behind Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam, who also gained independence from the British and other imperial forces, but managed faster social and economic development. The country's longstanding challenge is to escape from this trap and reach the target of becoming a developed nation crossing the World Bank's benchmark per capita income of USD 12,000 by 2035 while sustaining the best efforts to achieve the National Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. A projection shows that it is possible if the country can 10% annual growth: starting from USD 4,000 per capita income of 2020 and growing at the annual rate of 10% will produce over USD 13,000per-capita income by 2033.

As in many other countries, Sri Lanka has started to see a rapid transformation in the economy and labor market demands. The automation and digitization of work, or Industry 4.0., will require countries to adjust their education systems to prepare the workforce equipped with appropriate and adequate skills and knowledge that remain relevant to the changing nature of work. Sri Lanka aspires to be an advanced knowledge-based economy, and thus, the country has put the highest priority to develop its human capital. This transition to high-value, more complex economic activities will require transforming the entire education system as students will need to establish a strong foundation to create a future knowledge-based society and compete in a globalized world.

⁴ Sri Lanka Sector Assessment, June 2019. TA-8235 SRI: Human Capital Development Capacity and Implementation Support: Secondary Education Reform.

⁵ Department of Census and Statistics, 2018. The Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey of the Fourth Quarter, 2018.

1.3 SECTOR CONTEXT

Over the past decades, Sri Lanka's education system, particularly general education, has proven robust, with the sustained commitment of all the stakeholders who are willing to contribute to human capital development. However, the country is currently passing a period that requires comprehensive reforms of its education system to boost and sustain economic growth and social development. Therefore, the priority has been placed to transform the general education curriculum and related systems to the next level and cope with the challenges in the new millennium, such as globalization, sustainable development, peace, and global citizenship.

The country's education system has to overcome three major challenges to achieve the national goal, **“to be a Sustainably Developed Nation with Sustainable Peace by 2030”**. These include (i) poor quality, relevance, and learning outcomes among secondary-school-aged children; (ii) low completion rates among secondary students, especially in science and more employable streams; and (iii) capacity and institutional gaps. Specifically, the key challenges are summarized as follows⁶:

Quality, relevance, and learning outcomes in secondary education

- **Curriculum.** The curriculum is content-heavy, theoretical, and lacks an inquiry-based approach and practical applications, especially in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This leads to a skills mismatch with labor market needs.
- **Assessments.** The assessment system, with its high-stakes examinations, favors theoretical skills. It is not sufficiently calibrated through benchmarking studies. Thus, it is difficult to know how students in Sri Lanka perform in comparison with students in other countries and whether the problem lies in poor learning or consistently difficult exams.
- **Inadequate educational quality.** The quality of teaching and educational leadership, particularly in grades 10–13, is inadequate and also leads to poor learning outcomes. Teachers with sufficient subject knowledge (particularly in STEM subjects) are in short supply, and some teach subjects they are not qualified to teach. Teachers' professional development tends to focus more on content knowledge to improve pass rates at the examinations. Hence, teachers often “teach to the test” instead of fostering inquiry-based learning.

Low completion rates among secondary students, particularly in science streams

- **Limited access to science streams.** Only 28% of all schools offer classes for students beyond grade 11 (with 'A' Level streams), of which only 36%—the so-called "1AB schools"—offer all four STEM streams. Thus, 1AB schools represent just 10% of all schools. Other types of schools offer only arts and commerce streams.

⁶ ADB (2020). SECTOR ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY): EDUCATION

- **Imbalance in the deployment of teachers.** There is a shortage of qualified STEM teachers and a deployment practice skewed toward urban schools, making it difficult for non-urban students to access STEM streams. As a result, the government’s efforts to increase STEM access in provincial and rural areas by providing additional classrooms and laboratories have not led to the intended results. Secondary school enrollment in rural areas still remains skewed toward arts subjects.
- **Lower scores for science stream.** Lower scores in science discourage students. The pass rate in bioscience (54%) and physical science (52%) was clearly lower than in the arts (66%) stream.
- **Limited places in some tertiary courses.** Limited access to tertiary STEM courses pushes secondary students into the arts stream to boost their chances of entering the university. In 2018, arts, law, management, and commerce accounted for 52% of total undergraduate enrollments, while science, engineering, architecture, and computer science accounted for 34%.

A highly structured and well-planned outcomes-based education system is the most effective means to achieve the national target for the country's economic prosperity for a long time. Identifying the desired values, character, and identity of a citizen who has completed the general education system is helpful to a nation in many aspects like planning and providing higher education opportunities, creating active democratic citizens for the sectors that provide economic strength to the country.

Sri Lanka is of the strong belief that the country's economic development can only be achieved by a commitment to a well-planned education system that promotes 21st Century skills to keep up with the changing nature of work amidst the 4th industrial revolution.

2. EDUCATION POLICY AT A GLANCE

Sri Lanka’s general education policy has evolved over more than 75 years. The most significant and decisive policy decision for the country's education was made in 1945 with the approval given to the “Free Education Bill” presented to the State Council by Late Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara in 1943. Since then, Sri Lanka has been committed to free equitable education for all children between the ages 5 and 16. At present, while retaining the core values of the education policy evolved over the past seven decades, the government’s education policy is governed by the concept “A productive Citizen and a happy family” that makes “human resource development the primary responsibility of the government.”

Sri Lanka has put forward the General Education Sector Development Program 2020–2025 focusing on four thrust areas: (i) quality of education improved, especially in science, technology, and mathematics; (ii) equity in education strengthened—equitable learning opportunities for all children; (iii) stewardship and service delivery of general education strengthened; and (iv) evidence-based education policymaking and planning enhanced.

Against this backdrop, the development of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) is guided by the country's determination for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, the SDG4 with an overall goal to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". It consists of five critical areas and specific indicators to be achieved by the year 2030.

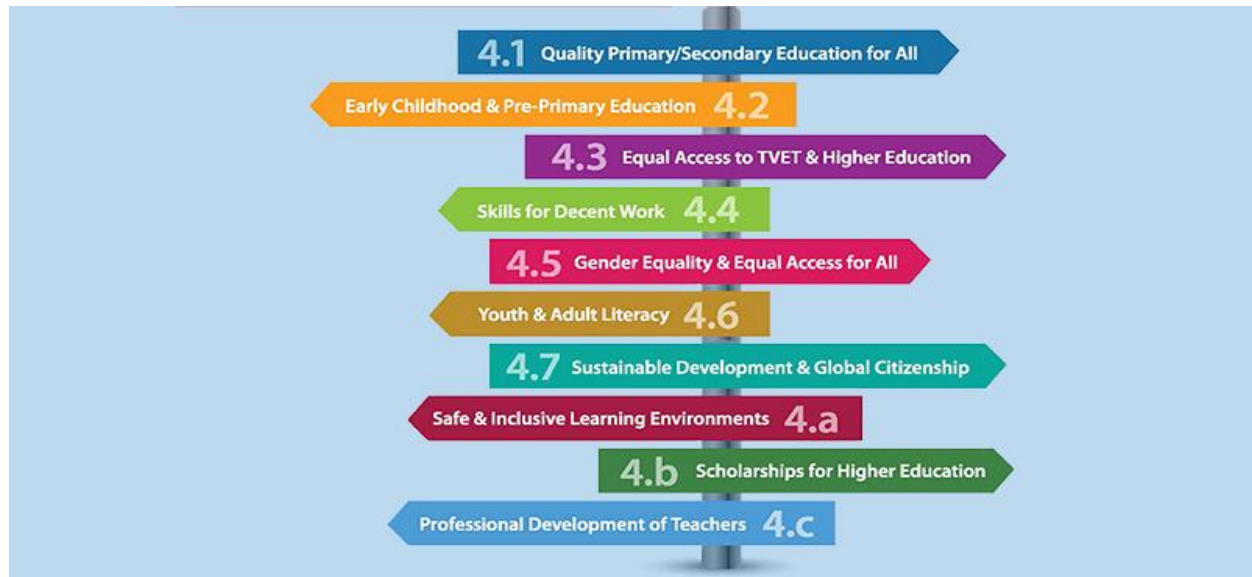


Figure 1 Targets of the Sustainable Development Goal 4

The government has reported⁷ that despite positive progress towards achieving some SDG4 indicators, critical gaps and challenges exist on the following indicators. While primary and lower-secondary enrollments and completion are notable for Sri Lanka, critical gaps and challenges remain the upper-secondary and tertiary enrollments (SDG 4.1). Participation to technical, vocational and higher education remains low, which hampers imparting relevant skills for youth and adults to have decent jobs, employment and entrepreneurship (SDG 4.3 and 4.4). Early childhood education in Sri Lanka has increased but remains lower than peers in the same income group (SDG 4.2). Also, the household survey data revealed critical disadvantages among vulnerable people, including people with disabilities, rural/urban, and among the poor (SDG 4.5). Furthermore, persistent issues of deploying qualified and skilled teachers suggest needs to reform systems for teacher's professional development (SDG 4.c). Much could be done for education interventions to be responsive to equity, health, clean energy, social justice and gender equity, social cohesion, inclusive education, poverty, and environmental conservation in achieving sustainable development (SDG 4.7). The country reaffirms its commitment to address the quality and relevance of education throughout educational levels, through reforming the national curriculum. As such, SDG goals are also setting National Goals for all nations, including Sri Lanka.

⁷ Government of Sri Lanka (2018). Voluntary National Review on the Implementing Sustainable Development Goals. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19677FINAL_SriLankaVNR_Report_30Jun2018.pdf

Besides the SDGs highlighted in the previous section, the National Curriculum Framework discussed below has extracted the development goals of the Government of Sri Lanka adopted within the “A Vision for a Resurgent, Prosperous Country, 2019”, which aims at producing;

- a law-abiding and productive citizen,
- a happy family,
- a disciplined, organized and peaceful society
- a vibrant human resource for a prosperous nation.
- a healthy citizen - health is one of the main pillars in human capital development.
- an informed and knowledgeable person
- a person with the culture of “Working for the Country”
- a person who respects the rights of differently abled and disabled people.
- a belief that every child can learn and will be given the opportunity to do so.

The curriculum and the learning process will ensure that the country will achieve these national development goals and meet the expectations, thus making the tagline of the curriculum reforms “Transform Education: Transform Sri Lanka.”

2.1 NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1.1 Curriculum Development Process

A clear and pragmatic description of the national curriculum development process is an integral part of the national curriculum framework to provide realistic guidance to the education system of a country. Since the education system in Sri Lanka is predominantly handled by the state, a consensus regarding the curriculum development process is needed. It paves way for stakeholders to be a part of a more sustainable and a realistic system that is ready to consider the rapid changes around us a priority. The main objective of this section is to look at the curriculum development process keeping its scope as the principal consideration.

