Think Mauritius

Pour une Maurice Meilleure

RETHINKING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN MAURITIUS

A discussion paper proposed by Think Mauritius

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Executive summary

In spite of its past achievements, the Mauritian education system today suffers from various weaknesses and deficiencies. These include an outdated, elitist, one-size-fit-all and exam-driven curriculum which is not appealing to our young generations, an over-centralized management system and a parallel system of mass private tuition. Many students leave school with poor basic literacy and numeracy skills, inadequate communication skills, deficient operational skills, poor work ethics and sense of values and are unfit for the exigencies of the new job market. Many of them turn out to be social misfits.

The system has remained unchanged for the past decades and is today out of tune with the new social, cultural, educational, technological, economic and environmental needs of the country. We are facing many contemporary challenges like globalization, trade liberalization, protectionism, knowledge explosion, revolution in information technology, climatic change etc. The reactive and piecemeal approaches adopted up to now to upgrade the system have not yielded the expected results. It is high time that we seriously consider the overhauling of the whole system from the pre-primary to the tertiary levels. Special attention should be paid to the consolidation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training for students with non-academic qualities and potential.

A strong political will is imperative for any meaningful change. The latter should start with an auditing of the system in terms of the infrastructures as well as the human, financial, technological and pedagogical resources and expertise. A modern and fully equipped National Curriculum Development and Research Centre should be set up, as the engine of change, to reorganize the medium- and long-term curriculum planning, trialing, implementation, evaluation and review. It should work in close collaboration with all stake holders. The NCDRC should define the expected profile of the future citizen, the educational strategies to be adopted and a comprehensive document for its implementation should be circulated for nationwide debate and consensus. Pedagogical changes should emphasise analytical and problem-solving capabilities, self-directed inquiry and technology-enabled learning, a strong sense of responsibility to the community and the environment as well as creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Teacher training should be reviewed and revitalized in line with the proposed plan.

Mass private tuition should be abolished. Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities should be promoted to make better use of the existing school infrastructures. Assessment and evaluation should be revisited to make them less threatening and more formative. Alternatives to Cambridge SC and HSC should be explored. Parent/teacher/school partnership should be strengthened trough better organized PTAs and parent education. Foreign expertise should be sought from countries that are at the forefront of educational advances and innovations. Digital technologies should rank high on the agenda for the proposed changes.
Foreword

“Information cannot be the foundation of intelligence, it can only be part of the material out of which the knower builds knowledge, the starting point, the nucleus of fresh discovery, and enlarged creation. An education that confines itself to imparting knowledge, is no education”

Sri Aurobindo

Education is the process of preparing the individual to live a useful, fruitful and fulfilling life in the society in which he finds himself. Traditionally it consisted of the transmission of technical knowledge of various types, of the values of the society, of its arts and culture and of the religious and spiritual practices and beliefs that it has developed. This enabled the individual to become a useful and, generally, happy member of the society in which he lives. With the advent of the industrial revolution leading to the mass production of goods and the rise of the consumer society, education has been more and more geared to the needs of industry for a large labour force with various skills. In most countries the other aspects of education relating to the needs of the individual for self-development have been neglected. The physical, mental, intellectual, artistic, emotional and spiritual development of the individual has received attention only to the extent that a healthy, happy and satisfied individual will be an efficient worker. As a result of this lopsided view of education there has been an erosion of human values and a consequent rise in violence, corruption, loss of professional etiquette and all types of social ills. It is to-day evident that we have to rethink our system of education among other things.

Reinventing our system of education and our society for that matter, cannot be the privilege of a small group of people; it must be the product of the collective contribution of all citizens properly organized to propose and discuss and agree on a system. It is to launch this process of collective discussion that THINK MAURITIUS has prepared this Discussion Paper on Education. We invite all stake holders to participate in this endeavour which we are sure will be enjoyable and will produce results.
Rethinking the Education System in Mauritius

A Discussion Paper

Proposed by Think Mauritius

1. Introduction

1.1 Importance of education

Education is the foundation of our society; it is a lifelong empowerment process, which helps citizens to develop personally and to become empathic individuals. It enables individuals to develop to their fullest potential physically, socially and affectively. It is a driver of economic growth. It brings political, economic, social and cultural development and stability. It helps to produce a more productive and innovative labour force - an indispensable pre-requisite for growth and competitiveness in today's global knowledge economy. Most of the problems that we witness in our society such as violence, corruption, drug abuse, loss of values, environmental pollution etc. find their roots in our education system.

Education is important for an individual's success in life. It prepares young people physically, mentally and socially for adulthood and the world of work. It equips them with knowledge, attitudes and skills which they will need to participate effectively as active member of society. In our multi-cultural context, it assists students to understand their cultural identity and liberates them from the numerous prejudices based on gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, superstition etc. It provides them with the opportunities to explore, to investigate, to discover, to understand, to undertake, to innovate and to solve problems.

Education is a multi-dimensional process of developmental exploration that begins at home and is strengthened and nurtured at school. It is contextual and dynamic having to respond to an increasingly interconnected, interdependent and media-led society. It is called upon to respond effectively to globalization, the exponential rate of knowledge generation and the rapid changes in technology and social media. It should develop cognitive skills such as conducting independent research, assessing information for credibility, applying concepts to new situations and self-assessing their capabilities.
1.2 The aims of education

Apart from the 3Rs, students should be given the opportunity through the appropriate curriculum and pedagogy to develop intellectual curiosity, critical and creative thinking skills, modern communication skills (to retrieve, assess and use information intelligently), metacognitive skills, problem solving skills, entrepreneurship and leadership skills, research and innovation skills etc.

what matters is not what students know but how they acquire that knowledge and what they can do with it later in life. School education should develop in students the thirst for knowledge and fulfilment; it should empower them with the capabilities to learn as well as to unlearn; it should provide them with opportunities to acquire basic life skills which would enable them to become effective members of society. It should foster in them social, cultural and national values which are important for nation building, national cohesion and unity; it should empower students to become agents of socio-economic and cultural changes.

The social dimension of education necessitates that education be essentially value-based. It should prepare young people to face the new challenges that they will be likely to face in the coming decades (see Table 1) bearing in mind that we lack natural resources and that we can only rely on our human resources for our competitiveness on the global market. It should also develop personal values such as integrity, discipline, effort, patience, perseverance etc; it should promote citizenship qualities such as patriotism, democracy, good governance, meritocracy, teamwork and to fight corruption, pollution, drug abuse etc.

Table 1 summarises the profound changes taking place in the social, economic and environmental contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Globalisation</th>
<th>harsh competition based on capacity to use new technologies, to innovate, to attract investors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade liberalization and protectionism</td>
<td>need to be more productive and competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge explosion</td>
<td>learning how to learn; how to access, select and retrieve information more important than learning what to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolution in science and technology</td>
<td>Nano technology, artificial intelligence, robotics and virtual reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolution in Information and Communication Technology</td>
<td>Mobile phones, tablets, internet, social media, 5G, Fintech, Blockchain, Cloud technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New insight in how the brain functions</td>
<td>e.g Multiple intelligence, emotional intelligence, new pedagogical strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change, pollution, renewable energies</td>
<td>new challenges; capacity to adapt and to be resilient</td>
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</table>
1.3 Why change?

Our young learners are being educated for the past instead of the future by the obsolete education systems. There have not been fundamental changes in our school model for the past decades. The changes have been more logistical (infrastructure, textbooks, transport etc) than conceptual (curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation etc).

Student demands and expectations have drastically changed. The coming generations will expect something different from education. The traditional approach adopted in our classrooms will get them bored and they will simply switch off to play with their phones or they will skip the class altogether. Why should they go to class if they can get the same (or even better) information freely and at any moment online (or during private tuition)?

Given the profound changes enumerated in table 1, changes in our education system has become imperative. Students sitting in our classrooms today will inevitably face a totally different world confronted with environmental, social, economic and technological challenges. They should be prepared for jobs that do not exist yet and for situations that we can hardly imagine at present. Education for these students cannot be realised in the traditional “business as usual” school set up.

The need for change is also justified by the fact that most of the problems we are witnessing at present may be linked or attributed to our educational system. Table 2 gives an apercu of some of the problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Contemporary problems linked with the education system</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>poverty, corruption, drug abuse, sexual abuse, family debt, values erosion, road accidents, betting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>productivity, economic growth, food security, consumption pattern, unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pollution, over-exploitation and depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, soil and beach erosion, flooding, climatic change</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1.4 Our education system

Unfortunately, the roles and purposes of education in our country have been restricted to the award of marks and certificates. Our elitist, exam-led, textbook-based and school-centric education model based on a top-down culture of a one-size-fits-all curriculum and streaming following standardised examinations is currently out of tune with our future economic and societal needs. The forthcoming generations will be facing unfathomable emerging and complex social, economic and environmental challenges. In such a volatile, uncertain and fast-evolving world, it is critical and creative thinking skills, analytical and problem-solving capabilities, and the ability to innovate and adapt to new situations that are vital. In this new era, discernment will predominate over knowledge, emotional intelligence will overrule traditional forms of intelligence and responding to real-life challenges will matter more than exam smartness.

We are presently stuck with the British education model which we are following blindly while remarkable educational reforms and innovations are taking place in countries like Finland, Singapore, Japan and South Korea. We are obsessed with grades at PSAC, SC and HSC levels. Our elitist education system offers a single path (PSAC- SC- HSC) to all students alike irrespective of the non-academic qualities and talents that they may possess. We are even perpetuating an expensive scholarship system that is encouraging an unacceptable yearly brain drain (our best brains) placing the country in the fifth position worldwide on that particular issue.

Educational reform is seen as the affairs of politicians. Each new minister of education wants to leave his imprint on the system. It is even used for vote banking. Some of the major changes in our education system, although laudable, were decided on the eve of general elections with political motives (free secondary education in 1976; free transport for students in 2005; free tertiary education in 2019). Educational reform cannot be the prerogative of politicians alone. It should involve the whole nation and essentially the stakeholders such as parents, employers, opinion leaders, religious leaders, economists, sociologists, psychologists, pedagogues, subject specialists etc. It is a long and tedious process that requires considerable discussions, negotiations and planning at the national level.

