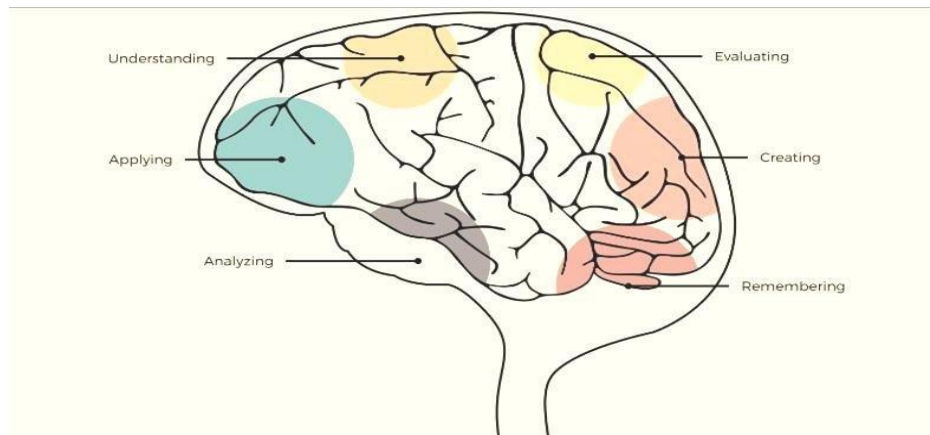




**PROPOSALS FOR
GENERAL EDUCATION REFORMS
2022-2032**
A Preliminary Note

August 2022
Office of the Minister of Education
Ministry of Education



Eight Problems, Sixteen Reforms Solutions, and Multiple Benefits to Stakeholders

THE VISION OF EDUCATION REFORMERS

“We, the reformers, envision our schools to be places of learning where students will lay the foundation for realizing their individual dreams and become partners of the nation’s dream of becoming a strong and sustainable socio-economic system.”

AND OUR MISSION IS...

“To develop and manage physical, human, knowledge, and informational resources of the system of education in order to build our schools as places of learning where students connect their aptitudes and passions with career opportunities and decisions, and where the guidance, inspiration and resources needed to support these decisions are provided.”

HIGHLIGHTS

Contemporary general education reforms are formulated at a time that our nation is undergoing the most serious historical and fundamental crisis of her economy. The economy has come to stand-still while schools are closed for the students and teachers who have already lost many months of school hours due to the COVID -19 pandemic that shattered the society for over two years. As such, it is neither wise nor pragmatic to conceptualize the kind of comprehensive and dramatic reforms that our general education system requires in order to put it again at par with international developments in education.

Rather, the objective here is to address some of the key problems in ways that seem rational in terms of social and economic difficulties the nation is going through. These problems are summarized into eight and the solutions are itemized as 16 in the following table. Some of the important benefits to stakeholders – the students, teachers, schools and principals, parents, administrators and educational organizations as well as employers are also mentioned there.

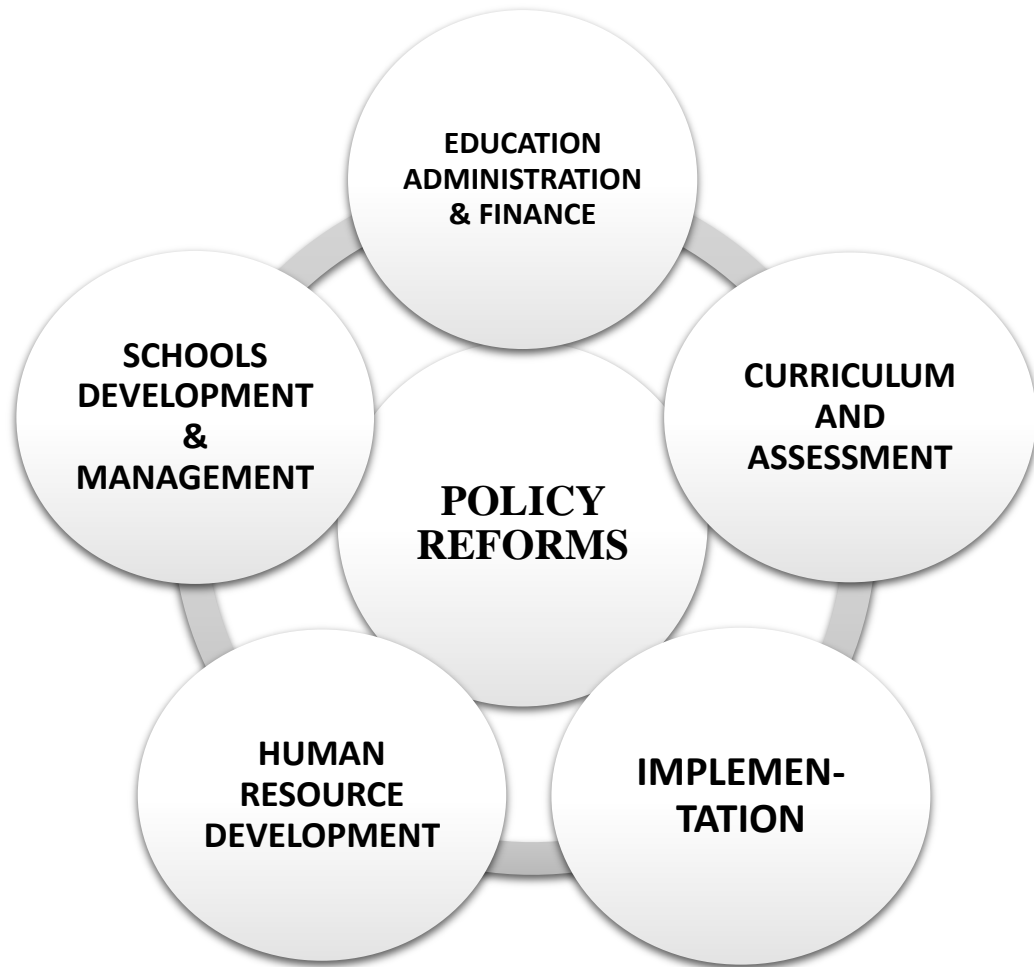
Table 1: Problems, Solutions and Benefits to Stakeholders

PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS	STAKEHOLDER BENEFITS
1. Lack of strong direction of education for meeting national socio-economic challenges of the 21st Century	EDUCATION POLICY REFORMS 1. Introduction of new education policies in all key areas of education 2. A system of planning for policy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarity of direction of education provision ○ Stability of education programs and resource allocation
2. Excessive burden of learning	CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT REFORMS: 3. Content and delivery reforms 4. Assessment reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Less content ○ Rationalized assessments ○ Reduced pressure for private tuition
3. Serious gaps in relevance of education	CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT REFORMS: 5. Clear career paths 6. Focus on skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students select career path ○ Vocational and life skills
4. Inefficient education administration	EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE REFORMS: 7. New school classifications 8. Reorganization and decentralization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New classifications supportive of sound management and resource allocation ○ Linking central-provincial-school levels purposefully
5. Serious gaps in education quality & delivery	SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT: 9. Focus on school quality standards 10. Focus on school supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upgrading schools according to standards ○ School supervision to improve school management ○ Recovering lost learning hours due to

		COVID – 19 economic crisis
6. Lagging staff & teacher development	HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: 11. A National University of Education 12. An Institute of Professional Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing greater higher educational facilities to teachers and staff categories ○ Continuous training facilitation for all categories
7. Inequity in resource availability	SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT: 13. Reorganization of schools development 14. School budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enabling more students to enter developed schools ○ Strengthening management of schools at the low end with budgets and resources
8. Need for effective and efficient implementation of reforms	IMPLEMENTATION REFORMS 15. A system of committees 16. Organizational reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equity in distribution of reform benefits ○ Cost effectiveness in implementation

The eight problems of gaps and the sixteen reform solutions are organized in to six solution domains: Policy reforms; Education administration; Reforms in curriculum and learning assessment; School development and management; Human resource development; and Implementation of reforms. These six domains are depicted in Fig. 1 below.