- **Curriculum Cycle**

A fundamental consideration of curriculum development is the time duration of a curriculum cycle. Determining how long a curriculum exists without being amended is associated with several factors. One such factor is the rapid changes taking place in the world around us owing to the explosion of knowledge. Especially, with the advent of globalization the world started experiencing remarkable changes and developments in all aspects of life and therefore there is a need to rethink what we knew yesterday in order to adjust ourselves to the realities of today. For example, some of the jobs we considered as very important just over a five or six years ago are rapidly losing their importance and new jobs we never thought would exist are emerging in today’s world. In addition, the 4th industrial revolution that is in operation currently is demanding more and more creativity, critical thinking, and innovativeness from the masses. In this context, we are presented with the challenge of determining when to bring changes to the curriculum and how to do that. The curriculum cycle of the Sri Lankan education system can be discussed in the light of

two concepts, reforming and revising the curriculum. It is important to note that curriculum design is essentially a process that is ongoing, needs to be flexible and adapt to changes.

- **Reforms Cycle**

Bringing a total reform to the education system is a complex task that involves careful planning and elaboration. A reform movement demands it to be based on the learnt lessons from the systems that existed for a considerable period of time and the socio cultural, political and economic foundation of the country. Considering all these requirements it is proposed that the curriculum reforms cycle for Sri Lanka should be eight years. In other words, curriculum developers and policy makers of the country should be ready with a new curriculum that suits the contemporary context and the future needs.

- **Revision Cycle**

Bringing revisions to an existing curriculum should be a process that requires prompt thinking and action. Since the world keeps on changing rapidly it is necessary to review the curriculum in practice continuously in order to align it with the improvements happening in the world. On such occasions the expectation of the curriculum developer is to identify the exact revision to be made and to fix it to the right place without making the process complicated to the teachers and learners. A careful and continuous review of the curriculum is needed in this respect. After such review the experts should decide where the change is needed; the syllabus, textbooks, teachers' guides, supplementary materials etc. It is, therefore suggested that there should be at least two revision cycles within a reforms cycle with a time frame of four years. In this way, it is possible to organize the curriculum development process with two revisions if necessary, at the end of the fourth year and eighth year leaving two years for the next reform based on the lessons learnt.

- **Curriculum Research**

Learning from the existing system has always been the best way to make the future interventions more effective and fruitful. In terms of curriculum development, it is the curriculum research that provides direction to the quality assurance of the curriculum process. Strong commitment to curriculum research in this context is the key to success of the curriculum reforms to be introduced to the country beyond 2020. Identifying the priority areas for research, managing curriculum research, and creating a platform to share research findings among the stakeholders are the most important factors that would make curriculum research worthwhile.

- **Curriculum Planning, design and development**

A national curriculum should be crafted very carefully thinking of the national as well as global priorities and dynamics. It is in this context; curriculum planning design and development become instrumental within the curriculum process. Curriculum planning of a country should be a holistic process where all stake holders must contribute. Especially, it is very crucial to obtain the contribution of the industry during curriculum planning exercise to make the final outcome match with the expectations of the beneficiaries. Once a strong foundation is laid with a scientific planning exercise it is pragmatically possible to design and develop the national curriculum.

Curriculum planning, design and development, in this sense, can be identified as the most sensitive stages of the process and therefore, should be handled with utmost care.

- **Curriculum Piloting**

Piloting the national curriculum before it is implemented nationwide is an instrumental part of the curriculum process. It is at the piloting stage the curriculum is tested at the classroom level and feedback can be obtained regarding its suitability to create the next generation of citizens to the country. Curriculum piloting is a very dynamic process. Information gathered during the piloting stage help the curriculum developers to fine tune the curriculum and implement flawlessly. As a result, curriculum piloting is identified as a compulsory stage of the process.

- **Curriculum Implementation**

A curriculum, however much carefully prepared, begins to display its true potential only when it is implemented properly. It is in the hands of committed and proficient teachers who interpret the curriculum and administrators who assure smooth implementation, a curriculum can become a tool that molds the future generation to achieve the development goals of a country. As a result, planning the curriculum implementation too is perceived as a part of the curriculum development process. A detailed account of the curriculum implementation in Sri Lanka is presented separately.

- **Curriculum Evaluation**

Curriculum evaluation is the phase that gives feedback to the stakeholders regarding their effort. A better evaluation process not only provides insight to future curriculum reforms but also helps the teachers and administrators to adjust their plans accordingly. It is the feedback that helps each and every stakeholder to improve the quality of the entire curriculum process.

2.2 VISION AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE CURRICULUM

The Educational experience provided to the children during the schooling years should be able to create the citizen the country expects. This we can identify as the desired outcome of general education. For quality assurance of the country's education system also it is essential to define the citizen the system intends to produce. Identification of the core skills for the general education is one way of achieving this objective.

It has been agreed widely that cognitive skills or intellectual abilities (such as analytical or critical thinking skills, decision-making skills, or general problem-solving skills) and the knowledge base together make up important mental resources that need to be mobilized for competent performance. However, it is now widely acknowledged by experts that meeting a demand or accomplishing a goal also requires the mobilization of social and behavioral components such as motivation, emotions, and values. So, the curriculum should be able to instill values while developing knowledge, skills and dispositions. It is proposed that the Sri Lankan general education system should be geared to empower students with the following core skill areas.

3 STATEMENT OF BROAD LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The 21st CC framework is a guide below on the foundational literacies, competencies and character qualities.

Exhibit 1: Students require 16 skills for the 21st century



Note: ICT stands for information and communications technology.

Source: Taguma, M., Feron, E., & Meow Hwee, L. I. M. (2018). OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030: Conceptual Learning Framework

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS AND LITERACIES

- **Literacy and numeracy**

Literacy in today's context is no longer limited to being able to read and write. With the advancement of education, life standards and specifically because of the human urge for knowledge the concept of literacy has undergone a paradigm shift encompassing all spheres of life. Science that was limited to the academia for many centuries is no longer a limited concept. Being able to think critically of the "scientific processes and concepts" (National Academy of Sciences, 1996) needed for everyday life is an essential competency that everybody is required to achieve. This ability makes the life more meaningful for individuals since they are able to make informed decisions in everything they do. In this view, it is possible to perceive scientific literacy

as a dynamic construct that makes human existence more sustainable and worthwhile. It is in this light scientific literacy is considered a core skill the Sri Lankan learner should achieve through general education.

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- **Technological literacy**

Technological literacy is also one of the newly introduced constructs that makes the outcome of education of a country richer and wholesome. Because of the profound effect of technology on human life there is a need for individuals to be updated with technological knowhow to make their day to day activities more effective and efficient. Especially, the modern technological tools that keep on advancing rapidly demand the technological literacy of people to put them in optimum use to bring quality to life. As a result, the education reform processes all over the world focus heavily on technological literacy as a core skill meant for learners who, as citizens, are expected to integrate technology to enrich their lives creating information and managing the huge influx of information carefully and wisely.

- **Media and information literacy**

In order to be media and information literate the skills to identify, locate, access, evaluate and use appropriate information for building knowledge. As ICT and AI use is increasingly spreading to all areas of working life the students need to require also a fundamental understanding of the ethical use of ICTs

- **Management, Financial and Entrepreneurial literacy**

The fourth industrial revolution that has just started to spread the wings over us demands more and more individuals who are creative, innovative and analytical in shaping the life for the next generation of people. Especially in a world where we have witnessed some of the most attractive jobs of the previous century becoming obsolete and new jobs, we never thought would exist emerging. In this ever-expanding world of new knowledge management, financial and entrepreneurial literacy is going to be an essential element of successful life. As a result, this is identified as a core skill area for the general education and it is suggested that Management,

Financial and entrepreneurial literacy should be achieved throughout the curriculum through an integrated approach.

- **Quantitative reasoning**

In a world that is becoming increasingly complicated with the excessive amount of information to be processed, logical thinking is an essential aspect of life. For individuals to be thinking logically quantitative reasoning is the core skill. Quantitative reasoning involves with the ability of the individuals to make connections mathematically. Mathematics plays a major role in developing quantitative reasoning of human individuals.

Quantitative reasoning process starts with understanding the problem at hand. Once the proper understanding is arrived at it is easy to follow the next steps; devising a plan to solve the problem, carrying out the plan and finally to reflect upon the solution. When individuals are exposed to the quantitative reasoning during the formative years, it is easy to create an empowered citizen who is able to display the abilities of critical and logical thinking, communication etc.

Interpersonal Skills

- **Effective Communication**

Effective communication is one of the globally accepted core skills a student who enters the world of work after finishing general education should possess. An individual competent in communication is able to communicate with others in a wide range of contexts encountered in personal and professional life. Sri Lankan students are also expected to be effective communicators both within the country and outside the country to win their share of the knowledge economy.

- **Social and cultural skills**

The world our students step into after school education is extremely diverse. Achieving success in a diverse society is the challenge they are expected to meet in order to make the concept of sustainable development a reality. It is, therefore, an essential responsibility of general education to make the next generation of learners realistically aware of the social and cultural diversity among them as an integral part of being global citizens and to be inclusive. In this context perception of social and cultural diversity is proposed as one of the core skill areas to be included in the general education reform movement in Sri Lanka. With the inclusion of this core skill area it is expected to achieve lasting cohesion within the Sri Lankan society while making the future generations to accept the unavoidable realities of the contemporary world.

- **Critical and innovative thinking**

In a world that is becoming increasingly complicated with the excessive amount of information to be processed, creative and logical thinking is an essential aspect of life. Critical and innovative thinking skills cover reflective thinking and reasoned decision making as well as skills for application and the entrepreneurship to turn ideas into action. Creativity enables students to create

new and worthwhile ideas as well as evaluate and analyze their creations. Reasoning process starts with understanding the problem at hand, proceeds to a plan to solve the problem, carrying out the plan and finally to reflect upon the solution.

For individuals to be thinking logically also quantitative reasoning is needed. Quantitative reasoning involves with the ability of the individuals to make connections mathematically. Mathematics plays a major role in developing quantitative reasoning of human individuals. Critical and innovative thinking is essential in creating an empowered citizen who is able to display the abilities of critical and logical thinking, communication etc.

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- **Global citizenship**

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The students are to be active citizens in the democratic Sri Lankan society. They need skills for exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship at the local, state and global level. Conflict resolution skills such as identifying areas of agreement and disagreement, reframing the problem and analyzing the issues at stake are necessary for a peaceful society. For developing respect for the environment, the students need skills and knowledge to understand the environment and the challenges of the planet such as the biodiversity loss and climate change.

With the inclusion of this core skill area it is expected to achieve lasting cohesion within the Sri Lankan society while making the future generations to accept the unavoidable realities of the contemporary world and being able to take individual and collective action for a better future.

- **Intra-personal skills**

Focus of the national curriculum has to be on producing a modern citizen who is capable of facing the realities of the future world which is complex and competitive in nature. The education system should pay more attention to training the students to develop their personality. Developing their personality through helping them achieve 21st century skills is the key to achieve sustainable development goals. Throughout the education the students need to develop their self-awareness, self-discipline and self-motivation. This means the ability to set and balance short- and long-term goals and manage one's life to give it meaning and purpose.