1.4.1 Brief History

During the French occupation in the 18th century, no formal education system existed and education was more of an individual concern. It was only towards the end of the eighteenth century that education started to become a concern for the administrators. Under General Decaen, L'Ecole Centrale became the Lycée and provided both primary and secondary education. A few primary schools were opened to non-whites but secondary education remained the preserve of whites.
Reverend Lebrun set up free day primary schools to instruct the destitute and the coloured children in Port-Louis in 1815. In 1827, under the pressure of British humanitarians, a slavery amelioration policy was adopted. In 1829, the English planter Charles Telfair was the first to introduce education for slaves on his estate at Bel Ombre. Popular education in the nineteenth century was achieved through the work of missionaries.

In the 1830's, Indian immigration started but no provision was made for the education of the children. In 1851, Governor Higginson drew the attention of both the local and British governments to the need to improve the state of the Indians. In 1856, grants-in-aid were offered to denominational schools. Aided Primary Schools started to become popular and they grew alongside the government schools. In 1882, there were 47 government schools with 6,571 children enrolled and 57 grant-in-aid schools with 5,316 children enrolled (Ramdoyal, 1977, p.72). Attempts to educate the Indian population however, met with two major difficulties namely the medium of instruction and the lack of competent teachers. In 1908, only about 7,000 of the 60,000 Indian children of school age attended school. The situation evolved positively in the following decades. In the year 1955-56, 85,446 pupils were enrolled in primary schools and 126,173 in the year 1959-60 (Ramdoyal, 1977, p.125).

In 1925, the first tertiary institution, the College of Agriculture was set up. It was converted into a full fledged university in 1969. In 1945, regulations were established concerning teacher training, staffing, examinations and the English scholarship. From 1950 to 1960 “education pour tous” became a slogan for the ruling party.

In 1963, the John Kennedy College was established to offer technical education for the first time. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute was set up in 1970 to promote Indian Culture. The MIE was created in 1973 to provide teacher education, and to engage in curriculum development and educational research.

Primary education has always been provided on a free basis. Secondary education which was initially fee-paying, became free in 1977 while tertiary education was declared free in 1988. Since July 2005, the government also introduced free transport for all students.

In 1980, CPE (Certificate of Primary Education) was introduced to replace the PSLC (Primary School Leaving Certificate) and the Junior Scholarship was abolished. In 1984 the MES was set up to conduct and organize national examinations. The MITD was set up in 2009 as a provider of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The Nine Year Continuous Basic Education was introduced in 2015. CPE was replaced by PSAC in 2017. Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd was established in 2017 to run training programmes for the middle professional level.
14.2 The way forward

Our people are our most precious resource. We must prepare every single Mauritian, whatever their capability and aptitude, to contribute to the sustainable development of our nation. At present, more than 30% of our young people drop out of the education system unable to read, write, communicate and behave properly. They are wrongly stigmatized and labeled as failures and many of them turn out to be a burden to the society as they often adopt anti-social behaviours at a very early age. Many of them drop out because they possess non-academic potentials (e.g. artistic, sports, musical, entrepreneurial etc) which are not recognized and valued by the system. Even those who succeed academically are often handicapped by the weaknesses inherent in our education system. They lack the basic life skills necessary to perform effectively and efficiently in a highly competitive and an ever-changing socio-economic environment.

In the face of the challenges lying at our door steps, we will need people with new forms of literacy, new skills as well as new mind set and behavior patterns. We will be called upon to fight a battle of brain and ideas. We will need people with leadership and entrepreneurship skills who can think rationally and fast, work under pressure, take prompt decisions, use the latest technologies, adapt to new situations, behave ethically and value life-long learning. We will need a labour force that is highly skilled, reliable, productive, specialized, cooperative, innovative and versatile. Moreover, we will need citizens imbued with the spirit of patriotism and who can live harmoniously in a multicultural society.

The solution to our problems is definitely not the reactive and piecemeal approaches (e.g. PSAC, ZEP schools, Summer School Programme, Bridging the gap, Enhancement Programme, A+, Pre-vocational streams, 3-5 credits etc) that have been adopted up to now. A more proactive, systematic and systemic approach is called for. The whole system should be scrutinized, analysed, reviewed and overhauled. It is high time that we come up with a new vision, a new paradigm and new strategies for an in-depth review of the system based on as wide a consensus as possible.

We should reformulate our educational philosophy, review our curriculum development practices, update our pedagogical strategies, upgrade teacher education, revisit assessment and evaluation and promote educational research. Curriculum development backed by educational research, both strategic and action research, should be the motive force behind the changes. It is a strategy that will take time and that will warrant considerable resources and expertise. It will yield dividends only in the medium and long term. It is the price to pay if we really want to provide quality education to empower the next generation to be powerful players on the local and international scene.

Several documents have been produced by the MOEHR over the years. Rhetoric terms such as “world class education”, “child-centered and holistic education”, “no child should be excluded or disadvantaged”, “the shift from an examination-driven to a curriculum-driven system of education” etc have been used abusively without any noticeable change in the quality of the educational output. The latest one in the series relates to the “Nine Year Schooling”. These documents have all undoubtedly been produced with genuine intentions. (refer to Annexe F-H). On paper, they appear quite appealing and convincing. However, they
remain at the level of intentions; the blockage seems to be at the implementation level due to deficiencies in the planning phases and the lack of commitment on the part of the main actors.

This paper makes a brief analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of our educational system and proposes a paradigm shift in our educational philosophy and policies. It makes a series of propositions to improve the system. It acknowledges that some of the propositions will not be easy to implement to the satisfaction of all the stakeholders. Nevertheless, it points out the avenues in which future efforts should be directed for meaningful changes in our education system.

1.4.3 The strengths of our education system

Over the years, the education system has evolved considerably (Refer to Annexe A and Annexe B). The early curriculum was designed to allow students to achieve an acceptable level of literacy and numeracy that would open the door for white colour jobs in the public and private sectors while at the same time meeting the needs of the cheap manual labour market with the drop out from the system. The system has worked well in the 1980’s and 1990’s as it has allowed the sugar cane industry to flourish and the textile industry as well as tourism to take off. School infrastructure has constantly been improved over the years and today every towns and villages are endowed with fairly well-equipped, comfortable and functional schools. All teachers at the primary level have received professional pre-service training at the Certificate or Diploma level at the Mauritius Institute of Education. The large majority of teachers at the secondary level have also received professional training at the MIE at the Diploma, BEd, MEd or PGCE levels. About Rs. 18 billion are spent annually to service the system. This sum represents about 12.6 % of our total expenditure and 3.7% of our GDP. The charts below provide a comparative picture for the year 2016 with a few other countries. It is noted that Mauritius expenditure on education as a percentage of the total government expenditure for 2016 is almost similar to that of the OECD countries average and higher than that of countries like Japan, Germany and Finland which are known to have the most effective educational system worldwide.
Expenditure on Education as % of total govt. Expenditure (2016)

Table 3

Spending on Education as % of GDP (2016)

Table 4
Other strengths of the system are summarised below:

❖ Mauritius has one of the highest enrolment rate (97% at the primary level and 72% at the secondary level) in the African region.

❖ Free primary education is available to all Mauritian children since the 1940’s.

❖ Free secondary education (including the pre-vocational) is available in states and private secondary schools since 1977.

❖ Since 2005, education is compulsory for every child from a young age (usually 5/6 years) until at least the age of 16

❖ At the primary level, textbooks are made available freely to all students.

❖ A free transport system has been put in place to enable students to attend schools.

❖ Low performing schools (ZEP schools) in some deprived areas are given special support to enable them to catch up on the other schools.

❖ The official pupil teacher ratio compares favourably with that of the other developing nations, that is 24:1 (but actually varies between 35:1 and 40:1 in most schools) at the primary level and 13:1 (but actually between 20:1 and 25:1 in most schools) at the secondary level.

❖ Students learn at least two foreign languages at the primary and secondary levels.

❖ There has been marked improvement in pre-primary education mostly as a result of professional teacher development by the MIE and other institutions.

❖ Pre-vocational classes have been put up to cater for students who cannot make it at the CPE examinations.

❖ Head teachers, inspectors and rectors have received specialised training in school administration and management.
Several commissions of enquiry and reports have been produced highlighting the vision, mission, plan of action and the strategies for implementation for a more responsive education system. (Ref. Table 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Report</th>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Master Plan on Education</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Towards a Quality Curriculum – Strategy for Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>The Education &amp; Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>National Curriculum Framework- Pre-primary (Parts 1 &amp; 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Primary Curriculum Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Secondary Curriculum Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Education Reforms in Action 2008-2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>The Nine Year Continuous Basic Education</td>
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These reports have been formulated in line with the vision of the MOESR “to develop a culture of achievement and excellence, foster innovation, generate new knowledge, provide quality and relevant education for all and develop a Human Resource base to transform Mauritius.”

The education sector objectives are elegantly enumerated in the above reports.

The Private Secondary Schools Authority (now Private Secondary Education Authority) was established to provide the facilities and maintain standards at non-state secondary schools, while the state provided large grants to cover the recurrent costs.

Pre-Vocational education was provided for those pupils who had failed the CPE twice and hence were not eligible for admission in secondary schools. In 2001 pre-vocational classes were integrated in secondary schools alongside the mainstream classes. The pre-vocational curriculum provides for basic literacy, numeracy, science, technical and ICT skills over three years.

The Nine Year Schooling brought some positive changes like the elimination of the PSLC and the Pre-voc, the regionalization of education, the valorization of technical education, the introduction of continuous assessment and the modular system, the early diagnosis of pupils with learning difficulties and the appropriate psychological support etc.

Opportunities for tertiary education in local institutions have increased considerable during the recent years. Free tertiary education was announced in January 2019 to democratize access to public tertiary institutions but information as to its implementation has been rather scanty.

The target of doubling the enrolment ratio at the tertiary level was clearly stated in the budget document along with the financial means to achieve it (loan scheme for needy students and flexible learning modes).
1.4.4 The weaknesses of the system

Unfortunately, the system which performed well in the 1980’s and 1990’s, has not forged ahead in line with the extensive socio-economic changes that have taken place locally and internationally. Today, it is out of tune with the exigencies of the new millennium. In spite of the heavy investments in the education system (Ref Table 3 and 4, Page 7), it suffers from many weaknesses which may be summarised as follows:

❖ The four pillars of the system (curriculum development, teacher training, examinations and school management) appear to work in isolation, each with its own agenda; they are often out of tune with each other. There is hardly any forum where they can meet to tune up their strategies towards a common goal.