FIG. 1: SIX SOLUTION DOMAINS OF EDUCATION REFORMS



EDUCATION POLICY REFORMS

1.1 Introduction

With the adoption of free education policy as far back as October 1945, Sri Lanka government recognized that education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable society, and promoting national harmony and development. Even after nearly eight decades, providing universal access to quality and relevant education continues to be the major challenge for education reformers in the country. Though late, the education leadership is now taking on the challenges in the frontiers of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and preparation for the 4th industrial revolution. Concerns and priorities on UN Sustainable Development Goals (No. 04 in particular) run high to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.’ Our efforts will confront, *inter alia*, some of the important gaps and key challenges that educationists of the 21st Century elsewhere too are facing:

- Articulating new aims and a national vision for education;
- Expansion and restructuring of education to meet competitive market demands;
- Assurance of education standards and a quality education at all levels of our communities;
- Restructuring of education administration at national and provincial levels;
- Decentralization of administration and improving school-based management;
- The use of information technology in learning and teaching;
- Development of new curricula and methods of learning and teaching;
- Changes in assessment and measurement practices;
- Search to enhance teacher quality and availability; and
- The need for continuous professional development for teachers and principals.

In developing and formulating policies, we are mindful that an education policy statement must reflect specification of goals to be realized, the values to be respected, recognize preferred

ways of achieving the goals, provide a framework for decisions and share a common message with all stakeholders.

1.2 GENERAL EDUCATION POLICY PROPOSALS: GENERAL

1.2.1 Meaning of General Education

General education, for the purpose of this report, means instruction that presents forms of fields of knowledge and competences, methods of inquiry and expression fundamental to intellectual growth and to a mature understanding of the world and the human condition, as distinguished from ‘specialized education,’ which prepares individuals for particular occupations or specific professional responsibilities.

Thus, in a broad sense, general education is a program that develops students’ general knowledge, literacy, skills/competencies to equip them with the foundation for lifelong learning and well-being. If general education is to achieve these aims, a number of concepts of the human being, illustrating our complex and diverse roles and identities, need to be defined for curriculum development. These include:

- The creative human being;
- The working human being;
- The spiritual human being;
- The social human being; and
- The integrated human being.

Education should ultimately form integrated human beings possessing seemingly conflicting capabilities, attitudes, values and skills which permit him/her to lead a full and meaningful life, actively contributing to the common good, yet maintaining his/her own identity and dignity. From this perspective Sri Lanka’s education aims to pursue the following.

1.2.2 Education for Future

Develop education to achieve a vision for the nation through a vision for education as illustrated below:

A VISION OF FUTURE SRI LANKA

Building the nation for a strong and sustainable future, and become a developed country by 2040.

(in line with the declared vision of the present government)

A VISION OF EDUCATION

“A holistic, progressive and life-long learner for a cohesive, peaceful, patriotic Sri Lankan society attuned to face the local and global challenges.”

- A productive, caring, and patriotic citizen.
 - (NEC Report, p.19)
 - OR

A leading knowledge society in Asia by 2040, using human capital as the competitive force for positioning the nation in the global economic system.

(This is in line with the stated vision of government for Sri Lanka)

1.2.3 Goals of Education

Aligning of national education reforms with national education policy shall be achieved first by focusing on goals of education, and the NEC has developed eight education goals as follows:
(NEC p.19)

- Happy and healthy human being
- Productive individual
- Progressive learner
- Respectful and trustworthy person
- Resilient individual
- Culturally rooted ambassador
- Reflective learner
- Patriotic citizen

1.2.4 Aims of National Education Policy

ACCESS: Education system assures access to education by all children of Sri Lankan citizens in an equitable and inclusive manner, disregarding differences in gender, race, religion, socio-economic status, abilities, discontinuity in school education, and geographical location in the island.

QUALITY EDUCATION: Healthy learners, and enriched, resourceful learning environment, an appropriate curriculum, and learning-teaching process with qualified and committed teachers and a school management

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT: Developing the total personality, providing opportunity for competency development, and providing value education

EQUITY IN RESOURCH ALLOCATION: Need-based resource allocation, state commitment to free education, and provision for private sector participation

EQUITY IN SCHOOL AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT: A commitment to eliminating disparities among schools in terms of financial, physical and staff availability, and provision of teacher training and development equitably and continuously

PRIVATE AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS: Implement the state responsibility for a policy and regulatory framework for private and international schools

ACCOUNTABILITY: Enact laws and adopt policies and procedures to achieve higher levels of efficiency in resource utilization and ensure effective governance, responsibility, accountability and transparency in achieving national goals in education.

1.2.5 Guiding Principles

The development of reform proposals are guided by the following principles:

- i. The system of school shall promote equity and ensure equal opportunities for all by resource allocation, utilization and opening access to curriculum learning;
- ii. Schools achieve excellence in education by providing a high-quality teaching-learning environment managed by a school principal, and supported by educational technology and competent and committed teachers;

- iii. All students must have access to mastering knowledge in chosen areas, developing generic competencies including communication, creative abilities and self-confidence;
- iv. All students must have access to acquiring specific competencies in such areas as technology-based vocations, ICT and open learning, supported by career counseling;
- v. An effective education system is well-integrated across the components of pre-school, general, professional, vocational and higher education; and
- vi. Effective education has explicit links between quality and equity of education and relevance of education to Sustainable Development Goals (UN).

1.2.6 National Learning Competency Framework

The National Learning Competency Framework (NLCF) outlines the human development guidelines in four key areas: *Knowledge*, *Competencies*, *Personality*, and *World View*. There are 12 components given by the NEC which are categorized in to the four key areas below:

<p>Knowledge</p> <p>Understanding the contextual, conceptual, theoretical and pragmatic content of a given subject domain</p>
<p>Competencies</p> <p>Acquiring sets of skills in subject domains and across disciplines to approach real world problems and situations, including communication, teamwork and leadership, creativity and problem solving, managerial and entrepreneurial, ICT, and social skills</p>

<p>Personality</p> <p>Understanding self, improving personality, adaptability and flexibility, values and attitudes and developing professional standards</p>
<p>World View</p> <p>Developing a vision for life, acquiring a world view from multiple perspectives, continuing life-long learning and cultivating a socially responsible individual</p>

Apply this competency framework for developing the curriculum and delivering it in all levels of education, namely, early childhood education and development, primary education, junior secondary education, senior secondary education and upper senior secondary or high school education, as proposed by NEC (pp. 25-31)