The students learn to understand their personal strengths and weaknesses and interpret their emotions and motivations in order to self-improve. They develop their self-motivation skills to be self-directed learners.

Values and Character

- **21st Century Skills and Personality Development**

Focus of the national curriculum of a country within today's context has invariably to be on producing of the modern citizen who is capable of facing the realities of the future world which is complex and competitive in nature. Developing 21st century skills of the students is a very essential area that comes under the responsibility of the school and therefore, the education system should pay more attention to training the children to develop their personality. Particularly, developing of their personality through helping them achieve 21st century skills can be seen as the key to achieve sustainable development goals.

- **Appreciation of life and Ethical Understanding**

Life on this lonely planet is the greatest gift and unsolved mystery of the universe. Honouring life has become an essential part of our existences more than ever. Learning to respect and preserve life in a very competitive world created by the humans themselves over the past few decades can be identified as the key to preserve life on the Earth. It is in this context Appreciation of Life can be identified an essential core competence area to be achieved through general education of the country. Through this it is expected that the country will be able to achieve lasting peace and harmony, dignity of life and labour, sustainable development etc. It is also suggested that this should be a core competence area to be achieved through an integrated approach within the curriculum.

These core skills can be dealt with across the curriculum when presenting different learning areas of the curriculum through a wide range of subjects. The most important factor to be focused here is the necessity to ascertain that the citizen to be produced is equipped with the core competencies through realistic teaching, learning, and assessment.

3. VISION FOR GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

A sound education reform movement is always guided by a strong vision based on the needs of the country and its people. A people-oriented education system is manifested by the national curriculum crafted based on the lessons learnt over time, considering the specific national development goals derived in association with the Sustainable Development Goals. The ultimate Goal of the general education system proposed for Sri Lanka finds inspiration from three main concepts - challenges of and beyond the 21st century, sustainable national development and sustainable peace.

3.1 ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION SYSTEM OF SRI LANKA

TO LAY THE FOUNDATION TO CREATING A CITIZEN READY FOR THE CHALLENGES OF AND BEYOND THE 21ST CENTURY, AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROCESS OF SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE OF THE COUNTRY

3.2 AIMS OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the general education of Sri Lanka will be implemented with aim of producing:

An active Contributor to sustainable National Development

Who is healthy; actively and productively contributes to the production process with a deep understanding of how to make use of the local, regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities; a life-long self-directed learner who updates the self to interact with the dynamic and changing world

An effective and efficient work-oriented citizen

Who is skilled and employable; an asset to the nation, organization, and his/her team; who contributes in active and positive manner; who is people/ customer oriented and take actions in a proactive, practical and pragmatic manner as a dynamic team player; does everything with dignity and pride in professional manner

An entrepreneur and a person with entrepreneurial mindset

Who is creative, innovative, and constructive; thinks out of the box; takes risks to introduce new ideas, processes, concepts, products, and services to address local and global market needs, to provide employment opportunities and to reduce poverty and regional disparity

A patriotic citizen

Who loves Sri Lanka; promotes sustainable use of natural resources; respects and values Sri Lankan heritage and cultural diversity, peace and social harmony with independent mind set as a responsible citizen; an effective member of family, immediate community, larger community; and thinks globally and acts locally

A good human being

Who is honest, straight forward, ethical and empathetic; maintains integrity; understands the right and wrong; stands against the wrong; understand his/her own strength and weaknesses; respects human rights

A member of a happy family

Who values human relations; is democratic in decision making and implementing decisions; aware of the rights and responsibilities towards others; lives a life full of commitment, caring, and sharing

3.3 KEY ATTRIBUTES OF THE CITIZEN CREATED TO ACHIEVE THE ABOVE AIMS

The Sri Lankan Citizen who has gone through the general education system;

- is a patriot who clearly perceives the demands of the global citizenship while retaining own cultural values,
- is an honest citizen who stands for justice, fairness, and personal and professional integrity
- is able to forecast the unpredictable future acting proactively pragmatically and positively
- is ready to take the initiative and sensible to change and confident in finding the right solution through creativity, critical thinking, collaborative actions and effective communication
- is healthy physically and mentally and ready to appreciate the beauty of life within self, family, society and the world
- is technically and technologically sound through self-directed learning while benefitting from the success of others
- is productive and ready to engage in nation building for sustainable development through a fine blend of modern and indigenous wisdom and redefined applications
- is committed to sustainable peace being inclusive valuing unity in diversity
- has a clear understanding of his aptitude, ways and means of enhancing it and how to use it productively in his future career

4. STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

4.1 STAGES OF SCHOOLING

General education span of Sri Lanka is 13 years. Early Childhood and Primary Education starts at the age of 5+ and finishes at 18+. The general education system is divided into three main stages

1) Primary Stage

2) Junior Secondary Stage

This is the most important age group in the development of knowledge, skills, values and expected national profile for sustainable development of the nation.

3) Senior Secondary Stage which is divided into 2 phases.

Phase 1 covers Grades 10 and 11 leading to the G.C.E. Ordinary Level qualifications.

Phase 2 covers Grades 12 and 13 leading to the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) – G.C.E. (A/L)-examination. The G.C.E. A/L examination currently also serves the purpose of university entrance. G.C.E. A/L is the Senior Secondary Completion Certificate.

Table 1 depicts the stages of schooling in detail.

Table 1 Stages of Schooling in Sri Lanka

School Stage	No. of Years	Grades	Age of entry	Age of exit
Early Childhood & Primary Education	5	1-5	5+	10+
Junior Secondary Education	4	6-9	10+	14+
Senior Secondary Education Phase I	2	10-11	14+	16+
Senior Secondary Education Phase II	2	12-13	16+	18+

The general education system in Sri Lanka operates with four major purposes at each stage of schooling as given in table 2. The ultimate goal of the education system is to lay the foundation for creating citizens who are ready for the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. By doing this education contributes to the process of sustainable national development and peace of the country.

Table 2 Purpose of Education at different stages of schooling

Stage	Period	Purpose	Grades
Primary Education	5 years	Education for basic life skills	1-5
Junior Secondary Education	4 years	Foundation for life	6-9
Senior Secondary Education Phase 1	2 years	Foundation for career readiness	10-11
Senior Secondary Education Phase 2	2 Years	Foundation for academic and professional life	12-13

Vocationalization of General Education

There will be a predetermined benchmarking system that helps the students to decide their educational journey after the completion of Grade 9 CCCE certification. Depending on their choice the students can continue towards the academic streams such as Bio Science, Physical Science, Agriculture, Commerce, Liberal Arts, Aesthetic, Technology, Home Economics, Sports and Vocational. The new curriculum will offer more optional modules on practical skills and life skills. This enables students to develop vocational skills and enhance technical and vocational education to choose the vocational training path. General education will be bridged with the vocational and tertiary education providing sound career guidance and counseling service to all students from grade 6 to 13. It is proposed to establish Counselors to all schools.

School year and teaching hours

At Present, in a full working week of 5 days, there are 27.5 hours of school time. In a term of 14 weeks it is 385 hours. However, with all other involvement in schools with public holidays etc. the Instructional time for a term is estimated as 12 weeks and 300 hours. It is expected the school will implement 300 hours of instruction as the minimum. At present, schools start at 7:30am and ends at 13:30, including 8 lessons of 40 minutes.

In the new curriculum, current 40-minute lessons need to be changed to one-hour learning blocks due to activity based, authentic learning. Arranging the one-hour blocks and the breaks in a school day could be decided at the school level.

In the new School Week, students will have 25 hours of learning and in a School Semester a minimum of 12 weeks. This means 300 learning hours (25 x 12) a Semester. In international credit hour system this means that in a Semester of 12 weeks a student can earn a predetermined number of Credits. This credit requirement ranges between a minimum and maximum number carefully decided by the curriculum experts based on student aptitude, psychological readiness and international benchmarks for school education so that the Sri Lankan school education system could be internationally benchmarked. Upon completing the minimum credit requirement for the academic year a child will qualify to reach the next grade.

After earning the stipulated number of credits during the four years of Junior Secondary Education (Grades 6-9), the student will be awarded the Certificate of Completion Compulsory Education (CCCE). There will be no examination for this certificate.

5. STRUCTURE OF CURRICULUM CONTENT, LEARNING AREAS AND SUBJECTS

This section presents the structure of the national curriculum for the general education in Sri Lanka with specific reference to the content. Broad learning areas and the subjects that provide base for the school curriculum will be presented followed by a description of the ideology of the curriculum to be presented with the proposed education reforms and the focus of the reforms based on three rethinking processes; rethinking the learning process, the school culture and the relationship between the school and the community, and the roles, goals and content of school subjects, Transversal skills⁸ (Transferable) as learning outcomes to support the identity

5.1 IDEOLOGY OF CURRICULUM

- a. Learning is a process, not a product that ends at examinations;
- b. Curriculum will be created as an open, extensive and interactive process to ensure the learner acquiring the 21st century skills beside the essential core learning outcomes, content learning and content deepening meeting human capital profile;
- c. A national core-curriculum is needed to ensure essential basic skills such as Language Skills, Mathematical Skills, Scientific thinking skills, Health, Hygiene and Physical Fitness, Safety and Security Skills, Family and Life Skills, Civic and Community Skills, Social and Aesthetic Skills, Religious, Moral and Ethical Behavioral Skills, Play

⁸ UNESCO. 2016. 2014 Asia-Pacific Education Research Institutes Network (ERI-Net) Regional Study on Transversal Competencies in Education Policy & Practice (Phase II): School and Teaching Practices for Twenty-First Century Challenges: Lessons from the Asia- Pacific Region. Bangkok:

- Skills and Leisure Skills, 2nd Language Skills and International Language Skills, and Wider understanding of Global Issues, etc.;
- d. School Level Curriculum will be a strategic document that reflects our best understanding of humanity, the Sri Lankan identity and heritage, social and interpersonal skills and learning from local, national and global environments;
 - e. Learners look outside the classroom and school wall to achieve 21st century skills through Authentic Learning and develop psycho-social skills and life skills;
 - f. Curriculum will be diversified to overcome its present stereotype nature facilitating student interests and abilities to be developed through investigative and interactive learning of wider range of modules;
 - g. Curriculum will have the flexibility for fast learning gifted children to complete studies on fast track and the slow learner to complete the course of studies at his or her own pace;

5.2 Focus of the Curriculum Reform

Rethinking the learning conception

- a. Learning has to be a joyful activity and is important students learning through experiences and activities, deepening knowledge;
- b. Importance of working together through collaborative and cooperative learning, and learning to learn through active methods, and interaction and explorations;
- c. Renewing the idea of learning environment to go beyond the classroom, the school walls to community, environment, workplaces, industry and commerce;
- d. Learner develops wider horizons of the interdependence of geography of human settlements and the global challenges faced for human existence.