❖ The system is examination driven and therefore teachers teach to the tests and students resort to rote learning and mass private tuition.

❖ The heavy emphasis on examination has a detrimental impact on curriculum development, teacher training, school administration and even parents’ behaviour. It is the root cause for mass private tuition and the rat race at the PSAC level and the other national examinations at the secondary level.

❖ Mass private tuition is vitiating the system through increased cost for parents and excessive stress for students. It is a parallel system of education with a turnover of billions of rupees, endorsed and supported by Teacher Unions for the benefit of their members. Kids are deprived of some of best moments in their lives for recreation, sports, dance and other social activities. They are submitted to undue mental stress at a time when they should be freely exploring, discovering and interacting with their physical, biological and social environment for their normal overall development.

❖ Much time is spent training pupils to answer examination questions (past examination papers) with the result that no time is left for the development of essential life skills

❖ Some of the measures adopted recently (e.g automatic promotion, 3 credits to move in lower six, lowering of pass mark etc) have contributed to the decline in the overall quality of education.

❖ Curriculum development which should be the engine providing the driving force for changes in the system is actually playing a subsidiary function.

❖ The curriculum is highly centralised, compartmentalised and locked up in a straightjacket. It is imposed on students from above. Students are not encouraged to pursue alternative curricula according to their interests and needs. Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which are essential for the development of basic life skills are simply ignored.
There is no specialised institution for curriculum development and curriculum research as in most other countries. This responsibility has been entrusted to a teacher training institution which is not equipped for that purpose.

The teaching strategies adopted in most cases favour rote learning at the expense of critical and creative thinking. The same pedagogical approaches are adopted during mass private tuition held in deplorable conditions after normal school hours.

The textbook is often the sole source of knowledge; it is used as if it is a holy book by the teacher as well as by the assessors; such knowledge is freely and abundantly available on the internet.

The education system is too elitist; it favours a small group of students in their academic pursuit, at the expense of others who are endowed with unrecognised but valuable non-academic qualities.

Lack of equity remains a problem. Children from rich families are favoured as they enjoy a better nutrition, a richer learning environment, better educational support including private tuition etc.

The system is characterised by a low internal efficiency resulting in a significant number of dropouts; only 35% of students who join the system ultimately make it to the HSC level.

The share of pre-primary education in the education budget (2015) is around 1.5% compared to 14% for Vietnam.

The share of tertiary education in the education budget (2015) is around 8.1% compared 20% for Vietnam, Singapore and Nepal.

There is a high failure and dropout rate as a result of inappropriate curriculum, passive pedagogical strategies, lack of commitment on the part of some teachers, absence of remediation and psychological support and the use of the wrong yardstick for assessment purposes.

Children with special educational needs (around 10% of any given population) are not properly catered for and fail to develop to their full potential because of lack of appropriate policies, infrastructure, training etc.

No early detection mechanism has been envisaged for children with special needs and no appropriate mechanism has been set up to address the problem. Moreover, there are too few educational psychologists to tackle the problem effectively.

The transition from pre-primary to primary is a big emotional shock for many students in spite of the changes introduced recently to tackle the problem.
Schools are perceived as having variable standards. In spite of the policy of regionalisation, many parents resort to dubious strategies to have their wards admitted to supposedly “star” schools.

In spite of the changes proposed by the Nine Year Schooling programme introduced in 2014, cut-throat competition at the end of the primary schooling is still a problem. Getting through the PSAC is the central goal of primary education.

Little is known of the effectiveness of the system due to a lack of appropriate evaluation, auditing and educational research.

Curriculum research is almost inexistent with the result that curriculum development and curriculum review and renewal is done haphazardly and is not based on empirical data.

No situational analysis is conducted with the stakeholders to find out about the educational and training needs; curriculum development teams base their judgement on their own limited perceptions; the process of curriculum development is often limited to lengthy panel meetings within the four walls of comfortable offices.
Teacher education which is probably the strongest determinant for quality education, has hardly improved over the past decade. Over-emphasis on subject knowledge and professional knowledge overshadows the need for practical professional skills (competences in motivating students and managing the classroom) and values such as dedication and commitment to the profession.

Many teachers are involved in the flourishing business of education; they are attracted more towards the financial gains from private tuition; they seem to have abdicated their roles as change agents for the coming generations.

More money is spent per students in state schools compared to government aided private schools.

Many parents have a distorted notion of education. Through lack of information and appropriate education, they easily fall into the trap of star schools, private tuition, academic certificates etc.

The system instigates uniformity among students (same syllabus, same exams, same problems to solve, same answers expected etc) instead of a culture of diversity. Pupils are seen as identical and not as individuals with unique potential, background, experience, character and personality

Basic life skills which can be acquired through values education, citizenship/civic education, consumer education, sex education etc. (e.g problem solving, conflict resolution, lifelong learning, team building, leadership, entrepreneurship skills etc.) are ignored by the system.

Pupils who apprehend the system are tagged as low achievers although they may have better alternate potential; they are often non-conformists who think out of the box and are more creative and critical in their thinking.

Children joining the pre-vocational classes are often branded and stigmatised as rejects of the system. They are forced to follow the same traditional programmes that have failed them.

There is a lack of facilities for quality technical and vocational education which needs to be expanded and valorised. Furthermore, restricting TVET to low performers of the system adds to its demise.

Rapid expansion in enrolment at the tertiary level has not been followed by improvement in infrastructure, human and financial resources, quality and relevance, linkage with industrial and economic sectors, research etc.
2. Why revamp our education system?

❖ The system has served its time and is presently out of tune with the socio-economic and technological exigencies of the modern world.

❖ Rapid changes are overtaking the world community - knowledge explosion, climate change, globalisation, ICT revolution, protectionism, resource depletion, pollution, unsustainable development, increasing poverty, loss of values etc.

❖ With trade liberalization, a fierce competition will emerge on the world market and we must be ready to compete. We should be prepared to offer quality products and services at competitive prices.

❖ In the future, national economies will depend more on educated and highly skilled workforce; we will be drawn in a battle of brain power and ideas.

❖ There is a strongly felt need to move from an industrial model to a learning model as we are transiting from an industrial to an information age and from a linear to a complex and chaotic world filled with uncertainties.

❖ The world is witnessing a knowledge explosion: knowledge is doubling every couple of years; by 2020, it will double every 73 days!

❖ Recent researches have shed light on how the brain grows, develops and functions. New concepts have emerged about the plasticity of the brain and about intelligence. The latter is not static, but it develops and grows. The concept of multiple intelligences is taking a firm hold in the education arena.

❖ There is a better understanding of how humans learn (Annexe B). It is possible to increase students’ creative and critical thinking capacities through instruction and practice.

❖ With new information and communication technologies, knowledge is now available at the tip of our fingers at any time and any place.

❖ It is difficult today to anticipate precisely an individual’s future knowledge requirements.

❖ The system is diseased; the symptoms of the disease are indiscipline, violence, absenteeism, drug abuse, drop outs, private tuition etc.

❖ There is growing dissatisfaction with the system in terms of its appropriateness and quality of output, cost-effectiveness and social justice.

❖ The piecemeal approach adopted to address the weaknesses in the system up to now has failed.
Tertiary education will be called upon to play a more decisive role in our socio-economic development, especially if we want to see the country transformed into a Knowledge Hub to serve the Region and as a Centre for Higher Learning and Excellence.

Quality technical education is likely to provide the solution for our youth unemployment problem and to raise overall productivity.

A rather large proportion of our revenue is spent on free education; we should ensure that we are getting value for money by improving on the quality.

An education revolution is underway in countries like Finland, Singapore and other Asian countries. If we do not react now, it may be too late to catch up with them.

3. What type of citizen do we want to produce?

In view of the expected changes mentioned above, we will need:

- Compassionate citizens who will value effort, discipline, patience, perseverance, truth, integrity, respect, flexibility, creativity, adaptability, autonomy, interdependence etc.

- A labour force that is highly skilled, reliable, productive, versatile, imaginative and creative; people who can think rationally, take decisions and act promptly, work effectively and efficiently in teams and all this under pressure.

Our education system, therefore, should produce individuals:

- Who are literate and numerate, ICT literate, independent and self-reliant, self-initiating, self-modifying and self-directing, adaptable and cooperative and life-long learners.

- Who are imbued with civic and patriotic ideals; with good working habits; with logical, critical and creative thinking skills, entrepreneurial and leadership skills and with problem-solving skills.

- With capacity to learn and change consciously, continuously and quickly and to continuously adapt to new situations.

- With the proper mind set and attitudes to live harmoniously in a multicultural society.

- With awareness of the need to protect and to preserve our environment.

- Who show respect of self and for others, respect of rules and respect of other people’s property, opinions, views, culture etc.
With ethical principles and values e.g. love, peace, tolerance etc.

With knowledge, attitudes and skills for sustainable living and healthy lifestyle

Ready to fight against injustice, fraud, corruption, favouritism, nepotism, opacity etc.

4. What should be the vision and mission of the education system?

We should have a common national vision and mission which must be approved by all the stakeholders in the system.

5.1 Our Vision

Our vision should be to:

- Empower all Mauritian children to develop physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally, psychologically and aesthetically according to their potential and in harmony with their physical, social and biological environment.