1.2.7 Aligning Career Development Paths with Goals of Education

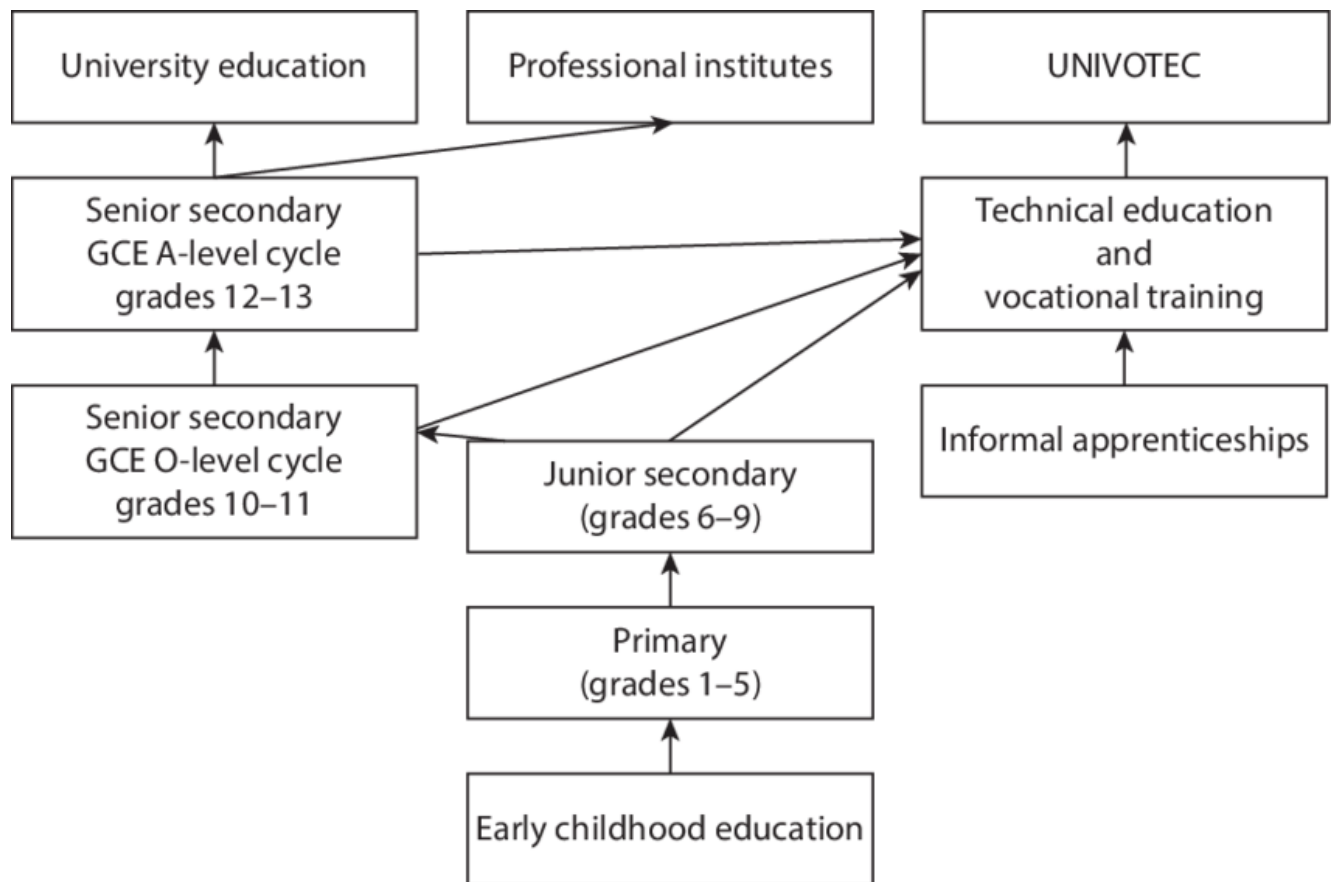
The youth who leaves the system of general education is expected to enter a path of career development. These paths may be in higher education, professional education, vocational skills training, paid employment or self-employment. Whatever the path taken, the youth will face four common challenges in society relating to: *role of a good citizen, role of a productive worker, role of a change agent, and the role of a responsible member of the community of living*. Thus, the goals to reach are:

- i. A youth who has developed the personality holistically, so that the person is able to develop and maintain a healthy life and make independent decisions to perform the role of a good citizen successfully;

- ii. A youth who is equipped with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes well-fitting the economic and social opportunities in the world of work;
- iii. A youth who has leadership qualities including mastery of self, motivated, and thinking creatively so that the person can influence the society's path to progress; and
- iv. A youth who is aware of the broader social and environmental concerns and thus respectful of social cohesion, physical and biological environment, and cultural and religious values

The proposed education reforms intend to make a visible contribution to the above goals, and alleviate the social problems and the mismatch that exists between education and society today. The current system of career paths is given in Fig. 1.1 below.

Fig. 1.1 Career Path for Students

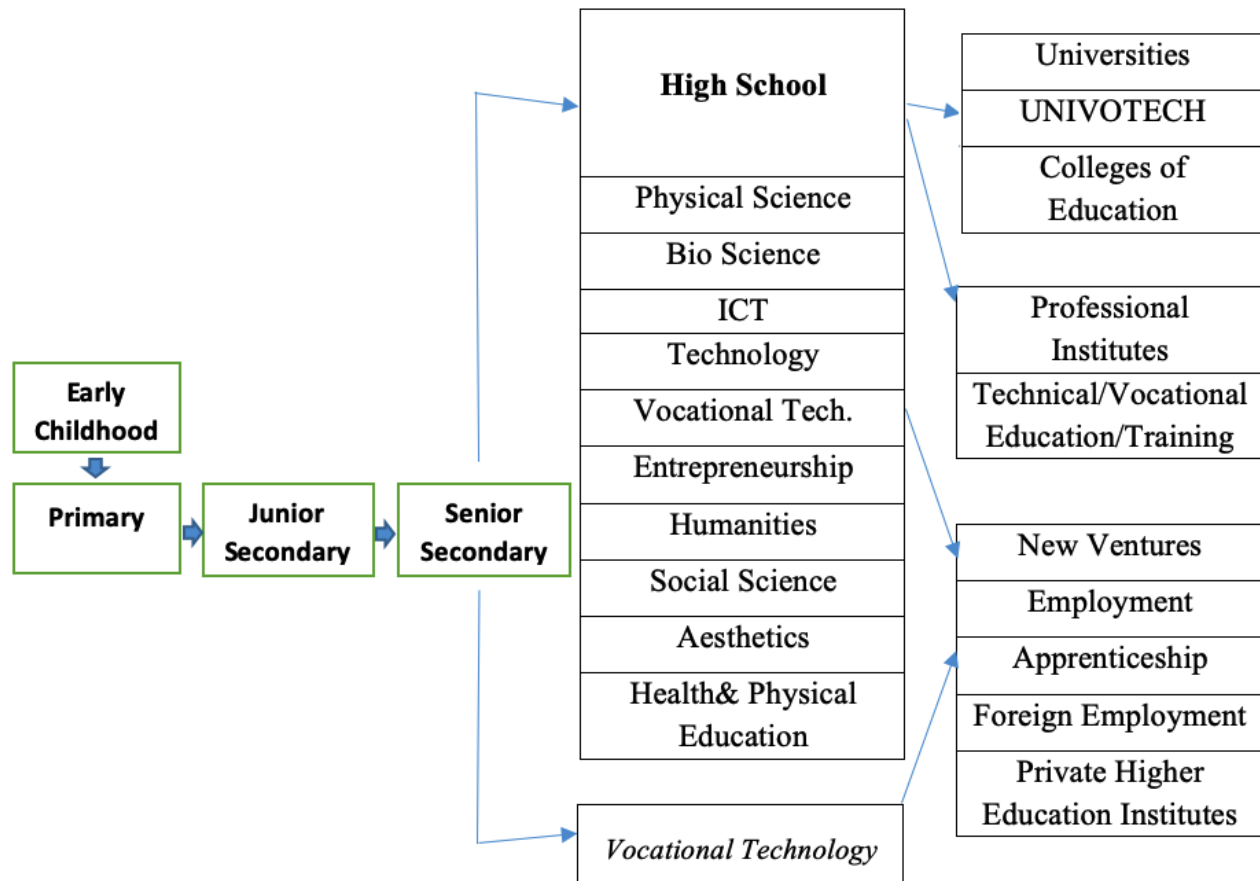


1.2.8 Linking Effectively with the World of Work Driven by the 4th Industrial Revolution

At this juncture in history, the key socio-economic demands that the system of general education is called upon to address must be envisioned in the context of evolving with the 4th Industrial Revolution around the world, and they can be stated as follows:

- i. Developing an economically productive workforce who can accelerate economic growth after recovering the economy from the present crisis;
- ii. Developing an economically productive workforce who can transform Sri Lanka as a knowledge hub in the region;
- iii. Developing a workforce who can innovate by using science and technology in the new global waves of technological transformation;
- iv. Developing a workforce who can transform agriculture, plantation, food, fisheries, light industries, tourism, and manufacturing to become the leading sectors of the national economy;
- v. Developing a workforce who can shoulder regional development and minimize regional disparities of development;
- vi. Developing a workforce who can protect our environment and help achieve Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations;
- vii. Developing a society which is proud of its origins, culture and heritage, and achievements and well positioned to protecting national security and integrity; and
- viii.** Developing a society with high quality of life, guided by the principles of harmonious living, religious and spiritual values, and social justice.

Fig. 1.2 Proposed Career Path for Students



1.2.9 Assess Reforms in Terms of Expected Reforms Outcomes

It is important that we recognize the outcomes resulting from addressing the problems and issues in education from the view point of beneficiaries of education, mainly, students, teachers, parents, and employers. They are the most affected and the most likely beneficiaries of reforms. The society at large also is affected. The key outcomes expected by addressing the problems and issues by reforms are:

I. Reduced School Disparities and Admissions Pressures

- a. Reducing the inequitable distribution of resources among schools which results in disparities of quality of education available to a large proportion of students in the island while exerting heavy pressures on a small group of ‘popular’ schools for admission:

Emphasis of all reforms, especially resource allocation, school's development, and staffing will be to achieve this goal.

II. Reducing Burden of Curriculum and Exams

- b. A significant reduction of the excessive burden of school curriculum which compels students to devote an unjustified amount of time and effort for studies, denying the students their childhood rights: Curriculum reforms will address this mainly.
- c. Reducing the burden of exams: Assessment of learning is confined largely to written examinations, which results in rote learning, poor learning, and often socio-psychological issues with children that begins with the Gr. V scholarship examination.
- d. Providing greater choices in a more flexible curriculum to accommodate students' aptitudes and preferences.
- e. Reducing the current excessive focus on university admissions as the most preferred pathway by introducing other appealing pathways where the GCE (AL) curriculum provides life-supporting education and learning.

III. Learning Attraction in Schools

- f. All the above-mentioned current problems, often enhanced by poor teaching, lack of teachers, and poor school management, have contributed to the emergence of a formidable private tuition industry, which is eroding the school system on the one hand, and taking time and money away from the students and their parents. The proposed reforms will improve attractiveness of school learning and hence reduce the need for tuition beyond school.

IV. Relevance to Markets

- g. Producing school children with 21st Century skill requirements for economy is a major expected outcome. Currently, the curriculum does not produce students with knowledge, skills and values mostly demanded by industries and the emerging knowledge economy, while also leaving students ill prepared for entrepreneurial work/self-employment;

V. Improved Quality of Education

- h. Streamlining the curriculum, texts, and teacher guides with modern knowledge and practices in education sourced from elsewhere.
- i. Improving teacher recruitment, deployment and training/development to ensure quality education and modern learning-teaching processes in schools.

VI. Adding Value to Society

- j. Installing a system of general education that produces the whole person, who adds value to society with qualities of initiative and good character. School leavers would no longer contribute to social problems such as drug addiction, crime and social disorder.

By achieving these outcomes, the investment in education will give a positive yield to the economy. The reforms will address the burning issues in education that revolve around the need of prioritizing reforms, institutional capacity for implementation, and the methods of mobilization of resources for education development. All seem to agree with one thing: education development for the knowledge economy is the key to prosperity and splendor in Sri Lanka.

VII. Outcomes and the New Child

The youth who leaves the system of general education is expected to enter a path of career development. These paths may be in higher education, professional education, vocational skills training, paid employment or self-employment. Whatever the path taken, the youth will face *four common challenges* in the society. These are the role of a good citizen, role of a productive worker, role of a change agent, and the role of a responsible member of the community of living. Thus, the implications for the child are:

- a. A youth who has developed the personality holistically so that the person is able to develop and maintain a healthy life and make independent decisions to perform the role of a good citizen successfully;
- b. A youth who is equipped with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes well-fitting the economic and social opportunities in the world of work;
- c. A youth who has leadership qualities including mastery of self, motivated, and thinking creatively so that the person can influence the society's path to progress; and
- d. A youth who is aware of the broader social and environmental concerns and thus respectful of social cohesion, physical and biological environment, and cultural values.

The proposed education reforms intend to make a visible contribution to the above goals, and alleviate the social problems and the mismatch that exists between education and society today.

REFORMING EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Reforming organizational structures and processes in education administration and financing is a major effort which involves the following nine areas:

1. Organizational reforms at the Ministry of Education
2. Reforming provincial education administration
3. Education planning reforms
4. Reforming school classification and organization
5. Reforming Education Management Information Communication Technology and Systems
6. Reforming general education financing
7. Reforming existing institutions
8. Institutional Reforms for training and development
9. Reforming staffing and personnel services in education

The reforms in the above areas intend to address a number of education management issues including the following main objectives:

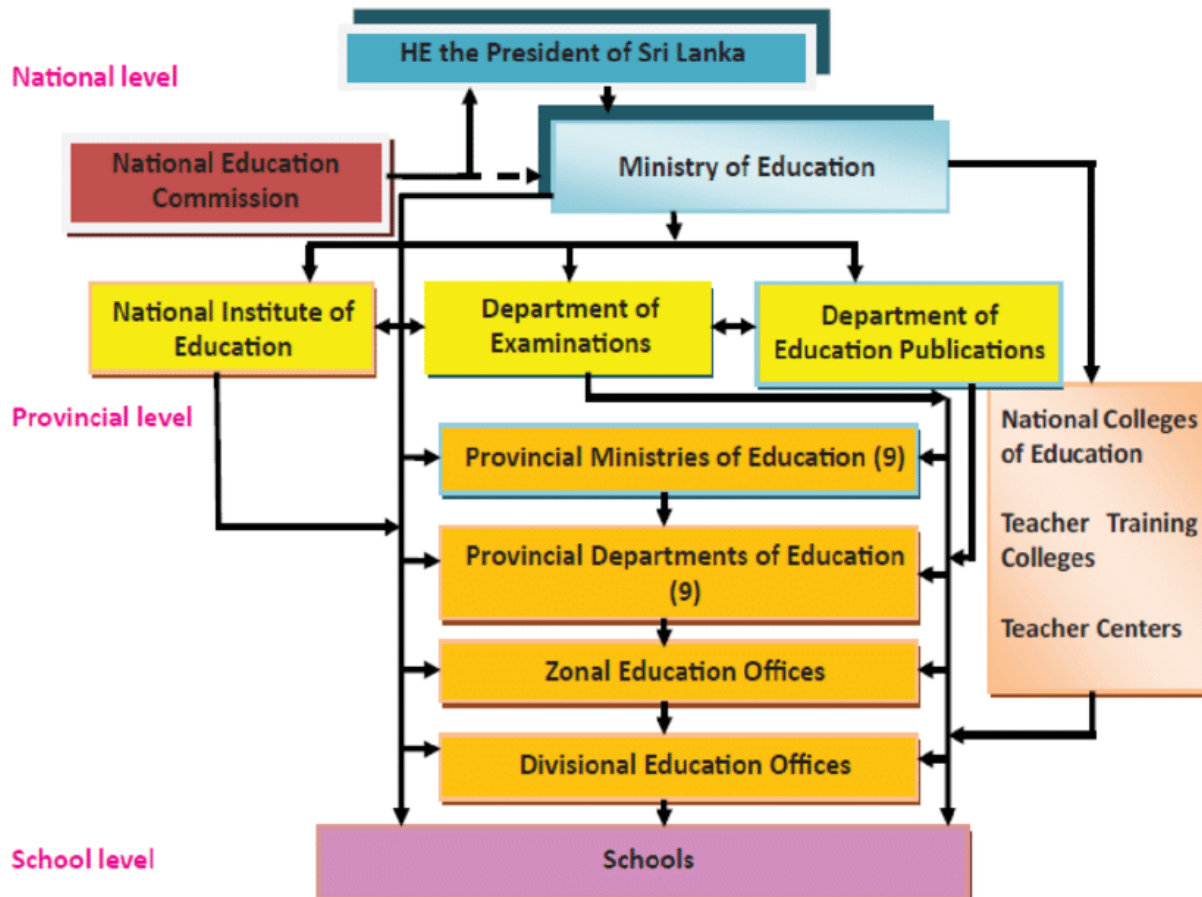
- i. Improving the policy and decision focus of the Ministry of Education on key result areas of education management, namely, achieving greater match between education and market needs, equitable resource allocation and improving utilization efficiency, quality of education, efficient school management, human resource development, and reaching higher standards in delivering programs in education for all, so that UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 04 is addressed effectively.
- ii. Strengthening education planning, monitoring progress and improving continuously with the support of ICT and systems operating at all levels and integrating information for effective and efficient decisions.
- iii. Allocating financial and other resources more equitably and ensuring proper utilization, transparency and accountability.

- iv. Providing all schools with the required teachers and principals who are trained and competent in their areas of work, and ensuring continuous training and development opportunities for all, and
- v. Improving management of schools within well-organized frameworks for curriculum, people, resources and accountability.

2.2 THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF GENERAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

The system of institutions at the national, provincial and school level are depicted in Figure 2.1 below. Reforming education administration requires analysis of functions and relationships among these institutions, particularly the Ministry, Provincial structure, and school organization.

Fig. 2.1 The Organizational System of Education Administration



2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL REFORMS AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

2.3.1 The need for reorganization

Since 2005, the MoE structure has not undergone a major review for organizational improvements and as such, the structure has been subjected to ad-hoc changes over time while the total number of staff had been expanding. The specific needs that have been recognized include the following:

- In 2020, four state ministries were formed by separating certain functions of the MoE and bringing other functions from outside. These State Ministries were:
 - i. Education Reforms, Open Universities and Distance Learning Promotion
 - ii. Dhamma Schools, Bhikku Education, Pirivenas and Buddhist Universities
 - iii. Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation
 - iv. Women and Child Development, Pre-School and Primary Education, School Infrastructure and School Services.

This change was rather chaotic and it created irrational division of responsibilities resulting in lack of coordination and confusions. New mechanisms for coordination and direction were not developed and hence an integrated policy and plan could not be implemented.

- In March 2022, the State Ministry system was abolished and a new Ministry of Education was established by bringing the following under one umbrella ministry:
 - i. General education;
 - ii. Higher education;
 - iii. Technical and Vocational Education; and
 - iv. Science, technology and research.

Previously, during certain periods of time, these functions and their respective institutions have been either separate Ministries or under ministries other than the Education Ministry. Therefore, the need of the hour in developing an organization structure for General Education functions is to establish coordination with other important functional areas mentioned above.

- ***The Duties and Functions assigned to the Ministry of Education in respect of General Education fall into these main categories*** (for detailed list as per Gazette notification of 22.07.2022, see Appendix A):
 - i. ***Policy:*** Formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects, in relation to the subject of education.
 - ii. ***Service delivery:*** Provision of public services under the purview of the Ministry in an efficient and people friendly manner.

- iii. ***Efficient modern management:*** Reforming all systems and procedures using modern management techniques and technology, thus ensuring that the functions of the Ministry are fulfilled while eliminating corruption and waste.
- iv. ***Curriculum coordination:*** Formulation and implementation of sectoral policies relating to education development so as to ensure good rapport between early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary divisions.
- v. ***Education reforms:*** Creation of a National Education System that will enable Sri Lankan children and youth to access global challenges with self-confidence and success.
- vi. ***Career path:*** Provision of policy guidance for the preparation of a clear road map from pre-school education to the completion of higher education.
- vii. ***Access:*** Ensuring the right of every child to access education.
- viii. ***Extra-curricular:*** Popularize extracurricular activities in schools.
- ix. ***National schools:*** Provision of physical and human resources needed for National Schools.
- x. ***Regulation of international and private schools:*** in conformity with the national education policy.
- xi. ***Quality:*** Take policy measures for proper maintenance of quality of education, student discipline and morals.
- xii. ***Special needs students:*** Adoption of measures to ensure education opportunities for students with special needs.
- xiii. ***Language education:*** Take necessary actions to promote national language and link language education.
- xiv. ***Religious education:*** Promotion of Buddhist and Pali Studies and upliftment of Piriven education to meet the objectives of religious education.
- xv. ***HRM:*** Human resources management and administration of the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service, Principal Service, Teachers Service and other educational services.
- xvi. ***School management:*** Administration of School Development Boards.
- xvii. ***Libraries:*** Promotion and Development of school libraries.
- xviii. ***Provisions for school children:*** Implementation and direction of programmes for the provision of school text books, uniforms, other student necessities and facilities.