Rethinking the school culture and the relationship between the school and the community

- a. School as a learning community the authentic learning needs to experience knowledge by doing more practical work and explorations and school community needs to facilitate such learning;
- b. School has to cultivate diverse and open cooperation with many organizations of learning, i.e. agriculture services, industry, service agencies, historical religious and cultural sites and educational institutions, social agencies where the child could fetch and develop values, identity and widen the learning outcomes and the horizons;
- c. Teacher as a facilitator of diverse learning oppose to bookish teaching, notes taking, testing, go beyond these conventional practices to facilitate explorations, experimentation, innovations and inventions;
- d. School and Community working together to facilitate learning.

Rethinking the roles, goals and content of school subjects, Transversal skills (Transferable) as learning outcomes to support the identity

- a. Development and the ability to live in a sustainable way;
- b. Develop life skills with a closer cooperation with homes to understand family living to sustain a Happy Family;
- c. Health habits, Food Security practices, Religious practices, Cultural values and skills to be enhanced through school and home, and school and community working together widening the world of learning.

5.2 BROAD LEARNING AREAS

Broad learning areas identified in the general education curriculum of a country reflect the ability of the particular nation to cope with the challenges for sustainable development and growth in a constantly changing world. In the Sri Lankan general education system, the learning areas have remained more or less static over the past few decades irrespective of the changes occurred around us. However, a fundamental consideration of the contemporary education is whether we need to revisit these learning areas in order to facilitate the new generation of citizens to perceive the world around them; a world that keeps on changing rapidly. It is keeping this fundamental consideration as the principal guideline the following ten learning areas are proposed to the general education curriculum. However, it is emphasized that the broad learning areas identified should not be considered as subjects prescribed for the general education in Sri Lanka.

(i) Language and Literacy Education

Achieving literacy is one of the main objectives of general education. In today's complicated world the term literacy is used to describe the abilities of individuals in various aspects of life such as ICT literacy, media literacy and so on. However, when literacy is considered in its very basic sense, "the ability of an individual to read and write", the fundamental consideration of education in achieving literacy can be identified as language education. In a world where multilingualism is the norm language education within the general education system can be categorized into two areas; learning of one's own language (mother tongue) and learning of other languages. Medium of instruction at the school is another important factor to be considered here.

In deciding all these, curriculum designers need to take the national language policy of the country as the guiding principle for language education. Language education policy in Sri Lanka is deeply rooted in the cultural diversity of the country where a long-standing tradition of valuing multilingualism exists. The two official languages: Tamil and Sinhala used by the vast majority of the people in Sri Lanka and the most essential international language: English provide the backbone of the general education curriculum in terms of language and literacy education while all the other languages taught at school are seen as value addition to the citizen to be produced at the end of school education.

All language learning efforts within the school system should be geared to creating the citizen who is able to communicate effectively in both local and global contexts to achieve excellence in all spheres of life. Particularly, the language teaching should be a process that empowers the learner to use whatever languages they learn as tools rather than teaching and learning about the language which is purely an academic endeavour that should be dealt with in other contexts

and when and where appropriate. It is proposed that language education within the general education context in Sri Lanka should have three main objectives;

- a. to learn language/languages for basic interpersonal communication – Students to be taught to speak well and convey ideas confidently; have a good vocabulary, ask questions and reason
- b. to learn language/languages to master the contents of the learning areas – Students to gain command over the language in terms of reading, writing and spoken language.

(ii) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education provide energy for any society to march forward in the diverse and complex world where we are. It is through science education the children get the ability to understand the world around them in a realistic way. Citizens with proper scientific awareness of the world around them are expected to be more sensitive to the world we live thus making it a safer and a comfortable place for humans in the future.

Mathematics education contributes to the creating of a citizen who is logical and critical in thinking and able to make decisions that enable them to find the best possible solutions to the problems they encounter in real life. As a result, it is imperative that all citizens are provided with mathematics education in such a way that it does not hinder their further education. Basic knowledge in technology and engineering too are considered to be pillars of modern education where the learners are provided training to cope with the challenges brought as a result of rapid expansion of knowledge and technology. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics education within the school system is expected to serve two major purposes; a) to ensure a sustainable pattern of life for every citizen of the country, and b) to motivate more and direct more individuals to further education in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

More importantly, it is this broad learning area that empowers a nation to deal with the challenges posed by the need to identify the dynamics of the 4th industrial revolution knocking at the doors of nations. These disciplines should also empower students to inculcate inquiry and problem solving which are integral to learning STEM subjects.

(iii) Commerce and Entrepreneurship Education

As a nation we are heading towards an era where the objective of education should be producing more job opportunity providers than job opportunity seekers. To help achieve this objective of education the general education curriculum should be rich enough to provide more opportunities for learners to focus on entrepreneurial skills. Further, financial discipline of individuals too is a very important factor that contributes to the overall economic development of the country as a whole. Commerce and Entrepreneurship education, in this respect, is identified as the best broad learning area that could contribute to creating of a nation geared

towards reaping the harvest of knowledge economy. In addition to building foundational business knowledge and skills, and employability skills, the aim should be to develop an enterprising mindset, and resilience to overcome challenges in a volatile world.

(iv) Humanities and Social Science Education

Humanities and social science education as a learning area in the national curriculum provides opportunities for the learners to realize their identity within the globalized society while valuing the diversity they experience in their specific contexts as an integral part of life. Involvement of Humanities and social science education in the general education curriculum is visible throughout the school span at different levels. This wider representation of Humanities and Social Science provides learners with an array of opportunities to develop their core competencies while providing the necessary skills to integrate their learning with other broad learning areas. It is this learning area that creates a strong foundation to produce a citizen with positive attitudes towards the world they live since they get opportunities to have a holistic view of the world around them. Humanities include topics from History, geography and social Studies which are important to develop students' identity as a Sri Lankan, have a sense of belonging to their immediate community and nation and participate in their country's development.

(v) Peace and Citizenship Education

Peace and citizenship education within the general education contributes to the creating of a strong civil society in the country. This area of learning is, perhaps, the most important aspect of education in empowering the citizens to benefit from the mission of educating a nation. Particularly, the skills developed within a child such as understanding the dynamics of the diversity around us, valuing democratic practices, decision making, peaceful coexistence can be seen as the building blocks of a future society that is geared towards reaching the true benefits of globalization.

(vi) Aesthetic Education

Aesthetics is one of the most essential broad learning areas celebrated in general education curricula with equal emphasis over the historical development of education. The most prominent core competency linked to Aesthetic education within the curriculum is Appreciation of Life. However, the strength of Aesthetic Education is not limited to Appreciation of Life. Within the technological world we experience today where 4th industrial revolution is in the forming Aesthetic Education as a broad learning area plays an imperative role in converting learners to design experts, which is one of the major drives in the society we live today.

Over the span of the national curriculum, the presence of Aesthetic Education should be planned in different ways considering the main objectives of each stage of schooling and at the same time with more practical orientation making education more meaningful for the learners.

(vii) Environment and Sustainable Development

The world we live at present has presented a plethora of problems that have to be addressed immediately in order to ensure sustainability of human life on this lonely planet. Human activities over the past few centuries have made the earth an uncomfortable place for life. Climatic changes, environmental pollution, global warming, depletion of natural resources are some of the problems that need immediate attention of the world to make the world a safer place for many generations to be born in the future. In a realistic effort to find lasting solutions to mitigate these problems, it is strongly agreed that the education system of a country has an unquestionable responsibility to intervene. It is therefore, the curriculum reform movements of the new millennium make notable efforts to address the issues related to environment and sustainable development through general education since the idea of a pervasive pattern of life can be inculcated more effectively during the formative years of life. Students should develop a concern for their immediate environment to begin with and make informed sustainable judgments about one's action and behavior that constitutes to a sustainable living locally and globally.

(viii) Information and Communication Technology

It is the advancement of information and communication technology that laid the foundation for the fourth industrial revolution and therefore empowering the nation with necessary skills to be ICT literate is one of the major missions of education of the country. This curriculum should be able to prepare students to be technologically proficient, and not only understand, but contribute effectively in an increasingly technologically transformed world. The objectives should be, for example, to build an awareness of technology and its tools that can be used in everyday life, across one's home, school and society. Additionally, to equip students with basic knowledge of ICT devices as well as teach them the fundamental computing knowledge and skills and its place in society.

(ix) Health and Physical Education

From ancient times the importance of making Health and Physical Education a core component of education has been emphasized by various philosophers. Health and Physical Education as a broad learning area within the general education system of the country would provide the foundation to creating a healthy and a strong nation. Particularly, in a world where unhealthy lifestyle of humans is one of the serious concerns giving prominence to health and physical education as a broad learning area in the national curriculum is an essential consideration. The purpose will be to enable students to understand and practice the values and attitudes necessary for a healthy and active life.

(x) Education for Work

Making the next generation ready for work is one of the responsibilities of education. A major concern of education in this regard is creating a culture of work where labour is respected and celebrated by every citizen. With the advent of 4th industrial revolution, it is crucial for a country to assess its manpower needs scientifically and re-aligning work education to meet the changing demands of the global economy. Since over the past few years we have experienced

hundreds of new professions emerging and old ones becoming obsolete or replaced by technology, education systems have to be continuously ready to face the ever-increasing changes in the world of work.

In summary, the curriculum could be developed subjects based or themes, with much flexibility and diversity. In the themes-based structure the learning areas and subject content, transversal competences, skills and attitudes would be defined under the themes. The future themes would cover the subject content of:

- Mother Tongue and Literacy skills for basic communication
- 2nd National Language English Language and literacy skills for basic communication
- Mathematics for Life
- Science and Technology for Life and Society
- Commerce, Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy for lifelong learning
- History Geography and Global Studies
- Civic Education
- Religion and Value Education
- Aesthetics Education (Music/dance/drama/arts and craft)
- Information Technology and Media, E Commerce and E Learning
- Health and Physical Education

The structure could be:

- List of thematic competency-based macro themes
- Details within a macro theme:
 - overall short description of the subject matter that will be taught
 - overall description of skills and attitudes
 - micro themes under each macro theme
- Details within a micro themes /units:
 - subject matter
 - skills
 - attitudes
 - assessment

The table below needs to be present and can be modified for each subject syllabus.

Knowledge and Understanding	Skills	Attitudes & values
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Facts Terminologies Definitions Techniques Equipment Procedures Concepts	Questioning Hypothesizing Synthesizing Problem solving Evaluating Decision making Collaboration Communication	Creative thinking Open mindedness Resilient Responsible
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The general outcomes of education are intended to establish a common purpose for teaching and learning across the country. This chapter would also like to emphasize that while drafting the syllabus for every subject or themes, please ensure that there is alignment with the desired general outcomes of education and 21st CC. A themes-based for Sciences (eg., Diversity in the environment, Science for life) or for Humanities (eg., Sustainable living) can be adopted flexibly.