5.2 Our Mission

Our mission should be to:

- prepare young people to face the challenges of the coming decades
- teach students HOW to think rather than WHAT to think
- help students develop the techniques of HOW to learn rather than WHAT to learn
- shift from subject-centered to child-centered and integrated approaches
- Shift from an examination-driven to a curriculum-driven education system
- make education an enjoyable experience for all children - less threatening
- produce a highly professional, flexible and adaptable workforce
- Instil basic values (e.g. responsibility, adaptability etc.) for participating productively in the development of the country and in nation building
- develop the spirit of entrepreneurship and leadership
- encourage lifestyle that will lead to healthy living, happiness and fulfilment
❖ encourage sustainable living to preserve the environment and our natural resources
❖ ensure social cohesion and national unity in our multicultural society
❖ decide on a language policy to facilitate learning in schools and communication
❖ ensure a cost-effective use of resources in the education system
❖ provide more opportunities for young people to engage in quality tertiary education
❖ to provide quality technical education for pupils endowed with non-academic talents

6. Paradigm shift in education

Table 6 summarises the proposed paradigm shifts in education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old paradigm</th>
<th>New paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis on the cognitive domain- intellectual development</strong></td>
<td>Emphasis on the affective and psychomotor domains- physical and moral development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook based education</td>
<td>Education based on life and work experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher centered education</td>
<td>Student centered education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam-led instruction</td>
<td>Curriculum based instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative evaluation</td>
<td>Diagnostic and summative evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on passing examinations</td>
<td>Focus on functional competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC and HSC only options</td>
<td>Other O level, A level and technical options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory testing</td>
<td>Testing concept acquisition and application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoon feeding, parrot learning</td>
<td>Metacognition and lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didactic teaching</td>
<td>Brain compatible pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to remember</td>
<td>Learning to learn/ to find out/to reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using percentages (obtained in exams) to describe an individual</td>
<td>Using a cumulative portfolio to reflect the multiple competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of restraint, authority and indoctrination</td>
<td>Freedom and opportunity to pursue own interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information</td>
<td>Ensure formation and transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High pupil/teacher ratio</td>
<td>Low pupil/teacher ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight jacket centralised curriculum</td>
<td>Open and flexible curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table: Comparing Educational Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Practice</th>
<th>Proposed Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut throat competition</td>
<td>Collaborative and Cooperative learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking along established norms</td>
<td>Critical and creative thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External evaluation</td>
<td>Internal and auto evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic promotion</td>
<td>Competence based promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative evaluation</td>
<td>Formative and continuous evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of learning</td>
<td>Assessment for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropouts</td>
<td>Every one taken on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving textbook problems</td>
<td>Solving real everyday problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to follow and abide by rules</td>
<td>Capacity to take initiatives and to innovate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tends towards uniformity</td>
<td>Promotes variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better consumers</td>
<td>Better producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on employability</td>
<td>Emphasis on adaptability and productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralised authority</td>
<td>Decentralisation- regionalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No career guidance and counselling</td>
<td>Counselling an important aspect of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lip service to Technical Education</td>
<td>Technical Education at the core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complacent tertiary education</td>
<td>Reorganize and revitalize tertiary education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In line with the new paradigm, a series of recommendations have been proposed to upgrade the system and to make it more responsive to the changing needs of our people and our nation.

At this point, it is important to understand how the education system functions. A system is made up of parts or sub-systems, all of which must work in harmony for the system to perform effectively towards a common goal. The components of our educational system are curriculum development, teacher training, assessment (examinations), school administration, inspectorate, and parents. One of the major weaknesses of the system is the absence of a forum where the parts of the system can interact and coordinate their action along a common education philosophy and strategy. In fact, each component is operating in isolation and has its own agenda. An interesting analogy is a car with its four wheels trying to move in different directions. A mechanism should be devised to allow the education system to function efficiently and effectively.
We should also reconsider our concept of holistic education. Table 7 summarises the components of holistic education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTION</th>
<th>TRAINING</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Skills and competence</td>
<td>Attitude and behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Formation</td>
<td>Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Personal engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus- list of subjects</td>
<td>List of competences</td>
<td>Life skills, values,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms/schools</td>
<td>Labs, workshops, gym</td>
<td>Schools, home, society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks, chalkboards</td>
<td>Tools, machines</td>
<td>Books, media, internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive learning</td>
<td>Learning by doing</td>
<td>Visits, projects, surveys, PBL, ECA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoon feeding, cramming (PT)</td>
<td>Dexterity, practice,</td>
<td>Creative &amp; critical thinking, problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal resources</td>
<td>Logistics et expertise</td>
<td>Logistics, team work,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term outcome</td>
<td>Medium term outcome</td>
<td>Long term outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to evaluate</td>
<td>Complex evaluation</td>
<td>Extremely complex evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written exams</td>
<td>Practical exams</td>
<td>Diaries, portfolios, projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSAC, SC, HSC</td>
<td>Practical competency,</td>
<td>Character, personality, values,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts, music, dance,</td>
<td>entrepreneurial skills, team spirit,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sports</td>
<td>versatility, adaptability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Holistic education is a fair mix of the above**
It is worth noting that education in our context focuses on knowledge acquisition, examinations and certificates. This is probably because it is the least difficult approach to schooling and instruction. It is less demanding in terms of infrastructure, resources, organization, management and evaluation. The development of skills and competences as well as the development of proper attitudes and behaviour are much trickier to organize and manage. They require not only sophisticated resources but much greater expertise and commitment from the actors including the decision makers, the teachers and the administrators. The way the curriculum is designed and implemented as well as the quality of teacher training have a decisive impact on the effectiveness and relevance of the education system.

7. **Recommendation 1: Prepare a new mission document**

A comprehensive mission document should be prepared by a multi-disciplinary team of experts following an in-depth situational analysis of the entire educational system. All the stakeholders should be consulted for as wide a consensus as possible. This document will define the educational philosophy as well as the educational goals and objectives that we would seek to attain in the short and medium term. It will also describe the strategies to be adopted to attain these objectives taking into account the roles of each sub-system. It should ensure that there is proper coordination among the sub-systems to work towards the common goals. Recourse to international expertise could be helpful at this stage.

This exercise should be dissociated from party politics and vote banking. However, a strong political will to bring about the desired changes is warranted on the part of the ruling party.

8. **Recommendation 2: Need for a National Educational Coordinating Committee**

Following the mission statement, a **National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC)** should be set up at the level of the MOE with representatives from the main educational institutions (MOE, MIE, MES, MCA, PSSA, NCCRD) and other stakeholders to ensure smooth, effective and efficient coordination within the system. There should be a better partnership between teacher training, school management, the inspectorate and parent organisations. A national auditing mechanism should be set up to evaluate the short / medium term outcomes as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of the system.

Curriculum development should be established as the driving force of the system. A **National Curriculum Advisory Committee (NCAC)** should be set up. It should work along the lines of the mission statement and other proposals made by the NECC. It should also make an audit of the available resources and expertise in terms of curriculum developers, evaluators, subject specialist etc. A **National Education Conference** with all stakeholders may be organised and the proceedings of the conference will culminate in the production of a white paper on the **National Education Policies and Guidelines** for pre-primary, primary, secondary, pre-vocational and tertiary education including technical education. The white paper should be circulated for extended debate and consensus.
9. Recommendation 3: Establish curriculum development as the hub of the system

The thrust for change should be initiated at the level of the curriculum. In the 1970’s, the Mauritius Institute of Education was set up with a view to mauritianising the curriculum, improving the professional profile of teachers and reviewing the assessment strategies. In the 1980’s, the NCCRD (National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development) was set up at Barkly, Beau Bassin to specifically improve curriculum development. In spite of the effort to review and improve the curriculum with more emphasis on practical subjects (e.g. agriculture, home economics, design and technology, visual arts etc.), not much was achieved simply because curriculum development was viewed as a non-essential component of the system. Educational research, so important for curriculum development, never really took off; academic staff from the MIE, MES and MOE were delegated to provide their services to the NCCRD for half a day per week and often without any prior training. There were only a few permanent administrative staff at the NCCRD and the budget devoted to curriculum development was negligible. Curriculum development was reduced to textbook revision and textbook writing. It is not surprising, therefore, that curriculum development never assumed its leading role and it became subservient to examinations. The over-emphasis on examination is largely responsible today for most of the ills and shortcomings of the system.

A National Curriculum Steering Committee should be set up to monitor the implementation phase. Subject panels including subject specialists, teachers, curriculum specialist, educational psychologists, media specialists, inspectors, textbook editors etc should be organised to work on the syllabuses at the different levels. The Syllabuses should be circulated to all schools and colleges for information and feedback before they are ultimately approved. Schools should be allowed some autonomy with regards to the curriculum implementation and extra-curricular activities.

Teaching/learning materials including textbooks, project workbooks, practical activity sheets, teacher’s guides, digital materials etc. should be produced by the subject panels in line with the proposed curriculum. A few schools should be carefully selected for the piloting of the material. A group of experienced educational researchers should be involved in the feedback collection and analysis. Based on the feedback, the curriculum material should be modified for the final print. Textbooks should be used only as reference materials as most of the content knowledge are readily available in other books and on the internet. Pupils should be encouraged to intelligently use the latest technologies to access, select and use the information available. The use of mobile phones, tablets and computers for teaching/learning purposes will be inevitable in the future.

Concurrently, teacher training, examinations and school administration should be reorganized based on the new curriculum proposals. Pre-service and in-service training of teachers as well as the training of school administrators and inspectors should be reviewed in line with the new curriculum.

Evaluation of the programmes should be conducted by a team of experienced and qualified educational evaluators according the curriculum goals and objectives. It should consist of the evaluation of the teaching/learning material, the schools, the teachers and the evaluation of learners in terms of the learning outcomes.
10. Recommendation 4: diversifying the curriculum

In view of the changes mentioned in Table 1 (page 2), the curriculum should be revisited both at the primary and secondary levels. To cope with the advances taking place in science and technology including ICT, new subjects such as quantum physics, nano technology, artificial intelligence and robotics will find their way in the school curriculum. To cope with the world food, water and energy crisis, new subjects such as bio-farming, sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, apiculture, biotechnology, renewable energy technologies, water management technologies, waste recycling and ecosystem preservation will be introduced. On the economic and social front, new subjects such as fintech, blockchain, eco-tourism, global business, regional and global economy, ports technology and management, healthy living and healthy lifestyle, values and multicultural education should also form part of the school programmes.

The traditional subjects taught in schools should be supplemented with new disciplines. Schools should be given the option to offer disciplines such as health education, citizenship education including political literacy, road safety, sex education, consumer education, environmental education, sustainable living, agricultural education, marine science and oceanic industries, information and communication technology, values education, entrepreneurship and leadership, conflict resolution, thinking skills, climate change, sustainable development/living etc.

Specialised panels should be constituted for each discipline for the purpose of curriculum development including the production of curriculum materials. The panels should make proposals for the best pedagogical approaches and the elaboration of appropriate evaluation and assessment tools. Emphasis should be placed on experiential and interactive team learning through workshops, case studies, surveys, project work, practical work, visits etc.