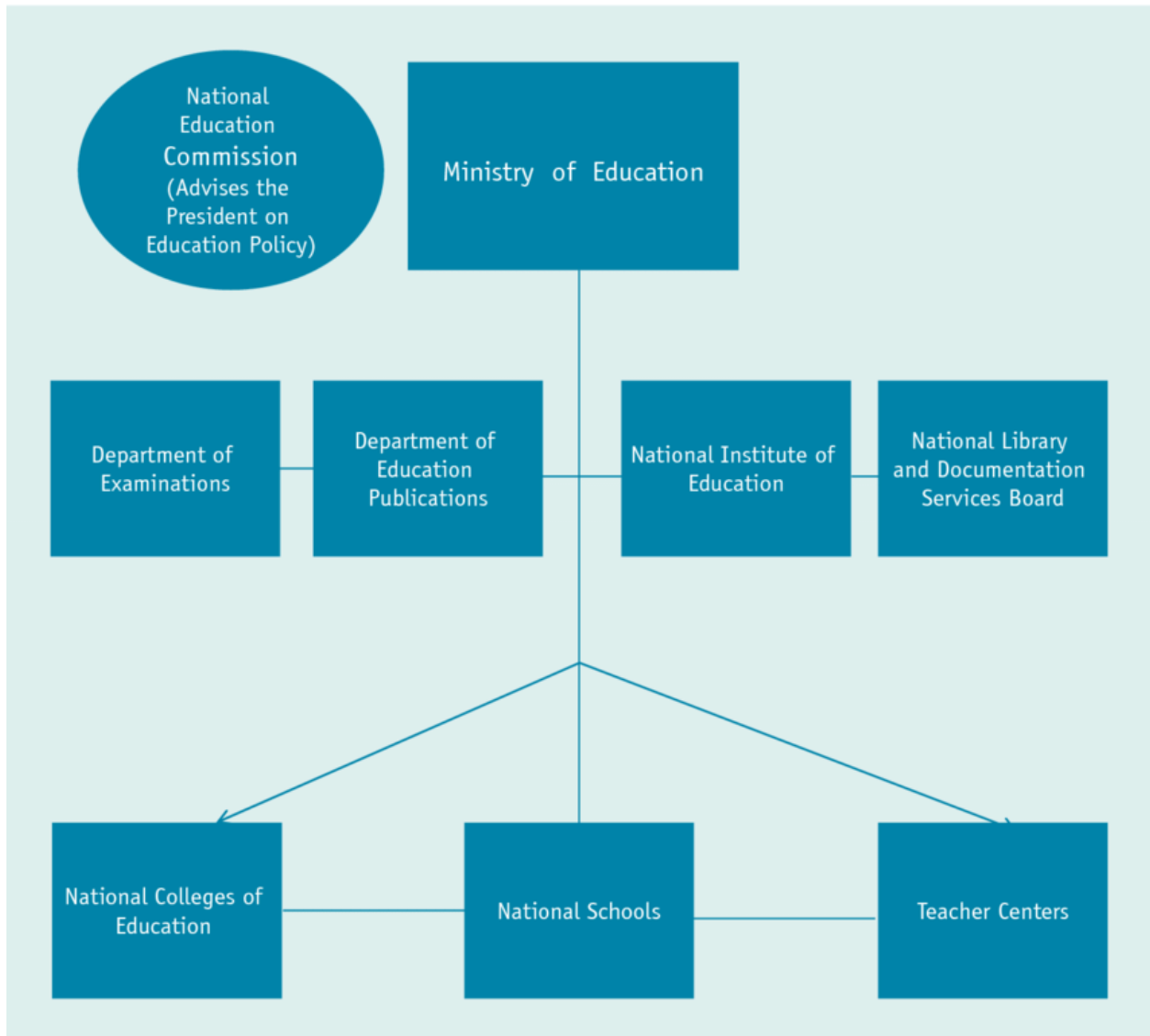
- xix. ***School infrastructure:*** Development of all physical facilities including sanitary facilities, student-friendly classrooms, teachers' residential and restroom facilities in all schools.
- xx. ***Learning and teaching technology:*** Development and promotion of the use of modern technological facilities for learning and teaching.

Structural reforms at the Ministry are required to undertake these duties and functions properly.

2.3.2 The Current MoE Organization and Its Gaps

A description of the Ministry allocation of functions among Divisions is given in Appendix A. The institutional network of the MOE is depicted in Fig. 2.2 below.

Fig. 2.2 The System of Institutions of the Ministry of Education as at June 30, 2022



Vision of the MoE is ‘*to reach excellence in global society through competent citizens who share the Sri Lankan identity*’. This formulation of the vision needs revision in order to reflect the new education reforms and the policies of government. The phrase ‘excellence in global society’ is not clear and lack relationship to nation building task of education. A new vision statement must reflect the character of the new economy and society that is being built with the contributions of education.

Mission is to ‘*develop competent citizens keeping with the global trends through innovation and modern approaches to education leading to efficiency, equity and high-quality*

performance ensuring stakeholder satisfaction.’ Mission statements describe the road map to achieving the vision of the organization. It should address questions of what, whom, and how in designing and delivering the expected values. Accordingly, this mission statement requires further improvement.

The present organization structure and its functioning exhibit the following gaps:

- In the past, not being able to design, implement, monitor and evaluate education policies, enact legislation, regulations and programmes for public school education in Sri Lanka to reach national goals of quality education, relevance in education, and provision of access to equal education opportunities for all.
- Analyzing and formulating sector policies in order to establish effective relations amongst the key levels of early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- Upgrading the national competency framework to suit the 21st century requirements.
- Reforming school curriculum and textbooks to provide education relevant to the economy.
- Preventing the system of education from continuous adoption of outdated examination-based assessment schemes where the child’s effective learning is sacrificed.
- Not being able to distribute financial resources among schools on an equitable manner.
- Neglecting supervision of schools which has demoralized school administration
- Not being able to ensure the availability of qualified and competent teachers in key subject areas island-wide, and failing to train and develop them, and
- Not being able to provide a satisfactory principals training program efficiently.

2.3.3 Reorganize the Ministry of Education to Make it More Effective and Efficient in Administering the National Education System

The following are the guidelines for reorganizing the Ministry of Education:

- i. Establish an Advisory Board whose role would be advising the Hon. Minister on matters of education management and development in Sri Lanka

- ii. Set up a Committee on Education Administration for the Ministry, chaired by the Hon. Minister
- iii. Set up a Steering Committee on Education Reforms and Implementation chaired by the Hon. Minister
- iv. Incorporate the institutions affiliated to the Ministry in the organizational structure, both functionally related (such as DoE, NIE, NEC) and auxiliary (such as SPC and NIBM) as per the Govt. Gazette Notification No.2281/41 of May 27, 2022, and set up a liaison office at the Ministry;
- v. Rationalize the allocation of functions among Divisions and Branches, giving attention to the distribution of work and responsibilities under the 4 State Ministries, now defunct.
- vi. Create an organizational arrangement to provide a focal point of contact in the Ministry for all the Provinces;
- vii. Create organizational provisions for an Addl. Secretary for Education, an Addl. Secretary for Education Reforms, and Addl. Secretary for School Financing and Supervision;
- viii. Make organizational responsibilities linked to key result areas of education, including Education quality and standards; Implementation of curriculum; Recruitment, deployment and development of human resources; Resource allocation and school financing; and Alignment of external resources with core functions of the Ministry;
- ix. Set up a separate Board for Administration, Professional development and Certification of personnel of Teacher Service, Principals Service, and Educationists Service;
- x. Streamline task specification, job descriptions, communication, performance review; and
- xi. Improve overall efficiency and effectiveness of administrative and management processes by adopting office systems, ICT, process re-engineering and lean management principles.

2.3.4 Achieving Restructuring Objectives

I. Education Leadership and Management

Ensuring long-term stability to education policies, programs and systems is a fundamental requirement that reorganizations and reforms must address at present, so that political and other leaders will not change education on an ad-hoc basis in the future. Our children, schools and resources have suffered due to ad-hoc changes to education in the past. Another fundamental

requirement is to take steps to ensure proper implementation of reforms on a continuing basis. These needs will be achieved through three main steps:

- i. Providing a legal foundation for policies and reforms through the legislature and the executive.
- ii. Setting up an Advisory Board consisting of eminent persons in education and related fields to advise and work together at the top leadership of the Ministry.
- iii. Establishing a Steering Committee for Education Reforms and Implementation.

The functions relating to key areas of general education together with education reforms will be assigned to an Additional Secretary. Who will have three Directors of Education and three Deputy Directors to carry on reforms.