School Stages

Early Childhood and Primary Education

Purpose: Education for basic life skills

Sri Lanka's Early Childhood and Primary Education (ECPE) process demonstrates the country's commitment to achieve the target 4.1 of the SDGs; ensure quality primary and secondary education for all. The ECPE curriculum offered by the formal school starts at grade one and runs for five years retaining the three tier Key Stage structure proposed in the report of the National Education Commission in 1997 and implemented in 1999 and 2007 education reforms.

Key Stage 1 – Grades 1 & 2

Key Stage 2 – Grades 2 & 3

Key Stage 3 – Grades 4 & 5

ECPE stage thus structured within the school system is implemented with the tagline “Education for basic life skills.” It is during this period the Sri Lankan child is trained to face the uncertainties and complexities of the future with a firm base in competencies needed to face the challenges in life. During the ECPE stage the children are exposed to a range of areas like literacy, numeracy, communication, basic science and environmental related awareness and skills, appreciation of life and creativity through aesthetics skills, religious and value education, health nutrition and physical training, basic life skills, basics of financial literacy and so on and so forth. In delivering the ECP curriculum in the formal school it is expected to bring the theoretical principles of constructivist philosophy in to practice in such a way the entire curriculum promotes outcome and activity based, problem solving pedagogical approach powered by authentic learning. The concept of “more activities and less desk work” promoted and recommended and continued under the 1999 and 2007 curriculum reforms is expected to be strictly adhered to in the forthcoming curriculum reform with the prime objective of creating a strong foundation to producing of a citizen empowered with the ability to face challenges of and beyond 21st century.

Children who complete ECP Stage in Sri Lanka are expected to develop

1. Awareness of the context the child lives in starting with the immediate environment incrementally leading from local to global over time with a deep understanding of the cultural, social, physical, biological, environmental, ecological, geographical diversity that makes life interesting, vivid, and worthwhile
2. Literacy, numeracy, social and cultural skills needed for the development of a pervasive pattern of life that suits the demands of the 21st century and beyond
3. Understanding of basic life skills related to healthy living, character and citizenship, basics of financial literacy, that helps creating a 21st century ready citizen
4. A foundation for balanced personality

Learning Areas involved in the ECPE

1. Mother tongue Language
2. English language
3. Second National Languages
4. Mathematics
5. Elementary Science and Environmental Related Activities
6. Religious and Value Education
7. Integrated Aesthetics Education

8. Health and Physical Education
9. Co-Curricular Activities, Assembly and Interval

Time Allocation – Per Week

Learning Area	Key Stage 1 Time per Week (hours)	Key Stage 2 Time per Week (hours)	Key Stage 3 Time per Week (hours)
Mother tongue Language	5.00	5.00	5.00
English Language	0.30	3.00	3.30
Second National Language	0.30	1.00	1.00
Mathematics	3.30	5.00	5.00
Religious and Value Education	1.15	2.00	2.00
Elementary Science and ERA	4.30	5.00	7.00
Integrated Aesthetic Education	1.00	1.30	1.30
Health and Physical Education	1.40	2.05	2.05
Co-Curricular Activities, Assembly and Interval	3.20	2.55	2.55
Total	22.30	27.30	30.00

Junior Secondary Level of Study

Theme: Foundation for Life

The Junior secondary curriculum of the Sri Lankan education system that leads to the Certificate in Completion of Compulsory Education (CCE) is designed with the main objective of forming the foundation for life. The four-year course of study is designed to provide the learners with necessary skills to face the challenges of the unpredictable future. Learning experiences for this stage will be organized under three categories; Core Learning Units, Elective/optional Learning Units, and Co-Curricular Learning Units. All the learning units within this stage are arranged in the form of modules.

Proposed Core Learning Units

1. Mother tongue and Literacy skills
2. English Language
3. Second National Language
4. Mathematics for Life
5. Science for Life
6. Religion and Value Education
7. Health and Physical Education
8. Information Technology
9. Geography and Global Studies
10. History
11. Civic Education
12. Commerce and Entrepreneurship Education
13. Aesthetic Education
14. Technology for Life
- 15.

Elective and Optional Learning Units Proposed to be offered

The following elective learning units are proposed for the junior secondary level initially and each component is weighted at one weekly credit hour with 12 learning hours per semester.
Appreciation of Literature

1. Leadership and 21st Century Skills
2. Foreign Languages
3. Global Studies (Environmental Studies can come here)
4. Orientation to world History
5. Practical Technical studies
6. Health and Nutrition
7. Science for further studies
8. Mathematics for further Studies
9. ICT studies for Industry 4.0
10. Entrepreneurship and Regional Studies
11. Media Studies
12. Social Service and Work-related Education
13. Climate change resilience and adaptation
14. National heritage
15. Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness

From this category a child can select a minimum of two (to reach the minimum level of completion) or six (to reach the maximum level) depending on the child's interest. To maintain variety within the curriculum and assuring the children of selecting more optional learning units, schools can decide the number of elective components offered in each term. Apart from the suggested elective learning units given here schools and school clusters can add learning units to this section based on the regional and school level requirements with the approval of the Provincial Board of Education and the NIE. In delivering these learning units it is proposed to utilize expertise and resources from the area so that the regional contribution to the education can be maximized which consequently will add to the regional contribution to the GDP reducing the disparities.

Co-curricular Learning Units

Co-curricular learning units are introduced to the curriculum with the objective of producing a citizen with rich personality. It is expected that the children will improve their leadership skills, team building skills, communication skills and many others when they are engaged in these learning units. There are three learning units in this category with a value of one weekly credit hour.

1. Sports related activities
2. Movements (Cadetring/Scouting/Guiding/Red Cross Society/ St. John's Ambulance Brigade etc.)
3. Clubs and Societies

To achieve the minimum requirement to complete the semester a child has to select at least two credits while three will take them the extra mile.

SCHOOL DAY:

Schools start at 730am and end at 1330, with 6 (six) school hours.

Once every week, Students will have a 20 minutes' school assembly session. On the other four days, students will have two 20-minute Physical Education sessions, one Mindfulness Training Session and one Leadership training session. Following these sessions students will be **given 10 minutes to get back to their formal classes.**

Current 40-minute school period needs to be changed to **one-hour learning block** due to activity based, authentic learning. It is currently difficult for a student to finish an activity in 40 minutes and often the 40 minutes' school period usually ends up as 30 minutes of instructional time and which is inadequate for activity-oriented learning situations. A school day will therefore have five **one-hour learning blocks**. However, each school has to decide how the one-hour blocks will be arranged to meet the expected Authentic and Active Learning sessions, those that may require a student to work more than a one-hour block to accomplish any meaningful learning. These decisions could be left open for the teachers and school administrators to decide than centrally dictating.

The remaining 30 minutes of the school day could be given as **two 15-minute breaks** or one 30-minute break as school desires.

CREDIT HOURS

In a School Week, a student will have 25 hours of learning and a School Term consists of a minimum of 12 weeks. This means 300 learning hours (25 x 12) a Term. In international credit hour system this means in each Term of 12 weeks of study, a student can earn 25 Credit Hours - (25CrHrs).

When a student studies a Module one hour a week for 12 weeks, h/she will earn one (1) Credit Hour. So, in a school year with three semesters a student can earn $(25 \times 3) = 75$ Credit hours – (75CrHrs).

However, not all students can study at the same level and of same speed. Some students may need to go slow as they require more time to learn, while some other students may even take more work and earn more credits than an average student. Thereby it is safe to say that a student has to earn a minimum number of credit hours in a Term and earn a minimum of credits a year to complete the grade level successfully.

Fast Track Learning, Special Students and Slow Learning:

The curriculum will have the flexibility for allowing gifted children to complete studies on fast track and the slow learners to complete the course of studies at their own pace.

In any school system there are some students who can learn on fast track. At the same time there are slow learners who need more time for learning and also extra assistance in learning. The fast learners will be allowed to take more modules and fulfill the requirements for achieving GCE O/L and GCE A/L in shorter duration. The proposed curriculum reforms allow fast learners to complete a cycle in a shorter duration and similarly gives more time for slow learners to complete the course with no set time frame. This will allow most of the special education students to complete the course of study.

Modules for Inclusive Education:

It is highlighted that to ensure inclusive education policy implementation, it is proposed that NIE Inclusive Education Department design e (alternative?) learning modules for Students with Special needs, along with the modules prepared for average learner, giving more learning facility and illustrations etc. meeting their special needs requirements. It is proposed the Special Education Unit of NIE in association with the other relevant academic departments, consider preparing 'Alternative Modules' where necessary to facilitate such students. This must be given priority as the inclusive education policies are poorly implemented in the school system. The number of hours to be assigned to each subject or learning area in each stage or cycle are to be decided by the specialists in the field of education when it comes to the children with special needs while the normal school curriculum to be implemented with the children once they are included in the main stream. However, all the teachers should be provided with special teacher development opportunities in the case of inclusive education, particularly in areas like curriculum and lesson adaptation, dealing with heterogeneity of the classroom etc.

Recommendations for Junior Secondary Curriculum

- Essential Core-Learning Outcomes will be made compulsory to all students;
- The curriculum will be diversified on a broad premise allowing all students to develop their interests and abilities beyond knowledge acquiring employable skills;

- In place of the subject-based compartmentalized curriculum a Themes based curriculum with vertical and horizontal integrated curriculum will be designed ensuring the essential learning outcomes as core-curriculum;
- In place of the teacher centered instructional system “Learning Centered” education with Authentic instructional system to develop life skills and employable generic skills and technological and IT and Media skills will be developed to achieve 21st Century expected learning outcomes to facilitate the graduates to join the world of work;
- In place of the year-wise long curriculum a Semester-based (School-Terms based) Modular curriculum will be introduced; eg. School Year currently is 200 days (40 Weeks) of schooling and it is proposed to increase schooling to 42 Weeks to implement three semesters of 14 weeks each

Senior Secondary Stage

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (G.C.E.) ORDINARY LEVEL:

The General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) Ordinary Level will require the accumulated credits beyond the CCCE level. In general grade 10 and 11 will be treated as G.C.E Ordinary Level. However, a child who proceeds from the Junior Secondary Stage to this level has to transfer the number of credits earned within the last year of the junior secondary stage, that is grade 9. Accordingly, beyond the CCCE a learner has to earn further 180 Credit hours to earn G.C.E O/L with certain mandatory requirements and pre-set standards of achievement. The total learning process will follow set procedures for assessment and evaluation. These will be followed by the teachers and school and monitored by the Department of Examination - (National Evaluation and Testing Service)- ensuring validity, reliability of assessment through the appointed panels for School Based Assessment. Beside a Summative Tests for Essential Learning Outcomes of the Core-Curricular Themes will be administered by the assessment Panels appointed by the Department of Examination.