To make school more appealing, to motivate pupils to learn and to provide them with a holistic education, extra-curricular activities (Table 8) should be organized after normal school hours. Students should be allowed to invest themselves in activities that suit their interests and talents e.g sports, music, drama, debates, social work etc. It should prompt them to develop a strong sense of belonging to the nation. In the same wake, mass private tuition should be banned.

**Table 8: Extracurricular activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports Activities</th>
<th>football, volleyball, swimming, badminton, tennis, judo, yoga, judo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor games- chest, cards, domino, monopoly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Activities</td>
<td>music, dance, singing, drawing, painting, modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Activities</td>
<td>Gardening, cookery, pottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural &amp; Religious Activities</td>
<td>visits to churches of different faiths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Activities</td>
<td>helping elderly people and handicapped people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outing Activities</td>
<td>hiking in forests, mountains, rivers; camping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>science centres, museums, historical sites, botanical gardens, industries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.1 Values Education

Values education should be an integral part of the school curriculum. Values are ethical principles of human behaviour and conduct; they are ideas, beliefs or understandings that guide one's behaviour. Values determine our thoughts, attitudes, feelings and actions; they play an important role in character formation; they are the building blocks of a good society.

The present elitist education system is not doing much to address the behaviour problem. On the contrary, it is exacerbating negative qualities such as selfishness, shame, insecurity, hatred, apathy etc. in our students. Every day we are witnessing flagrant cases of lack of discipline, responsibility and respect (Refer to Annex C) as well as an increase in violence, absenteeism, substance abuse etc. in our schools. It is not surprising that there is an erosion of traditional, cultural and spiritual values in our society.

Values education (along with citizenship education) should be an integral part of our curriculum. It should be based on the principle that “values are not taught but are caught”. Hence it warrants a very particular methodology for its implementation. Teaching strategies for values education should be built around problem-based learning, project method, role play, case studies, storytelling, visualisation, brainstorming, discussion, group interaction etc. Teachers should be specially trained to vulgarise basic human values with their students and also to help them to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect which are so important for their success. They should be the role model for their pupils.

10.2 Health Education

Health is influenced by:

❖ personal factors such as nutrition, hygiene, lifestyle, exercises and mind set

❖ socio economic factors such as family economic status and purchasing power

❖ environmental factors such as climate, pollution, accidents and diseases

Health education has become imperative in view of the increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and coronary heart diseases in our country. Unhealthy lifestyle and eating habits starts during early childhood and persist during adulthood. Smoking, alcohol and drug abuse often start at school under peer pressure during adolescence. Teens pregnancy is another problem that is becoming alarming.

Health education along with sex education should form part of the curriculum both at the primary and the secondary levels. Knowledge acquisition alone will not serve the purpose. Pupils should engage in group activities within the school and in the community to help them develop the proper attitudes and adopt healthier behaviours.
10.3 Citizenship Education

Citizenship education emphasizes the need for citizens to be properly informed, to be aware of their rights and responsibilities, to understand how society works and to play an active role in society. It also allows them to express their opinion freely irrespective of their political philosophy, race, caste, religion, status etc. It introduces the basic concepts of democracy, meritocracy, transparency, good governance etc.

Political literacy is all about helping people to become politically aware and to participate effectively in the political affairs of the country. It provides them with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to make fair political judgments and decisions. Lack of political literacy leads to apathy, indifference, complacency, distorted political opinion/judgement, poverty, oppression, communalism, extremism etc. Politically literate citizens will be better prepared to fight against injustice, oppression, fraud, corruption, favouritism, nepotism, opacity etc.

10.4 Agricultural education

Agricultural education should help the country to address the food deficit problem (more than 70% of the food we consume is imported), to provide the population with healthier food, to reduce our food importation bill and to save precious foreign currencies. It could help young entrepreneurs to start their own business and to create more employment opportunities. It is one of the rare disciplines that allows young people to exploit our limited natural resources such as land, sunlight, air, water, plants and animals. Apart from the economic dimension, agricultural education is an integrated, multidisciplinary and applied science where students learn basic concepts of biology, chemistry and physics as well as economics, book-keeping, sociology etc.

However, for greater productivity and for environment-friendly practices, future farmers (sitting in our classrooms today) should be specially trained to make use of the appropriate technologies and the best management practices. They should above all develop the taste for agricultural production and the skills for efficient agricultural activities. Marine science should be introduced in the curriculum given the extensive marine resources at our disposal which are presently not being exploited fruitfully. We cannot afford to leave the primary sector of our economy in the hands of school drop outs, as it has been the case up to now.
10.5 Environmental education

Global warming and climate change are threatening the delicate equilibrium that allows life to subsist on our planet. As a small island state, we are extremely vulnerable to such changes. We are already witnessing the ill effects of our reckless environmental decisions and actions such as deforestation and badly planned urbanisation. Pollution is a major problem on account of the irresponsible behaviour of many Mauritians.

We can all help to protect our environment by doing simple things at school, at home, in public places, on the street, at work, on the beach, in the forest etc. We can develop an environment-friendly way of living through a properly prepared curriculum and appropriate activities at school. We should create awareness of the need to protect and to preserve our environment.

Table 9 summarises the main components of environmental education.
10.6 Consumer education

Excessive consumerism is becoming a scourge of our society. Many families live beyond their financial means and are deeply indebted. They are unable to set priorities and spend much of their income on unnecessary items. They are easily misled by false advertisements which they are bombarded with throughout the day. Many families are seriously indebted as they have never been trained to prepare a family budget. Gambling is also negatively impacting on the behaviour of people who are all looking for quick and easy way to earn money. Effort, discipline, patience and perseverance are no more the ingredients for success in life.

The objective of consumer education should be to help consumers develop the proper mind set and behaviour pattern for intelligent and sustainable consumption and healthy life style. They should be warned against the danger of false advertisement.

10.7 Thinking skills

Traditional education emphasises memorisation of facts, figures, definitions, rules, formula. At best it allows for analysis, synthesis and evaluation for linear problem solving.

Critical thinking is the process of determining the authenticity, accuracy, or value of something; it is characterized by the ability to seek reasons and alternatives, to perceive the total situation, and change one's view based on evidence.

Creative thinking is a novel way of seeing or doing things that is characterized by four components:

❖ **Fluency**- capacity to generate new ideas

❖ **Flexibility**- capacity to shift perspective

❖ **Originality**- capacity to conceive of something new

❖ **Elaboration**- capacity to build on other ideas.

Thinking skills are viewed as crucial for people to cope with a rapidly changing world. Many educators believe that specific knowledge will not be as important to tomorrow's workers and citizens as the ability to learn and make sense of new information. It is essential to teach students how to use information critically and creatively to make decisions and to develop problem solving skills.
Thinking skill may be taught as a discipline on its own or infused in the teaching of other subjects. The pedagogical approaches to develop thinking skills involve logical thinking and reasoning including skills such as comparison, classification, sequencing, cause/effect, patterning, webbing, analogies, deductive and inductive reasoning, forecasting, planning, hypothesising, criticizing and exploring ideas. Pupils should be involved in activities such as brainstorming, discussion, questioning, using analogies and metaphors, solving problems, making decision and using metacognition.

10.8 ICT education

Computer technologies and the new digital culture have changed the ways people live, work, play, and learn. Digital literacy—the skills of searching for, discerning, and producing information, as well as the critical use of new media for full participation in society—has thus become an important consideration for curriculum frameworks. In many countries, digital literacy is being built through the incorporation of information and communication technology (ICT) into schools. Schools use a diverse set of ICT tools to communicate, create, disseminate, store, and manage information. In some contexts, ICT has also become integral to the teaching-learning interaction, through such approaches as replacing chalkboards with interactive digital whiteboards, using students’ own smartphones, personal laptops and tablets for learning during class time, and the “flipped classroom” model where students watch lectures at home on the computer and use classroom time for more interactive exercises.

ICT allows parents, teachers and learners to come together in a way that was never possible before. It allows teachers to be more effective in their teaching; it enables parents to keep abreast of their ward’s progress at school. It can help to improve learning as it is highly appreciated and effectively mastered by learners; it may also serve as a catalyst for whole-school improvement.

Schools should develop a positive and effective ICT policy. They should be digitally equipped and learners should have access to digital facilities to improve their digital literacy skills and to motivate them to explore beyond the classroom and traditional textbooks.
11. Recommendation 5: Improve teaching/learning in schools

The teaching/learning strategies in the classrooms have not evolved very much in spite of the heavy investment in teacher training over the years. Newly trained teachers find it difficult to impose new methodological approaches in a fossilised and examination dominated system. As they are judged essentially on the pass rate, their main concern is completing the syllabus in time and getting the highest rate of passes. The emphasis is on quantity at the expense of quality. Those who try to innovate are quickly caught up by the directors or the inspectors who would express their dissatisfaction on the grounds that they are out of tune with the system. Teaching strategies such as surveys, projects, visits followed by discussions, debates, workshops etc that will allow pupils to explore their environment and learn from first-hand experience, are often forbidden. It leads to funny situations in geography where supposedly bright pupils know all the rivers and mountains on a map but are unable to identify one when travelling across the country. Languages are learnt more with the view to passing an exam rather than to communicating orally and in writing with others. Science and mathematics are learnt to solve problems on paper during exams.

Students learn best when they are happy and when they feel loved and supported. Student motivation and task persistence increase when students can work with topics that are of personal interest to them. Hence, instruction should draw on student interests for greater student engagement, higher levels of motivation, higher productivity, greater autonomy, increased achievement, and an improved sense of self-competence and self-satisfaction.

Didactic teaching/learning should make way for problem-based learning, brain compatible pedagogy, philosophical discourse, project method etc. that help in the development of higher order thinking skills (Refer to Annex D). Cooperative learning should be encouraged instead of the prevailing cut throat competition as it prepares young people to work effectively in a team.

Sophisticated electronic devices will play a crucial role in teaching/learning in schools, at home and other places. Teachers will be mere facilitators. Textbooks and black boards will be replaced by pen drives, laser discs, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, interactive whiteboards, cable television etc. Classes will be available online via social media such as YouTube or Google Hangouts both in real time and archived. If students miss a class, they go to the online class to catch up. Class will be fully connected to social media. All students will be able to share their screens with others via Skype, Google etc. Homework and projects will be submitted online via Dropbox. Students will each have a digital portfolio where they store all of their projects, assessments, notes. All students will have a web-based email account. Schools will have digital bulletin boards. Schools and students will work on a 24/7 basis and absenteeism will not matter anymore. Assessment will be based on digital portfolios and real life approaches. Education will be individualized and students will assume greater responsibility for their learning. Parents, teachers and schools will work as a digital community for the benefit of students.