II. Driving Reforms and Achieving Institutional Collaboration

In formulating, adopting, implementing, and monitoring education reforms, the Ministry of Education through an office of Additional Secretary (Education Reforms) will ensure proper coordination for functional alignments, resource sharing, and accountability among the following:

- i. National Education Commission
- ii. National Institute of Education
- iii. Commissioner General of NCOEs
- iv. National University of Education (proposed)
- v. Ministry of Higher Education
- vi. Ministry of Vocational and Skills Development
- vii. Department of Examinations
- viii. Department of Publications
- ix. University of Vocational Technology
- x. Ministry of Health
- xi. Ministry of Sports
- xii. Ministry of Child Development and Women Affairs
- xiii. Ministry responsible for National Planning
- xiv. Ministry of Finance

xv. Any other relevant institutions

The required coordination will be achieved by establishing a *Steering Committee on Education Reforms and Implementation* with representatives from each of the above institutions and chaired, initially by the Hon. Minister of Education, and subsequently by the Secretary of Education, while the Addl. Secretary [General Education, Reforms and Administration] will act as the Secretary/Chief Operating Officer of the Committee.

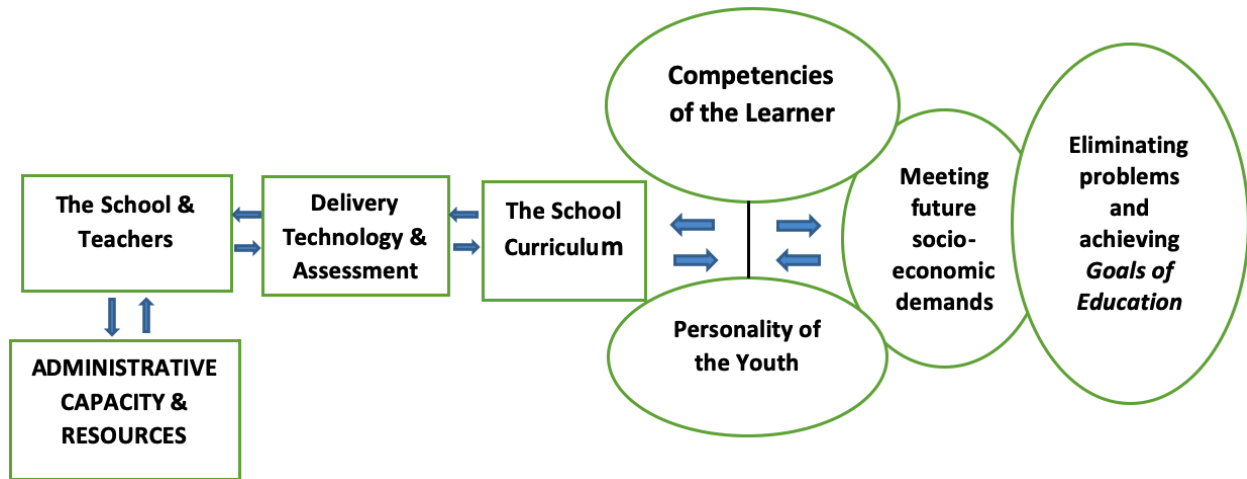
JUSTIFICATION: Some of the **lessons learnt** from the past efforts to introduce reforms are such that the type of reforms conceptualized from an ideational point of view fell short of reaching the ground level. The most recent experience came from the reforms steps taken to introduce a vocational study stream in senior secondary schools for those who failed GCE (OL) examination. Vocational skill needs of different geographic areas were not properly mapped and the educational and skill training support infrastructure of schools was not correctly estimated. While the industry seems to **demand NVQ certificates**, the Ministry of Education planned for an educational certificate from the Ministry.

Failure to work in coordination with the **Ministry of Vocational and Skills Development** resulted in lowering the practical skills imparted to students. The reform was not sufficiently understood by the students and parents. There was a significant delay in recruiting and training teachers for the selected trades. As a result, finally, the demand for these vocational subject-learning declined among the student community. This example alone exemplifies the importance of commencing reforms from the outcomes and the stakeholders responsible for the employment of outputs from schools.

III. Managing the Process of Planning and implementing Reforms:

It shall be the responsibility of the Addl. Sec. (Reforms) to manage the process of planning reforms including reforms implementation. Fig. 1 below illustrates the process and the path that the reforms effort would be taking finally. Each reform step would be assessed as to how it contributes to the other step in the reform process, ensuring finally that the capacity is built to deliver a curriculum that minimizes the current problems of education identified, and contributes to achieving the new goals of education reforms.

Fig. 1: Visualizing the process of planning reforms



IV. School Supervision

School supervision is fundamental to quality education supervision and direction. While internal school supervision by Principals and Head Teachers is continued, external supervision by qualified and trained supervisors will be re-introduced as a permanent feature of education administration. Initially this function, now almost abandoned, will be brought under an Addl. Secretary of Education who will be supported by two directors and two deputy directors. This team will formulate a detailed mechanism of supervising through carefully selected teams of supervisors from the system of educational institutions and schools.

The plan is to form 12 supervisory teams consisting of experienced educationists who will spend one day per week for school visits and half a day per week for report writing. The process will be implemented first for National schools; A National School will be visited by a team of 3 educationists twice a year to monitor implementation of policies and programs approved for schools and find ways of assisting schools to solve problems and improve performance. The existing framework of quality standards, with suitable improvements will be the framework for supervision of schools.

V. Provincial Relations

Proper coordination between Ministry officials and provincial and zonal officers is key to ensuring sound education administration. Center-provincial relations are not recognized in the current Ministry Organization Structure. With the reorganization, this responsibility is assigned to an Addl. Secretary (Provincial Relations and School Administration) who will be assisted by a Director of Education whose function will be to coordinate the work of Subject Directors at the Ministry as well as the policy, education reforms and financing involving the provinces.

VI. Modernizing with ICT and Digital Education

The functions of ICT and Digital Education, coming under a separate Addl. Secretary, will be strengthened with required staffs for systems development, data management and digital education development. A master plan, now nearing completion, will be adopted to modernize education delivery in the schools having necessary IDSL and computing facilities, while assisting all key administrative Divisions of the Ministry coordinate and implement programs and projects on a digital platform.

VII. Resource Allocation for Equity

Allocation resources among provinces, zones and schools on a rational and equitable basis has long been a serious issue area where the continued disparities have contributed to fundamental problems of education in the island. These disparities are the causes of many problems including pressure for admission to better schools, undue focus on public examinations and the emergence of a tuition industry, and school dropouts. New administrative provisions have been created in the structure of organization to introduce criteria-based allocations, schools and other measures that will be introduced in the section dealing with Finance in this report. Various sources of funds will be seriously examined and each school will be ensured with a separate annual budget either directly or through School Boards at School Clusters.

VIII. Teacher Certification

In order to address the issue of poor teaching standards, a priority will be assigned to assessment of training needs and development needs and an HRD program will be formulated. Teacher training areas will be prioritized and development education programs will be earmarked for

teachers (247,000 in number). Training of Trainers programs will be commenced at central and provincial levels with a plan to register 50 trainers at the Ministry level and 20 in each province. After the introduction of training programs, it will be made mandatory for teachers to obtain teacher certification from the Ministry/Provinces which will be valid for a specified time period, such as two years. To undertake this function, in collaboration with the NIE, a separate HRD Branch dedicated to teachers will be set up under the Addl. Secretary (Teacher Management, Development and Certification).