Proposed Learning Units

- Mother tongue and Literature
- English language
- Mathematics for life
- Science for life
- History and Social Sciences
- Religion and value education

- Health and Physical Education
- GIT
- Aesthetics Education
- Language performance (Mother tongue, 2nd National Language & English)

Advanced Learning Units for G.C.E. (O/L) Leading to G.C.E. (A/L)

Selection of Strands

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Strand
 - Mathematics and Physical Science sub strand
 - Biological Science sub strand
 - Technology Education sub strand
- Commerce and Entrepreneurial Studies Strand
- Humanities and Social Sciences Strand
 - Humanities sub strand
 - Social sciences sub strand
 - Aesthetics Education sub strand
- Vocational Education Strand

Co-curricular Learning Units

(Mandatory for Certification and Assessed through qualitative means)

- Sports
- Community Projects and School Clubs

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCE LEVEL (G.C.E. A/L):

General Certificate of Advance Level will require the accumulated 120 credits beyond the CCE O/L. In general grade 12 and 13 will be treated as G.C.E Advanced Level. Beyond the GCE O/L a learner has to earn with certain mandatory requirements and pre-set standards of achievement to earn GCE A/L in the selected specialized stream of study as Arts, Aesthetics, Agriculture, Bio Science, Bio-Technology, Commerce, Home Economics, Physical Science, Technology, etc. There will be mandatory requirements to earn the Advance level certificate. Beside the mainstream core curricular, every student will require to earn GIT-A/L qualification. Every student will have to earn English language as well as 2nd language requirements. Every Student has to participate and earn mandatory credits in Sports and Physical education, and Community Projects. The total learning process will follow set procedures for assessment and evaluation. These will be followed by the teachers and school and monitored by the Department of Examination - (National Evaluation and Testing Service)- ensuring validity, reliability of assessment through the appointed panels for School Based Assessment. Beside a Summative Tests for Essential Learning Outcomes of the Core-Curricular Themes will be administered by the Department of Examination.

Since more weight is given to qualitative assessment under the supervision of the Assessment and Evaluation Unit under the Provincial Board of Education and empowered by the National Evaluation and Testing Service, it is proposed that the students who prove their aptitude to study in a particular stream of study at the end of grade 11 with the required number of credits should be given the opportunity to start G.C.E. (Advanced Level) studies before they receive the results of the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) examination.

Learning Streams for the G.C.E. (A/L) Stage

1. Mathematics Stream
2. Science Stream
3. Commerce Stream
4. Technology Stream
5. Arts Stream
6. Vocational Stream
7. Agriculture

Mandatory Requirements for Certification

1. Language Requirement
 - a. Communication in Mother Tongue
 - b. 2nd National Language
 - c. English Language
2. ICT Requirement
3. Community Service, Work and Project Based Requirement
4. Participation in Physical Education, Health, and Sports activities at School Level

SCHOOL DAY:

Schools start at 7:30am and end at 1:30pm, with 6 (six) school hours.

Students will have 20 minutes daily in the morning, once a week for school assembly, and on the other four days 20 minutes for two Physical Education sessions, one Mindfulness Training Session and one Leadership training session. Following these sessions students will be **given 10 minutes to get back to their formal classes**.

Current 40-minute school periods need to be changed to **one-hour learning blocks** due to activity-based, authentic learning. It is difficult for a student to finish an activity in 40 minutes and often the 40-minute school period ends up being 30 minutes of instructional time, which is inadequate for activity-oriented learning situations. In a school day there will be **five one-hour learning blocks**. However, schools have to decide how the one-hour blocks will be arranged to meet the expected Authentic and Active Learning sessions. It may be necessary to allow a student to work more than a one-hour block to accomplish meaningful learning. These decisions could be left open for the teachers and school administrators to decide.

The remaining 30 minutes of the school day could be given as **two 15-minute breaks** or one 30-minute break as the school desires.

CREDIT HOURS

In a School Week a student will have 25 hours of learning. A School Semester is 12 weeks the minimum. This means 300 learning hours (25 x 12) a Semester. In international credit hour system this means in each Semester of 12 weeks of study a student can earn 25 Credit Hours - (25CrHrs).

When a student studies a Module one hour a week for 12 weeks, h/she will earn one (1) Credit Hour. So, in a school year with three semesters a student can earn (25 x 3) = 75 Credit hours – (75CrHrs).

However, not all students can study at the same level or same speed. Some students may need to go slow as they require more time to learn, while others may even take more work and earn more credits than average. A student has to earn a minimum of 20 credit hours in a Semester and earn a minimum of 60 Credit hours (60CrHrs) a year to complete the grade level successfully.

Allocation of Instructional Time

In a full working week of 5days, there are 27.5 hours of school time. In Semester of 14 weeks it is 385hours. However, with all other involvement in schools with public holidays etc. the Semester Instructional time is estimated as 10 weeks and 275 hours. Schools are expected to implement 275 hours of instruction as the minimum. The distribution of the Essential Core-component, Optional or Elective Component, Co-curricular Activities, and Project-based activities for Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary levels will be as follows:

Table 2: Proposed Distribution of Instructional Time Across Curriculum Components			
Component CCCE⁹& GCE O/L	Junior Secondary Level % Value¹⁰	Component GCE A/L	Senior Secondary level % Value
Essential Core Curriculum	50% - 60% - (180 – 192 CrHrs instructional hours a semester), includes GIT O/L	Core Stream of Specialization –Bio & Physical Sciences, Technology, Agriculture, Arts,	60% (150 hours of Instructional Time per semester)

¹⁰ Note: Actual time allocation will be done at the finalization of Module based curriculum and its final implementation plans.

		Aesthetics, Commerce, Home Economics, Sports etc.	
Optional Curriculum	30% + - (130- 140 instructional hours a semester)	Optional Curriculum will allow students to select more courses along their interest and ability and also could be further extension of the Core Curriculum. This also could enhance IT and Media Skills	30% + (Over 100 instructional hours per semester). This could be extended as after school and weekend authentic learning activities as maybe required.
Physical Education, Sports Activities and co-curricular activities	10% - 15% (20-40 instructional & Activity hours per semester) Notional Learning – Out-side the allocated timetable time for sports activities after school hours	Sports, Physical Training, Health, Mindfulness, Student leadership Programs and Aesthetics	10% - 15% (Over 50 instructional and notional hours per semester for after school sports and games etc.)
Projects/Surveys/Community service and work-related experience	10% (30 hours of Instructional/Time and 100 hours of Notional Learning – Out-side the allocated timetable time- hours)	Core Stream Related Projects and Surveys as Research Studies, regularly monitored by the assigned Panel of Teachers	5% (10- 15 hours of instructional and notional hours -Out-side the allocated timetable time - hours per semester for Project Activities.

SCHOOL TERM:

The School year in Sri Lanka has 190 school days and a 5-day school week. This amounts to 38 weeks of 5 school days a week.

The practice in Sri Lanka is to have three school terms. This will remain so but will be called a Tri-Temester System with 10 - 12 weeks for a Term. A School Term can be defined as 12 weeks and the first Term with many co-curricular events could be 13 weeks, and the rest two Term of 12 weeks each.

However, a school has to ensure a minimum of 10 weeks' instructional program in every Term.

6. STANDARDS OF RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Curriculum reforms never become a reality unless the implementation of the reforms is facilitated with the resources necessary. Specifically, the focus should be on both human and physical resources needed here. Hence, a National Curriculum Framework is not complete unless there is a discussion dedicated to this important issue. Particularly, in a country like Sri Lanka heading towards a new era of economic development, it is very important to set minimum standards for resources and resource mobilization to achieve the true objectives of the investment made for the future of the country. This section of the NCF, therefore, attempts to elaborate on the resources needed for the smooth implementation of the general education curriculum in Sri Lanka.

6.1 TEACHERS AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Teachers play a vital role in the education system. In countries where education systems are celebrated for success, it is clearly observed that the quality of teaching is greatly associated with their success. According to Eric Falt, UNESCO's New Delhi Director, "Teachers are one of the most influential and powerful forces for equity, access and quality in education and key to sustainable global development." This statement is testimony of the importance that the teachers have in the system. A country planning to reform the education system with the main objective of transforming its economy has to pay much attention on its teaching force. Initial teacher development, continuing professional development (CPD), awareness on curriculum reforms, readiness to implement curriculum reforms, and rewards, in this context, are the most significant factors related to teachers in terms of the quality of curriculum delivery.

When analyzing the current teacher cadre of the country, it is possible to identify a variety of initial teacher qualifications.

1. Teachers with Trained Teacher's Certificate
2. Teachers with National Diploma in Teaching (NDT) offered by National Colleges of Education
3. Graduate teachers with Postgraduate of Diploma in Education

4. Teachers with Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) degree offered by national universities

Out of these different categories of teachers with initial teacher qualifications majority of the teachers come under the first two categories given above. It is observed that over the past few years while some of the teachers with the Trained Teacher's Certificate and the NDT have upgraded their teacher qualification to Bachelor of Education having followed the B.Ed. programme offered by the National Institute of Education (NIE). Apart from this there is a minute percentage of teachers with the M.Ed. qualifications and also there is a very minute percentage of teachers without any teacher qualification. Another very significant observation that can be made related to the current teaching force in Sri Lanka is that the majority of the teachers coming under the first two categories given above come under the mid-career and late-career stages of the professional life cycle model proposed by Huberman (1989, 2001). What this shows is that owing to some reason or the other, majority of the teachers have not been motivated to engage in continuing professional development, which is a main barrier in maintaining uniformity and quality of delivery.

Empowering and preparing the Sri Lankan teachers for the curriculum reforms to be implemented in the future should focus on;

- a) upgrading the initial teacher qualification offered by the National Colleges of Education to a B.Ed. degree and making curriculum reforms a compulsory component of the course,
- b) developing a scientific teacher development framework considering the dynamics of each stage of the professional life cycle of teachers,
- c) establishing a mechanism for teachers to engage in a professionally realistic period of time for teaching in keeping with the international standards and recommending a particular period of time to be allocated for professional development activities which are rewarded periodically,
- d) setting up a national level teacher empowerment unit and provincial units attached to the Provincial Boards of Education targeting the curriculum reforms.

With the establishment of these units it is expected that the teachers in the country will be made ready for the efficient implementation of the curriculum reforms. Proposed Applied Resource Hubs network with the National Applied Resource Hub at the NIE will create a state-of-the-art platform for this purpose. With all these interventions it is strongly proposed that each and every teacher in the country should undergo a strong awareness programme to make them ready for the curriculum reforms and no teacher is allowed to deliver the new curriculum inside a school classroom without the certification that they are ready to implement the new curriculum. Unlike the previous teacher awareness programmes that adopted the cascade model where there was heavy transmission loss, with the new curriculum reforms it is expected each and every teacher will be trained directly.