Finally, a system of pedagogical auditing should be introduced to ensure that these changes become a reality.
12. Recommendation 6: Re-engineer Teacher training

Teacher training started in the 1950’s with the setting up of the Teacher’s Training College at Beau-Bassin. The TTC was providing pre-service teacher education for primary school teachers. In 1973, The MIE was set up to review the existing curriculum and also to provide training for teachers at the secondary education level. Ultimately, the MIE took up the responsibility for teacher training at the primary level as well. There is no doubt that it did a remarkable job in the professionalisation of the teaching profession. It has constantly evolved with time providing flexible pre-service distance education programmes to cater for the large number of teachers and school administrators who urgently needed upgrading.

The roles of teachers are likely to change in the near future. Students will not necessarily need teachers to acquire information. They will rather need teachers to show them how to sift out credible from non-credible information; how to transform credible information into their knowledge systems; how to apply information, skills, values, dispositions and technology to create desirable results. This is precisely what they need in life and at work.”

The future development of any nation lies in the hands of teachers. Teachers play a crucial role in the social, moral, economic and environmental development of the country. They are the main agents of change in the community and the nation at large. Good teachers help youngsters to become good human being in the society and to embrace a fruitful career. They have a major impact on students’ learning and behaviour. Students are deeply affected by the teacher’s love and affection, character, knowledge, competence, and moral commitment. Countries like Finland and Singapore that stand out in education worldwide invest massively and effectively in teacher education. No doubt, teachers in these countries are extremely effective and enjoy a high status in society.

The qualities of a good teacher are enumerated in table 10

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<th>Table 10: Qualities of a good teacher</th>
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<td>The model teacher is a friend, a guide, a facilitator and a lifelong learner with the following qualities</td>
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As a professional body, teachers should have a code of ethics by which they should abide to uplift the status of the profession in the community. (Ref. Annex F). They should also learn to work collaboratively at the level of the school for greater efficiency.
12.1 Teacher training

Teaching is one of the noble professions that requires not only a deep knowledge of the subject but also a high level of conviction, commitment, integrity and patriotism. To have people with such qualities, the selection process for new teachers should be reconsidered and new selection criteria should be established. We have been used to a system where people with a basic qualification, who cannot find a proper job in the other sectors, finally opt for teaching.

Moreover, teacher education programmes should be re-engineered to make them more responsive to our future needs and to uplift the quality of education from the pre-primary to the tertiary level.

In brief, a normal teacher training programme should prepare teachers to develop:

❖ a sound and up-to-date knowledge of the subject and the syllabus.
❖ professional knowledge of the education system, the child, the pedagogy, the curriculum including assessment and evaluation.
❖ professional skills including skills in communication, planning and organization, classroom management and evaluation, motivating students, conflict resolution etc.
❖ professional values including commitment to the profession, to the pupils, to the community and the nation.

Unfortunately, teacher training programmes have not evolved much over the past decade. Emphasis is still placed on subject knowledge and theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning. This is probably because this aspect of the training programme is easy to manage and to evaluate through standardized exams. Someone may perform extremely well in such exams and still perform poorly as a teacher because they have the knowledge, but they lack the skills, the attitude and the commitment to apply that knowledge in the classroom situation.

Teachers often see themselves as civil servants with rigid scheme of duties (defended by strong teacher unions lobbies) that limit their roles to the teaching of the subjects only. Their major concern is to complete the syllabus and to achieve the highest pass rate. Some unscrupulous teachers are even making a flourishing business out of education. In spite of the fairly remunerative salaries, many choose to give mass private tuition often in appalling conditions outside normal school hours. According to the Prevention of Corruption Act of 2002 (A Public Official solicits, accepts or obtains a gratification in the execution of his functions and duties), this is a form of corruption which has been tolerated mainly for political reasons. It defeats the purpose of free education and goes against the principle of equity. It places an unnecessary financial burden on parents, and it robs students of some of their precious time which they could have used for their personal, physical, cultural, social, emotional and moral development.
One of the major objectives of teacher training is that the newly trained teachers will spearhead changes and bring innovation in the system. Ironically, instead of changing the system, they ultimately become part of it and help to perpetuate it. The system is so strongly rooted and distorted that even highly motivated teachers who want to bring about changes, soon realize that they are hitting their head against the wall. It is easier to join the system than to fight it. Finally, everyone teaches to the test and all the noble objectives of education are quickly forgotten.

The rising demand for more trained teachers has led to the mass training of teachers. Training of teachers in large cohorts and through distance learning mode is not effective. For teacher training to be effective, it has to take place in small groups and mostly in the classroom under the supervision properly trained and motivated mentors. Their assessment should depend essentially on their competences and attitudes rather than their success in written exams. Distance learning programmes should be used with care; it is like teaching someone to ride a bicycle without the bicycle! It should be complemented with regular interactive face-to-face sessions, long hours of teaching practice in the classroom with an elaborate mentoring system and more rigorous assessment procedures.

Emphasis in teacher education should be shifted from subject knowledge (available today at the tip of the fingers) to professional skills and professional values. Professional skills are acquired essentially in the classroom and hence the teaching practice component of the teacher education programme should be strengthened and given more weighing in the assessment grid. Teaching practice time in the classroom should be extended and the better pedagogical support should be provided to trainee teachers.

The development of professional values is almost inexistent in most teacher training programmes. Trainee teachers should be encouraged to reflect deeply on their roles in society and the qualities that they should develop to be effective. Trainees who develop the right professional values will be more motivated to acquire the professional knowledge and skills on their own through lifelong learning.

Additionally, the assessment of trainee teachers’ professional competences and qualities should be reviewed. It is illogical to assess a trainee teacher mostly on knowledge acquisition through a traditional one-off written examination and a 20-30 minutes teaching practice assessment. It has to be stretched over a longer period of time and it should adopt a formative approach. Such assessment should preferably be conducted throughout the training programme in the classroom situation and should also reveal the level of professional skills, values and commitment displayed by the trainee. It warrants much more resources and higher level of commitment and expertise on the part of assessors.
13. Recommendation 7: Review the evaluation and assessment policies and practices- diagnose with a view to help and not to penalize and reject.

“The real difficulty is that people have no idea of what education truly is. We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated. The girls, we say, do not have to earn; so why should they be educated? As long as such ideas persist there is no hope of our ever knowing the true value of education” – Mahatma Gandhi

Examinations are definitely the major limiting factor in our education system. At the moment, examinations are driving the system with the result that teaching/learning in the classrooms focuses on exams at the expense of many other life skills and values which are so important for a holistic education. Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are simply ignored as they have little relevance to exams. Community activities and work experience are regarded as utopia and unachievable. (Refer to Table 8- page 21)

Examinations focus to a large extent on memory testing. It is not surprising that pupils’ resort to cramming, parrot-learning, spoon-feeding and even cheating. For many pupils, exams are a threatening experience and are a major cause for failures and drop-outs. As a yard stick, exams measure only a limited aspect of the child’s potential ignoring all the other aspects which are so essential for success later in life. Judging a pupil’s potential on what he/she can achieve in an exam room during 1-2 hours is simply absurd. Finland has banned standardized exams and Singapore is following suit.

Nine Year Schooling has brought some improvement in the system but has failed to address the major shortcomings. The PSAC has improved slightly on the PSLC, but it still assesses students mostly in the cognitive domain. Even here, it assesses largely at the recall, understanding and comprehension levels which are lower order thinking. It barely goes into analysis, synthesis and evaluation levels which are higher order thinking. It is strictly textbook based and does not encourage students to explore their environment for alternative sources of knowledge. It ignores completely the affective and the psychomotor domains of learning which are so essential for the balanced development of the child. Furthermore, it is the major cause for mass private tuition at the primary level.

An effective assessment system should enhance teaching and improve student learning. It should provide feedback to students, teachers and parents to help them adopt alternative strategies to address their weaknesses. It should go beyond simple measurement of academic achievement to that of communication skills, critical and creative thinking, physical fitness, interests, values and attitudes. It should make allowance for a variety of evaluation techniques. It should increase (not diminish!) students feeling of personal worth, self-esteem and motivation. It should help students to learn how to evaluate their own learning. It should provide information that assists in planning and decision making about resources and support.
The assessment techniques as well as the assessment criteria for the end of primary education should be reviewed. Summative evaluation should make way for formative and continuous assessment where all the domains of learning are taken on board. Along with traditional exams, a series of alternative assessment techniques are available for assessing pupil’s competences and potential (refer to Annex E). Teachers should be specially trained not only technically but morally and professionally to assess students and report to the school and parents about their progress or regress. Pupils should leave primary schools with a portfolio where teachers, head teachers, school psychologists and parents have commented on their physical, intellectual, social, moral and emotional qualities and potential throughout their schooling. There is no justification for categorizing and ranking students at this age.

14. Recommendation 8: Review the roles of inspectorate and school management

Creating a school ethos which is conducive for effective learning is primordial. The physical, social and emotional environment of the school have a major impact on students’ learning as well as on their attitudes, values and behaviours. Lack of professionalism, commitment and bad relationship among the staff in many schools are at the root of poor school ethos. The absence of any form of citizenship or values education in the curriculum make matters even worse.

Head teachers/rectors and school inspectors are more concerned about school infrastructure and discipline than school ethos and pedagogy. The appointment of mentors has helped, to a limited extent to ease out the problem. School administrators and inspectors have received costly training to enable them to obtain extra qualifications and to manage their schools effectively. It appears, however, that those qualifications are meant more for extra financial increments than for bringing about the expected changes at the level of the schools.

There is a considerable generation gap between head teachers/rectors/inspectors and newly-trained teachers who join the system. Young teachers often complain about not being able to try out or experiment with new teaching and management approaches as these do not fit with their elders’ concept of management and pedagogy.