IX. Services Administration and HRD

Administration of personnel services at staff level, i.e. SLEAS and SLPS will be supported with proper systems of capacity development programs and performance appraisal and management. The HRD branch will come under the Addl. Secretary (Services Administration and HRD) where Training and Development functions will be conducted for all staff categories (except teachers).

X. Managerial Efficiency

Overall management efficiency of the Ministry will be improved by implementing a number of programs including adoption of ICT, management training, introduction of new operating systems including office management, and rationalizing team work and meetings.

2.4 REFORMING EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION TO BUILD DELIVERY CAPACITY

2.4.1 Guidelines for institutional capacity building

Planning and institutional coordination for implementation of reforms demands special effort by policy framers and administrators. Policy makers need to build broad support about the aims and mechanisms of education reform and engage stakeholders, especially administrators, educationists, principals and teachers, in formulating and implementing policy responses.

External pressures can be used to build a compelling case for change. All political leaders and stakeholders need to develop realistic expectations about the pace and nature of reforms. Some of the important guidelines are:

- ***Capacity development requires hard steps and resources.*** Efforts to overcome resistance to reform will be wasted if education administrations do not have state-of-the-art knowledge, professional know-how and adequate institutional arrangements for the new tasks and responsibilities included in the reforms. Successful reform might require significant investment in staff development, or clustering reforms to build capacity in related institutions such as the NIE and provincial administration. This also means that reform needs to be backed by sustainable financing.
- ***The right governance in the right place.*** Our education system extends from local schools to national ministries. The responsibilities of institutions and different levels of government must be specified. Reforms need to consider the respective responsibilities of different players. Some reforms may only be possible if responsibilities are well aligned or reallocated. Layers of provincial and zonal organizations will be good at identifying local needs, but they might not be the right vantage point from which to monitor progress towards overall goals and objectives. They seem to lack sufficient scientific, technical and infrastructure capacity including ICT to implement education policies that are consistent with national goals and objectives.
- ***Use of performance data.*** As obtaining, managing and accessing information have become easier and cheaper, education systems can capitalize on collecting better and more relevant data to track individual and institutional performance, locally and nationally. Evidence from national surveys and zones as well as comparative data and assessments can be used to guide monitoring at national level. Such evidence is most helpful when it is fed back to institutions along with information and tools about how they can use the information.
- ***Coordination among institutions.*** An essential aspect of planning will be the coordination of the roles of the Ministries and institutions involved. To move initial reform initiatives towards building self-adjusting systems with feedback from action levels, incentives to react and tools to strengthen capacities to deliver better outcomes will be needed. Investment in change management skills is essential. Teachers need reassurance that they will be given the tools to change. Their motivation to improve their students' performance should be recognized.
- ***Role of the EMIS.*** The Education Management Information System that has been designed by the Ministry remains incomplete and inoperative. With an additional investment, this software application must be updated and installed to become operative in the process of

reform implementation. It could become an uphill task to get this working, and to train and motivate relevant staff at all levels to use it for planning and monitoring. Until such a time that a proper system is established, it is proposed to adopt a system with limited functions such as monitoring school performance through supervision.

2.4.2 Strengthen the Capacity of Provincial Level Education Administration

Provinces and their Departments of Education, Zonal Offices and Divisions of Education are the key provincial-level organizations that are responsible for the provision of education through the system of schools at provincial level. The following re-organization proposals are made:

- i. **Increase the number of Education Zones** from 100 to 120 on a rational basis by using a set of criteria developed in consultation with the provincial directors of education and approved by the Secretary of Education;
- ii. **Allocate resources to Zonal Offices** based on a set of criteria approved by the Secretary of Education in consultation with the provinces.
- iii. **Strengthen the Educational Divisions** by providing more staff and facilities, and a budget to supervise schools for quality standards;
- iv. **Set up a Schools Administration Board for each Education Division** to guide the Division's work, and the Board must consist of two high school principals, two school principals from other schools of the area selected for a period of one year on a rotational basis, a Deputy Director from the Zone, three ISAs representing different subject areas, one PHI, Divisional Secretary or Nominee, and an officer in the field of agriculture. The Deputy Director of the Zone shall chair the Board meetings.
- v. **Allocate resources to Zonal Offices to improve the efficiency** of clearing staffing matters of school principals and teachers;
- vi. **Zonal Directors must delegate** substantial office work relating to management of schools to Divisions of Education.
- vii. **School clusters:** Based on proper mapping, develop a school cluster system.

2.4.3 Rationalizing the System of School Classification

The existing school classification: The classification of the existing 10,167 schools is done according to the number of grades and study streams available in a given school as follows:

- i. 1AB schools: schools with grades 1 to 13 or 6 to 13 having the science stream at GCE (AL) (Total 1,044 or 10%). Of these, 351 schools are **National Schools** administered by the Central Government.
- ii. 1C schools: schools with grades 1 to 13 or 6 to 13 having study streams other than science at GCE (AL) (Total 1847 or 18%)
- iii. Type 2 schools: schools with grades 1 to 11 only (Total 3,225 or 32%)
- iv. Type 3 schools: schools with grades 1 to 5 only (Total 4,059 or 40%)

Thus, 72% of the schools are Type 2 or 3, of which 40% of small schools are primary schools. There are other types as well: *Assisted schools; Pirivenas; Madrasas; and Special schools*. Schools are also classified according to the medium of instruction available: Single medium; Bi-media; and Tri-Media.

The issues with this system are:

- It does not guide the school administration and resource allocation;
- Appointment of school principals is done according to the classification, and allowances are paid accordingly. In order to upgrade the position, some principals try to change the school type by introducing a science stream without fulfilling the requirements.
- 1AB schools are recognized as better schools, despite the quality of education in them.
- This system prevents appointing a principal with a higher grade to a primary school.
- Most development efforts have been around 1AB schools, making them ‘popular’ schools, a trend that increases the disparities among the types of school.

Therefore, the following proposals are made:

- i. Classify schools as Primary Schools and Secondary Schools.
 - Type 1: **Primary School** (Gr. 1-5)
 - Type 2: **Junior Secondary School** (Gr. 6-9)
 - Type 3: **Senior Secondary School** (Gr. 10 -13)

Each type of school can be located separately or together in one location.

- ii. Administer each type with a separate Principal. Thus, a school having Gr. 1 to 13 will have three/four Principals one principal for each section, depending on student population size.
 - iii. Type 1 schools may have a class size of 25 students at maximum.
 - iv. Type 2 to 4 schools may have a class size of 35 students maximum.
 - a. Plan to achieve an increasing level of self-financing of the university over time, by raising funds through foreign participants, training programs, and education research
- y vary between sub-central authorities or between schools.
 - **Restricted block grant:** Funds that recipients can use at their own discretion, but within given areas of spending (e.g. operating costs). This, therefore, leaves a high degree of discretion over the proportion of the grant that will be allocated to different categories of expenditure, such as salaries and operational costs, and also over the amount allocated to lower levels of governance.
 - **Earmarked grant:** Funds that recipients are required to use for specific elements/items of current expenditure (e.g. teacher professional development, extra funds for special needs education). For example, the Ministry may provide a range of grants to national schools which are earmarked for particular items of expenditure in order to allow the Ministry to shape policy while allowing schools to take operational decisions.
 - **School-specific grant:** Funds that recipients are required to use for current expenditure in specific schools (or most cluster level Boards). This is the most restrictive type of transfer from the central to lower level authorities and implies reduced or no administrative discretion to reallocate funding among different schools.