6.2 EMPOWERING OF THE PRINCIPALS, IN-SERVICE ADVISORS (ISAs) AND OTHER OFFICERS

School principals, as the instructional leaders, provide a very significant contribution to the efficient and effective implementation of the curriculum reforms in the school system. It is,

therefore, very important that the school principals are provided with a special awareness on the salient features of the new curriculum reforms and how to implement the reforms to achieve the best results. A special unit established at the Faculty of Education Leadership Management (FELDM) at Meepe should be entrusted with the task of empowering the principals. This process should be a continuous one where all the principals are provided with an initial certificate and then refresher programmes happen at regular intervals. As in the case of teachers presented above, no principal is allowed to handle curriculum implementation related work unless he/she is a certified principal in this area.

ISAs and the other officers involved in curriculum implementation related duties should also be certified by the NIE before they are allowed to engage in such duties. All these standards related to human resources are proposed with the firm objective of achieving the best possible outcomes of general education for the country.

Apart from this all the higher education institutes and faculties of Education involved in professional development of the personnel involved in general education of the country should also offer a course unit related to curriculum reforms and implementation of the new curriculum in order to maintain uniformity in professional development related to curriculum reforms.

In general, all the professional categories discussed above should be empowered with specific area like handling modern technology and media platforms effectively to continue learning teaching during pandemic situations that would emerge at any time in the future, professional networking, co creation of content, content adaptation etc.

6.3 CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Curriculum developers at the National Institute of Education should also empowered continuously with the latest developments in the field. Establishing professional contacts with the organizations and institutes with similar interests and providing the NIE academics with such international exposure will be of long-term benefit to the country in terms of curriculum development.

The NIE is expected to devise short term, midterm, and long-term mechanisms for the sustainability of their professional development policy within and outside the organization. Particularly, establishment of a separate curriculum development wing at the NIE under the restructuring process with well empowered professionals in the field of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, and professional development related to curriculum process is a very important move to ensure efficient and effective functioning of the curriculum related activities. Within the period of five years starting from 2021 the NIE is expected to achieve its human resource development targets based on the following;

- a) revising the cadre requirements of the organization based on a more logical and scientific foundation,
- b) establishing the curriculum wing to support the curriculum reforms process,
- c) empowering the curriculum developers with short term and long term CPD programmes,
- d) establishing a sustainable policy for professional development and committing to the policy irrespective of changes in administration and government.

With a sound human resource development initiative, the NIE will be able to handle the present curriculum reforms initiative as well as the future reforms to support the country's vision for "sustainable national development and peace".

6.4 SCHOOLS, CLASSROOMS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Setting minimum standards for physical resources is also a very important consideration within the curriculum reforms movement. Such standards will, it is believed, support the Ministry of Education at large and particularly the State Ministries responsible for acquisition, prioritizing, and mobilization of such resources to achieve their objectives in a smarter way.

With the implementation of the new curriculum reforms schools are expected to be transformed from their relatively fixed structure to centres of innovation and creativity. Considering learning as a dynamic process the school should introduce arrangements for learning to happen within the classrooms as well as beyond the walls of the traditional classroom. Further, it is recommended that the traditional physical arrangements of the classroom that has been in existence without any change for decades should be modernized considering the dynamic need of the new curriculum vision. Apart from this the following recommendations are also made related to the standards of the physical resources needed for the smooth implementation of the reforms.

1. Establishment of innovations Hubs for students to acquire hands on skills. These Innovation Hubs should be equipped with the necessary resources for the children to engage in STEM related activities as well as other creative activities to improve their critical thinking, creativity, and innovative mindset that will make them ready for the demands of the industry 4.0.
2. Science lab, D & T lab and other labs to be updated with upgraded infrastructure, lab resources, chemicals, enough lab equipment, etc.
3. Creation of spaces, places and opportunities for the children to engage in activities related to improving their financial literacy, financial discipline, entrepreneurship, and work-related skills.
4. Enhancing facilities and platforms for the students and teachers to engage in blended learning, online learning and other innovative pedagogical practices recommended within the curriculum reforms.
5. Equipping the schools with necessary ICT infrastructure, electricity, and connectivity to ease the teachers of unnecessary paperwork that leads to waste of time. An elaborate ICT masterplan for implementation will be useful to draft.
6. Limiting the number of students in a classroom to 35 on all the occasions where it is possible at the moment of implementation of the reforms and gradually making this the norm over a period of five years adhering to a pragmatic school restructuring plan.
7. Establishing a dedicated center to coordinate community service projects and to identify local resources to support the reforms implementation process.
8. Timely provision of learning materials; this includes making the materials readily available both physically and electronically.

7. TEACHING METHODOLOGY

One major contributor to the present crisis in education in Sri Lanka can be attributed to existing problems in teaching methodology. Especially the teacher dominated traditional classroom teaching that happens at many places in Sri Lanka, adopted because of the administrative pressure and ease of execution, has been a greater barrier in achieving educational objectives in the country. Though there are a few schools ready to adopt innovative best practices, since there is not sustainable mechanism to promote and celebrate such practices, scaling best teaching practices across the system has become difficult. Considering the above and the need for recommending the teaching methodology associated with the philosophical base of the curriculum reforms, it is mandatory that the National Curriculum Framework makes a substantial attempt to elaborate the teaching methodology recommended.

Given are the fundamental considerations that provide the base for teaching methodology under the new curriculum reforms.

1. There is a shift from the traditional teacher centered approach to learner- centered constructivist approach in handling the learning content
2. Authentic learning approach will promote learner autonomy motivating the teacher to act more as a facilitator and as a resource person
3. Self-directed learning will make learning more meaningful, worthwhile, and relevant
4. Collaborative learning experiences will be beneficial to both teachers and students
5. Teaching and learning experiences should be designed to promote 21st century skills and with the aim of directing the students' commitment towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They need to learn to be independent and active learners
6. A variety of learning experiences such as community projects, problem solving activities, and activities to promote the research skills of the children should be provided
7. Equity, equality, and consistency should be maintained throughout the country in terms of teaching and learning methodology through a professional and unbiased quality assurance process
8. There should be substantial focus on child protection, security and psychological wellbeing of the children when determining learning experiences

Another important factor is that the curriculum displays greater flexibility and there are cross cutting themes identified so that presentation of subject matter becomes realistic and authentic.. The themes identified thus are;

- a. Health and wellbeing
- b. Communication
- c. Universe: The Earth and environment
- d. Food and Agriculture
- e. Culture and civilization
- f. Engagement and employment

g. Matter and energy

The following grid will further elaborate the vision behind the methodological approaches to be developed for the new curriculum reforms to be a reality.

7.1 THE GROUND OF THE CURRICULUM REFORM IN EDUCATION

<p>Pedagogical reforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforming from WHAT to Learn to HOW to Learn • Facilitate constructive learning and deep learning than rote learning • Spirit of inquiry in students • Promote self-directed learning than directed instruction • Move toward more real-world contexts in learning • To inculcate the spirit of lifelong learning • Shifting from examinations to assessment & evaluation
<p>Integration of knowledge and skills with human values and emotional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad learning outcomes - connections and collaboration in place of subjects, subject-oriented thematic learning • Generic Skills – Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity; Empathy, Interpersonal skills, life skills, Health and Sport, Cultural and Ethical skills, • Integration of Knowledge and Skills • Embodied learning of Competencies with Generic Skills and IT and media skills
<p>Changing school culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School ethos that promotes well-being and participation of students • Exam oriented explicit learning to process oriented implicit knowledge through Authentic Learning; • Renewal of classroom based pedagogical practices to facilitation of learning; • Classroom teaching to be transformed to collaborative, investigative and interactive learning; • School based learning to be oriented and related to the world of work; • Every student to participate and practice sports and physical fitness programs and actively participate

	in school level agricultural, cultural, aesthetic, cadetting, guiding, and indoor and outdoor activities, etc.
Gradual transformation of curriculum as a digital tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing the curriculum with printed material also with e-version of curriculum, e-learning guides, with more and more use of digital learning as the student mature and digital facilities expanded to all schools; An LMS can be developed with student learning resources (a good example in this respect is the Singapore Student Learning Space) • Assess possibilities for gradual integration of digital learning; provide access to Desktops and Laptops for all students from Grade 6 to 13.

8. ASSESSING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

This section looks at the overall assessment process of Sri Lankan school system with special attention on government schools, private schools and Pirivena in terms of its various components such as public examinations, School Based Assessment (SBA), and National Assessment and so on. It further gives suggestions/ recommendations to reconstruct the assessment system in general education. In this section the term assessment refers to the systematic process of evaluation which provide the judgments on student performance and their achievement of learning outcomes.

The main objective of education is holistic development of students in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, and preparing them for the world of work. As a result, classroom teaching and learning process needs to be aligned not only with the general measures of academic ability but also with the employability skills which students will need in the future working environment. UNESCO (2004) emphasized that the assessment is a key component of an education system and the heart of effective teaching and learning*. Regular, reliable and timely assessment is a key to improving learning and enhancing quality of education. Hence, the assessment procedure should not be limited to usual classroom paper-pencil tests which measures mainly recalling ability of students. In addition to that, assessments need to be developed and modified to assess students' higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing and problem-solving skills as well as other variety of performance specially related to affective and psychomotor domains.

Assessment of learning process in general education need to be converted into methodical and more efficient process to support teacher, learner and learning process as well as to provide reliable feedback to students, teachers, parents and the education system. The assessment procedure should help teachers to identify, analyze and interpret different domains of students' performance. On the basis of the information provided from such classroom assessments, students draw life-shaping conclusions about their future. However, according to Sri Lanka Education Sector Assessment

(2017), Sri Lanka has a fairly well-established assessment system and several measures have been taken to strengthen student assessment. Yet, there is a genuine need to improve school-based assessment program into proper formative assessment process and national level public examinations into a comprehensive summative assessment process.



The assessment system proposed under the new curriculum reforms has four main objectives; a) to collect cross sectional data to obtain feedback of the curriculum implementation process for continuous improvement, b) for the purpose of diagnosis c) to provide continuous feedback to learners of their performance, and to assure quality in learning and teaching process, and d) for the purpose of certification and international benchmarking. They also serve to compare learning outcomes across students and ultimately informs educational policy and practice.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AT GRADE 4 AND 9

The system of education has to assess each and every learner to ensure learning effectiveness and to ensure that no child is left behind as a slow learner. The National Assessment is not an Examination of the conventional type but an assessment. Department of Examinations will lead the development of assessment material to be administered in schools to assess basic competencies of primary education in Grade 4 and Grade 9. The national Assessment will also ensure the Sustainable Development Goals of Education. All teachers at Grade 4 must be involved in the assessment of reading competency, and mathematical abilities at school level. The Grade 4 assessment will help to identify slow learners, children with special education needs and help further planning of inclusive education in each school division. This is a measure towards ensuring sustainable development indicators of the nation. The schools will be guided to offer remedial programs to bring the slow learners on par with the norms. All ISAs need to be trained to monitor learning. The National assessment will record each Individual Learner Profile, the School Profile, the Divisional Education Profiles, District Education Profiles and the National Education Profiles, and such profiles will be utilized in the monitoring of schools and mentoring of teachers to ensure that every student achieve the basic milestones required to achieve for success in living.