A system of management and pedagogical auditing should be established to rate schools according to the physical, social and emotional support that they provide to the pupils to help them not only to pass exams but to adopt responsible attitudes and behaviours. Young teachers should be supported in their quest to introduce modern pedagogical approaches. Parent’s involvement should be encouraged to help students in their academic and social pursuit. Parent, teacher and school partnership is vital for quality education.
15. Recommendation 9: Introduce a programme for parent education

Parents often have a wrong concept of education and pedagogy. Yet, their input is instrumental in the proper education of their wards. Hence, a programme should be set up to cater for their education in terms of the objectives of education, factors influencing learning, parental support to students, problems with adolescents etc.

Through these programmes, parents should be encouraged to become more involved in the school affairs. They should be encouraged to attach less importance to mass private tuition and to use the time instead for the physical, social and emotional development of the child. They can help in citizenship and values education. They can play a decisive role in combating smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, violence and other forms of anti-social behaviour in schools. They should be prepared to set the good example.

16. Recommendation 10: Regionalisation and more autonomy to schools

The excessive centralisation of decision making and management policies at the level of the MOE is a major impediment for both primary and secondary schools. Head teachers and rectors operate as executive officers. They follow strictly the directives that emanate from the education zones. For example, a teacher in a state school is not allowed to take out his/her pupils for an educational visit unless clearance is obtained from the zone director. Although this may have certain advantages, it prevents the school administrators from taking certain initiatives on their own to bring about improvement at the level of their respective schools. Heavy bureaucracy at the level of the MOE and the zones prevent school administrators to take timely decisions for the benefit of pupils. State schools should be provided with more autonomy to decide on the curriculum, staff training, administration and management, time tabling etc. depending on the specificities of their catchment area.

One of the strengths of the Nine Year Schooling is the regionalization. Unfortunately, the existing four zones are not convenient and are giving rise to much dissatisfaction among parents with regards to the placement of pupils in colleges across the island. The root of the problem is the disparity of standards among colleges in different zones. In the short term, the zoning should be reviewed and the number of zones increased to ensure that pupils will not have to travel long distances to attend college. In the medium term, efforts should be made to provide all schools with similar facilities in terms of infrastructure, personnel and facilities.
17. Recommendation 11: Review the roles of the inspectorate

Traditionally, the roles of inspectors have revolved around administrative and infrastructural problems in schools. Many inspectors are reaching the end of their career and are very traditional in their approach. They are often an impediment to change. Much effort has been made during the past decades to provide them with professional training. Now that they have been trained, they should focus their attention on the quality of teaching; they should inspect schools on a cyclical basis in line with clearly established performance targets; they should provide advice to teachers and head teachers with regards to all aspects of teaching/learning, assessment and evaluation and school management. They should assist the teacher training institution in conducting the relevant in-service training of teachers. Ultimately, they should initiate and conduct educational research and disseminate the information for the purpose of improving teaching standards in schools.

18. Recommendation 12: Carry out research on salient educational issues

Educational research provides the basic inputs for meaningful changes to be effected in the education system. It is the foundation on which curriculum review and renewal should be based. It helps to enhance the continuous professional growth of teachers by equipping them with problem-solving, leadership and innovation skills; it makes their knowledge more authentic and objective. It leads to considerable improvement in teaching and learning transactions and in the administration and management of schools.

Unfortunately, educational research is lacking in our context with the result that most of the proposed changes are based on mere intuition and speculation. Major decisions are often driven by political motives and have little or no impact on the quality of education. Every new government that takes over after a general election invalidates what the previous government has put in place often for no valid reasons. This leads to a considerable loss of financial, organizational and time resources. Such practices should be stopped. Once a national development programme has been established by an independent group of experts, it should be strictly adhered to except for minor adjustments.

Educational policies should be developed to promote educational research with a view to improving educational processes. Teachers should be encouraged through appropriate incentives to invest in action research to improve their teaching. Likewise, school administrators should be exhorted to make use of action research to bring about improvement at the level of school management.
19. Recommendation 13: Set up Documentation Centres at the regional level to support students

Teaching in schools is often restricted to prescribed textbooks which are used as sacred books. Little effort is deployed to encourage students to search for and benefit from other sources of information. The fact that examination questions should necessarily find their answers in the textbook incite students to limit their reading. They are not provoked to look for other sources of information, to evaluate critically, to connect and combine information, to compare and contrast ideas, to assess the reasonableness and quality of ideas and to produce new information. With the current amount of information on the internet and other media and the technological facilities available to access them, students should learn how to learn rather than what to learn.

To encourage teachers and students to diversify and enrich their sources of information, Regional Documentation Centres should be established. These should be properly equipped, with the latest technologies, to attract students, teachers, school administrators and even parents.

20. Recommendation 14: The need for differentiated instruction

Each student is unique. Students are different in their learning style, their interests, their work habits, their talents, their aspirations etc. Most classrooms are heterogeneous grouping of students who work at differing readiness levels.

In such a context, a one-size-fits-all teaching/learning approach will not do justice to each individual student. While some students might find a task too easy and not challenging enough to keep them busy and motivated, other students will find the task too difficult and will likewise loose interest and motivation. In both cases, students will go off task and will start misbehaving. In such cases, teachers should have recourse to differentiated instruction to ensure that every student remain on task by adjusting the difficulty level of the task for each student or group of students.

Differentiated instruction consists of matching of work to the differing capabilities of individuals or groups of pupils in order to extend their learning. It means creating learning experiences that work at different levels, enabling students of all abilities to engage at a level and pace that is appropriate for them. It means starting where the kids are rather than adopting a standardized approach to teaching that seems to presume that all learners of a given age or grade are essentially alike. Thus differentiated instruction is “responsive” teaching rather than “one-size-fits-all” teaching. (Ref Annex G)

Such instruction should be the norm in low achieving schools and with students with learning difficulties. Differentiated instruction requires specialised teacher training, whole-school policy supportive of inclusion, appropriate curriculum and teaching methods, adequate resourcing in terms of staff and material, parent’s involvement and strong leadership at the level of the school administrators. Students with learning difficulties should be diagnosed at an early stage and provided with the appropriate support. However, for differentiated instruction to be effective, the pupil teacher ratio should be drastically reduced.
Brain research suggests that when tasks are too hard for a learner, the brain "downshifts" to the limbic area of the brain that does not "think," but rather is designed to protect an individual from harm. Also, when tasks are too easy for a learner, the brain activity displays patterns that look more like the early stages of sleep. Only when tasks are moderately challenging for an individual does the brain "think" in a way that prompts learning.

21. Recommendation 15: adopt educational policies that will discourage private tuition

Mass private tuition is a symptom of a diseased education system. It has grown up to be a parallel system of education involving a turnover of billions of rupees. It undermines the whole concept of free education. It favours students from rich families and from urban areas. It creates high levels of stress among many students and steals away their youth.

Treating the symptoms and ignoring the real causes is inefficient and may even lead to an aggravation of the disease. The solution is to go to the root of the problem and to revisit the whole system. This may be achieved, as mentioned earlier by playing down on exams and by placing curriculum development at the centre of the reform programme, by consolidating teacher training and school management while looking, at the same time, for alternative methods for student assessment.

Assessment should be re-engineered to make it less threatening, more formative and wider in scope. The traditional pen and paper examinations should make way for whole year continuous assessment, progress chart, course work, project work, portfolio etc. The introduction of modular syllabuses together with a system of credits could be envisaged.

22. Recommendation 16: Consolidate the psychological support system available in schools

It is hard to believe that a student who spends six years in our school system is not able to even write his name properly (and no one seems to be accountable!). Yet, every year hundreds of students leave our primary schools in this condition. These students have certainly been left on their own and labelled as unintelligent, lazy, incapable etc. No effort has been made to undertake a proper diagnosis, to motivate the student to learn and to raise his self-esteem.

In the absence of early remediation work and prompt personal psychological attention, and with automatic promotion, such student will never catch up and will end up as a drop out and a potential outlaw with a heavy cost to our society. It is an outright loss of our human resources.

We are also witnessing frequent cases of gross misbehaviour (e.g alcohol and drug abuse, violence etc.) in schools which warrants prompt psychological support and counselling.

A properly equipped Psychological Unit should be set up at the MOE for the early diagnosis of such cases and for appropriate remedial action. This unit should have sub-units in the different zones with a fair number of psychologists to cater adequately for the student population.
23. Recommendation 17: consolidate pre-primary education

Pre-school education play a vital role in the physical, neurological, cognitive, social, emotional, expressive (language), creative and aesthetic development of a child. Brain research shows that the stimulation of the prefrontal cortex (for thinking and reasoning) and the hippocampus (for learning and memory) at an early age determines the child level of success at the primary and secondary levels. The child intelligence potential is determined during the child’s initial years depending on the family and the school environment and support. Investing in pre-primary education is more productive compared to primary and secondary education.

Yet, less than 2% of the education budget goes into pre-primary education (compared to 26% for primary and 47% for secondary) as most of the schools are private schools. This represents a serious handicap for children coming from poor families who cannot provide their kids with the proper nutritional, educational and emotional support to allow them to successfully develop their academic potential. These children should have free access to quality pre-primary education; they should be provided with free meals at school and their parents should be supported and educated accordingly.

In pre-primary schools, pupils should be encouraged to move around, to discover, to express themselves, to communicate, to question, to interact with others, to explore their environment, to play, to imitate, to imagine, to experiment, to construct, to be autonomous etc. On the emotional front, kids should feel loved and protected by people around them. They should be listened to, encouraged, guided and supported.

The quality of pre-primary education is closely linked to the competences and engagement of the teachers and school administrators. Initial and on-the-job professional training of the latter is imperative. Furthermore, schools should be well equipped with a large variety of pedagogical equipment and facilities.

24. Recommendation 18: shifting to a “11yr basic education for all” system

The 9-year schooling, in spite of the good intentions, has not brought noticeable changes in the educational outcomes. The system is still characterised by a rigid and outdated curriculum. Elitism with its lot of unhealthy competition is a challenge to equity. Centralised decision making and lack of autonomy at the level of schools make it difficult for experimentation and innovation. Other weaknesses are mass private tuition, rote learning, multiple standard schools, lack of commitment on the part of teachers and school administrators, ineffective teacher training, indiscipline, violence, drug abuse, absenteeism etc.