National Assessment in Grade 9 will be conducted at school level targeting First Language, English, mathematics and Science the Department of Examination will prepare a Standardized Assessment System following the best practices in more developed countries. Grade 9 national assessment will enable the students, schools, parents and policy makers to provide guided learning and enhance learning opportunities for furthering of the learning and for the teachers to provide better guidance.

SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT:

The most predominant assessment will be the School Based Assessment. The learning Units will have built in assessment systems as the most recent development is to define 'assessment is learning'. Formative and continuous assessment will be employed. The GCE O/L and GCE A/L related grade levels particularly Grade 10 and 11 and Grade 12 and 13 will have Assessment panels appointed and trained by the Department of Examinations to increase the validity, reliability and the credibility of school-based assessments. These panels will operate under the supervision of the Provincial Boards of Education. Detailed planning will be done by the Department of Examination in consultation with the relevant authorities at filed level. Especially, the assessment of language performance, aesthetic performance, IT skills and introduce arrangements to include such performance-based skills in the student profile is also the responsibility of the assessment panels.



MINIMUM LEARNING OUTCOMES TEST:

The minimum Learning Outcomes test examines the lowest level of acceptable performance for a student to be certified as successful. This will be a summative test conducted by the Department of Examination to increase the Validity, Reliability and the public acceptance of the learning assessment. The proposed curriculum will rest more on Learning Units based authentic learning system well integrated by themes of learning. Still there will be *Essential Compulsory Learning* package to ensure each student's achievement of minimum competency such as Language/s skills, Math Skills, Science, IT Skills, History, Citizenship, Religion, etc. proposed under the G.C.E. (ordinary Level phase of the Senior Secondary curriculum. Apart from this at the end of the completion of the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) phase also there will be a public examination developed and administered by the Department of Examination. A National Assessment Framework will be developed by the Department of Examinations to make this minimum learning outcome assessment programme a success.

NATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

National Assessment Framework (NAF) developed by the Department of Examinations in collaboration with the NIE and the Ministry of Education will provide a strong scaffolding to the implementation of learning assessment procedure geared towards achieving learning outcomes articulated within the general education curriculum of the country. The NAF will elaborate the discussion created in this section of the NCF make the learning and teaching process more meaningful. Further, the NAF will strongly contribute to the development of the student profile for the completion of general education. The student profile thus created will be the passport for the students to enter the world of work as a productive and an enterprising citizen who continuously upgrade the perception of life.

The following figure illustrates the assessment philosophy highlighted within the national curriculum of the general education in Sri Lanka.

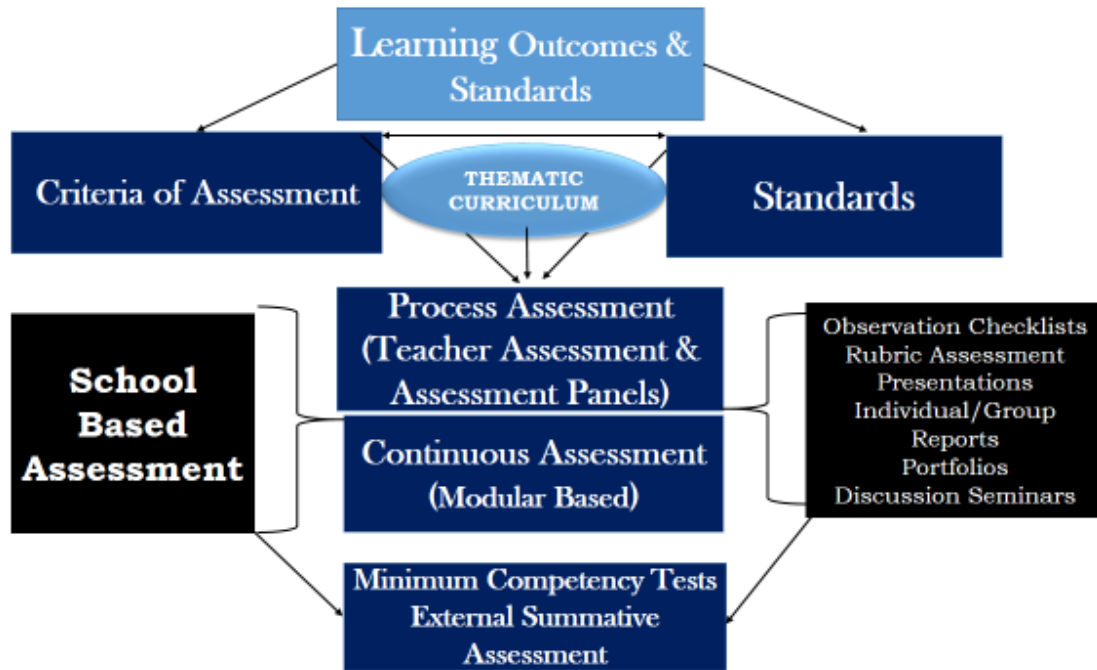


Figure 2 : National Assessment Philosophy

9. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE CURRICULUM

9.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED CURRICULUM:

The proposed reforms are a paradigm shift, particularly at Junior and Senior Secondary Curriculum and it will need several key reforms at school level. This needs to provide training all staff of the school. The learning environment has to be changed to facilitate the new culture of learning. The ‘Cascade Training Model’ is not the best to follow. Therefore, there is a huge challenge of training of in-service-advisers, subject directors, school principals and teachers and orientation of all other non-academic staff as well. The ‘Whole School Training’ Model is the best to follow and Training plans to support curriculum reforms are in the making. It is planned that the initial orientation and training will start in the last quarter of year 2020 and continued. Teacher Professional Forums (Associations) will be formed and all teachers will join their respective association and continuously follow in-service training.

9.2 IN-SERVICE TRAINING & TEACHER PROFESSIONAL FORUMS:

The in-service training has been carried out on an ad-hoc basis. Teacher Professional Development, which will be given high priority, will form Specialized Professional Teacher Education Forums at Divisional Levels – i.e. Example: Math Teachers’ Forum, English Teachers’ Forum, Social Science Teachers’ Forum, Religious Teachers’ Forum, Science Teachers’ Forum, Aesthetic Teachers’ Forum, Principals’ School Management Forum, etc. These forums are to share experience of teachers and to motivate action research and present at annual conventions of these forums. These divisional forums will form the Provincial Forum to enhance professional outlook of the teachers. In the beginning stages, ‘Seed Funding’ will be provided. To make these sustainable professional forums, a member registration system that will enhance teachers’ continuous professional development will be developed in due course. The in-service training will be offered using variety of modalities, including a blended mode, combining on-line and face-to-face learning.

In the implementation of the curriculum the following training sessions are to be carried out in the Year 2020, and 2021 and continue the training through teacher forums thereafter.

- Training of In-service Advisers, over 4500 in number
- Training of all Educational Officials – Subject Directors, Provincial, Zonal and Divisional directors; (Over 1500 in number)
- School Principals (Over 10,000 in number)
- All Teachers at all levels – Primary and Secondary (Over 245,000 in number)

These training packages will be prepared and implemented in the year 2020 and 2021.

9.3 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION:

NIE introduces a revised curriculum in an eight (8) year Cycle and the next cycle is due in the January year 2023.

Pilot Phase: The proposed curriculum being a totally new curriculum, is proposed to do a pilot implementation in year 2022 with selected schools per district and learn from the experience to review, evaluate and revise where necessary to ensure that it runs trouble free when introduced in all schools in January 2023. Orientation for Education Officials, School Principals, Teachers, and other school staff in the policy schools will be organized prior to the pilot.

Plan of Implementation: The curriculum will be implemented according to the following schedule. The new curriculum will be rolled out gradually. The first cohort of Grade 1 students who will learn in the new curriculum will start in 2023 and complete general education in 2034.

Year	Grade level	Coverage	Remarks
January 2022 (Pilot Phase)	1, 6 and 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential learning units • Limited Number of Optional Units • Physical Education and Sports Units • Project Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select at least three schools from a District • Teachers of the selected 100 Schools will be trained in in 3rd Term of Year 2021 • Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation continues by NIE and ISAs
January 2023	Grade1, 6, and 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential learning units • Higher Number of Optional Units to enable students to earn the necessary credits • Physical Education and Sports Units • Project Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Principals and teachers to be trained in Year 2021/2022 • Teacher Professional Associations (Teacher Forums) will be introduce in each of the Educational Divisions • Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation continues by NIE and ISAs
January 2024	Grade 2,7, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential learning units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Teachers will be trained Continuously

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Number of Optional Units to enable students to earn the necessary credits • Physical Education and Sports Units • Project Studies • The First G.C.E. O/L Examination of the new Curriculum will be administered in December 2024 	<p>through the Teacher Forums;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation continues by NIE and ISAs
January 2025	Grade 3, 8, 12	Proposed new curriculum will be implemented in Grades 3, 9, and 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Teachers will be trained Continuously through the Teacher Forums; • Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation continues by NIE and ISAs
January 2026	Grade 4, 9, 13	<p>New Curriculum will be implemented in Grade 4, 9, 13</p> <p>First G.C.E. A/L Examination will be Administered in Year 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Teachers will be trained Continuously through the Teacher Forums; • Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation continues by NIE and ISAs
January 2027	Grade 5	New Curriculum will be implemented in Grade 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Teachers will be trained Continuously through the Teacher Forums; • Curriculum Monitoring and Evaluation continues by NIE and ISAs

9.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE CURRICULUM

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the new curriculum's implementation plays a crucial role in reviewing and ensuring that an intended curriculum achieves its desired outcomes. M&E will be conducted by regular-routine reviews of the curriculum's implementation and a formal and systematic evaluation of the impact of the curriculum. A strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism is necessary for all stakeholders in Sri Lanka, especially the education policymakers

and administrators, technical experts such as curriculum developers, and implementation partners in the field.

First, regular-routine monitoring will be undertaken at the school level in collaboration with sub-national education administrators and instructional leaders. It is a process of routinely gathering information on all aspects of the curriculum implementation process, including teacher training, capacity building of other staff, material and textbook production, etc. It aims to support schools using objective data and information to determine strategies for improvement, which can be incorporated into schools' action plans. Existing tools and approaches will be reviewed, upgraded, and integrated with available ICT systems, where needed, making it more efficient to feed the morning results into continuous improvement.

In addition, a more formal and systematic review will be designed and carried out with a random sample of students, teachers, and schools to evaluate the mid-term progress on selected grades, learning areas, and subjects. The review and necessary tools will be carefully designed in collaboration with the experts. It will compare the achieved/implemented curriculum with the intended curriculum at the national level. The evidence extracted from the evaluation can be utilized to assess the mid-term impact of the new curriculum and determine strategic directions for the next curriculum cycle.

A dedicated curriculum monitoring and evaluation unit at the national level with its provincial counterparts working under the Provincial Boards of Education will be entrusted with the monitoring and evaluation task throughout the period so that it is possible to ensure the quality of curriculum through a professional process.