The piecemeal approach adopted so far to improve the system has failed. As mentioned earlier, the system is diseased and is not functioning properly. It must be completely overhauled. This is a colossal task that will require strong political will, international expertise and ample time for consultation, negotiation and planning.
The following aspects should be seriously looked into:

- additional financial, infrastructural, pedagogical and human resources
- the setting up of a Curriculum Development and Research Centre to review the curriculum at all levels in line with our future needs
- a flexible and broad based curriculum that will allow every child to grow fully according to his interests and talents in both academic and non-academic fields (Ref Annex H)
- a curriculum that will prompt young people to ask questions and to look for answers, to think out of the box, to develop resilience in the face of adversity and to develop living values and skills.
- the harmonisation of the curriculum at the primary, secondary and the tertiary levels
- a revised policy for the recruitment of new trainee teachers and an on-going professional development scheme for teachers and school administrators
- new policies and strategies for the assessment and evaluation of holistic learning outcomes
- the replacement of Cambridge SC and HSC by the GCE N level, O level and A level
- consider the possibility to introduce the IGCSE (International General Certificate of secondary Education) and the IB (International Baccalaureate)
- stringent measures to discourage mass private tuition
- the setting up of more technical schools and polytechnics
- The development of a multi-path human development scheme
- the extension of school hours for properly organised extra-curricular activities
- the improvement, standardisation and management of schools
- the setting up of an educational audit system
- the linking of school with society and the world of work
25. Recommendation 19: Rethinking and valorising technical education

One of the major weaknesses of our education system which is impacting negatively on our social and economic development is technical and vocational education and training (TVET). TVET has not been given the attention that it deserves, and it has even been looked down upon by policy makers and parents alike. It has suffered from the piecemeal approach adopted for the reform in education. It is designed as a last resort to cater only for failures from the mainstream; this has caused much prejudice to TEVT and over time it has developed a poor image.

Yet, TVET is particularly important for promoting economic development as well as expanding employment opportunities and qualities. It should equip students with practical experiences and technical skills in the agricultural, agro industrial, fishing, technological, commercial, financial, artisanal, building construction, electrical, digital, health, tourism, entertainment etc sectors. Technical education should be revamped in terms of its philosophy, objectives, content, strategies, facilities, assessment and rebranded to attract at least 40% of the secondary school cohort.

An Institute of Technical Education (ITE) should be set up to organize and provide pre-employment training and lifelong training to youngsters as well as adults who wish to take up employment in any of our potential economic sectors. It should ensure that students receive a combination of experiential and classroom-based learning in institutions that are well organized and equipped with the state-of-the-art and innovative technologies and facilities. The curriculum should be carefully adjusted to meet our future manpower requirements, but it should also integrate extra-curricular activities such as sports, artistic and community activities. The courses should be learner-centric, practical and evolving around the latest innovations and technologies. The future skills requirements should be carefully assessed and fed back both into pre-employment training and in-service training. It should also be able to lobby for a better salary structure for the trained graduates.

More TVET institutions should be set up in the education zones to accommodate students as from grade 9. The ITE will carry out a survey to decide on the number of TVET institutions to set up and on their geographical distribution.

Students leaving the TVET institutions will either go for apprenticeship on the labour market or will proceed to the Polytechnic for further training. The latter will prepare students at the Certificate, Diploma and Degree levels at par with the academic courses offered by the universities. Courses should be offered on a modular basis using a credit system which should be common to both technical and academic courses.

Teacher training for both TVET Institutions and Polytechnics should be completed prior to the setting up of these institutions. They should be specially trained to cope with children of low academic abilities. The major part of the training should take place in workshops equipped with the latest technologies. International aids and expertise should be sought from countries like Germany and Singapore where technical education has been instrumental to enable them to meet their manpower needs and to avoid the mismatch which we are experiencing between post-secondary education and our labour market.
26. Recommendation 20: Revisit tertiary education

Tertiary education should be the motive force that drives the country into the next phase of its economic, social and environmental development and turns it into a high-income economy. Countries with highly educated citizens are more equipped to deal with new challenges and technological advances.

Higher education in Mauritius includes universities, polytechnics and other post-secondary institutions. The sector is managed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) which has the responsibility for allocating public funds, and fostering, planning and coordinating the development of post-secondary education and training. Over the past years, TEC has made a bad name of itself by allowing foreign institutions of dubious reputation to be established in the island. Fortunately, since its reorganisation in 2015, it has contributed in the establishment of some renowned tertiary institutions. Its mission is to turn Mauritius into an Intelligent Island and a world-class knowledge hub especially for the African region.

In 2015, there were around 55 private institutions and 10 public institutions in the tertiary sector catering for some 50,000 students. 82% of students enrolled locally in both public and private institutions and 18% enrolled in foreign universities.

**Tertiary education suffers from some serious weaknesses:**

- Only about 10% of young people are enrolled at tertiary level compared to 30% for the top Asian countries
- The system is producing many job seekers but few job creators; it has produced around 10,000 unemployed graduates over the past years.
- Absence of collaboration between tertiary education institutions and the private/public job sectors has led to the mismatch of skills with the labour market
- Research and innovation, the life blood of highly performing universities, is sadly lacking
- There is limited regional and international cooperation in the sector e.g collaboration with renowned institutions to develop joint award programmes
- The main public institutions (universities) are offering the same courses resulting in a wastage of resources
- Emphasis is on quantity at the expense of quality- our universities rank rather low on the African continent and still lower at the international level
- There is a lack of local publications in high indexed journals
- Academic staff lacks the competences, skills and attitudes to inspire, motivate and transform students.
❖ The pedagogy adopted is often passive and didactic; it does not challenge students to be proactive, autonomous, reflective, creative, innovative, inventive and lifelong learners.

❖ Authentic quality auditing of the courses and programmes is not high on their agenda.

❖ Hardly any effort is made to come up with valid consultancy programmes to enable them to achieve a higher level of self-sustainability.

Tertiary education should be given a face lift to make it more responsive to the needs of the 21st century Mauritius. A national task force should be set up with local experts and people of vision who can rise above party politics, communal considerations, selfish and short-term interests. This task force should come up with a new vision and objectives, based on a national consensus, as well as proposed strategies and a plan of action for implementation.

**In view of the above weaknesses, the following propositions are relevant:**

❖ Existing tertiary institutions should be reorganised and improved in terms of infrastructure, human resources, training programmes, linkage with industries etc.

❖ Effort should be made to increase the Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratio which stood at 36.7% in 2015 according to the World Data Atlas, compared to 60% to 70% for the emerging Asian tigers.

❖ Tertiary institution should work in close collaboration with the private and public sectors to enhance the relevance of their courses

❖ Research and innovation should rank high on the agenda of tertiary institutions with more publications in prestigious journals.

❖ Collaboration and joint ventures with recognised institution should be established for the transfer of technology and expertise; but also collaboration with regional institutions for a tertiary institution network.

❖ Public tertiary institutions should specialise in specific areas to reduce duplication and wastage of resources.

❖ Almost all programmes and courses should promote the spirit of entrepreneurship and initiate start-ups.

❖ Tertiary education institutions should provide better incentives to attract more foreign students in line with the national policy to become a regional education hub

❖ A solid programme for the continuous professional development of academic and non-academic staff should be envisaged
The recent government decision for free tertiary education is welcome on the grounds of equity. However, the way it was announced show that there has not been any consultation and negotiation with the stakeholders, not even with the Tertiary Education Commission and the universities. Nor was there any planning to ensure that an effective implementation would ensue. The motives behind this decision appears to be political vote banking in the wake of the coming general election.

27. Conclusion

The piecemeal and firefighting approaches adopted up to now to improve and modernise our education system has failed to yield the expected results. The system should be completely overhauled from the pre-primary to the tertiary level. This is a colossal task that cannot be achieved overnight; it is an arduous and long process that needs to be carefully planned, organized and executed. The success of such an exercise depends on the expertise and quality of the people involved at the planning as well as at the implementation stages. It demands intensive and genuine brainstorming, discussions and negotiations to reach a national consensus. It should be free from party politics and communal, ethnic and religious considerations. It should not be left in the hands of political nominees and advisors who are more concerned about their pockets than the future of our kids and the common good of the nation. It will require the mobilization of a huge amount of physical, human and financial resources. It should take into account the changes that are taking place at the international, regional and local levels. It should consider the impact of globalization, trade liberalization, climate change, knowledge explosion, information and communication technology, environmental degradation, changes in geopolitics etc.
1. To ensure that ALL children aged 3 to 5 years in Mauritius have the opportunity to develop their individual intellectual, socio-emotional and psycho-motor skills to the best of their capacity in order to build the confidence and self-esteem in learning that will not only prepare them for the next level (primary school) but, more importantly, lay the foundations for learning that will support them throughout their lifetime.

2. To sustain equitable access to quality education, ensuring that all learners attain high levels of achievement in Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communications Technology and such essential Life Skills as sound human values, healthy lifestyle and so forth as the basis for lifelong learning and good citizenship.

3. To ensure that all students are given the opportunity to embark on and complete higher secondary education for employability and higher and further education and training with the required maturity and confidence.

4. To build a system that ensures a supply of quality personnel that work collegially with a strong management and quality assurance system to improve and support learning achievement and overall development of all learners.

5. To provide an efficient and effective TVET system of greater public esteem responsive to the present and future needs by having a skilled and flexible workforce.

6. To make Mauritius an intelligent island, a Knowledge Hub to serve the Region and a Centre for Higher Learning and Excellence.

7. To build a creative and competent Human Resource base for Mauritius for sustainable national development.

8. To develop the Ministry into an efficient, effective, and accountable functioning public institution that exemplifies ‘best practices’ at all levels of the organisation.
ANNEX B

What learning is all about

- **Learning** is a natural human activity; it is a biological process involving the senses (input) and the brain (processing and storage device).
- **Learning** occurs when experience causes a relatively permanent change in an individual’s knowledge and/or behaviour/skills.
- **Learning** does not automatically follow teaching.
- **Learning** is linked with curiosity - urge to discover and the urge to perform better.
- **Learning** is a process, not a product.
- **Learning** is not done to people but by people; hence learning is controlled by the learner and not by the teacher; it is the responsibility of the student.
- **Learning** depends on the learner’s interests, motivation, self esteem, emotion, Personality.
- **Learning** is developmental; it involves relating to prior experience/knowledge; it happens at different levels. (scaffolding). It takes times.
- **Learning** involves challenges at the right level.
- **Learning** is difficult to recognise and assess.
- **Learning** may require direct experience.
- Learning does not take place under conditions of stress or fear (which is often the case in our classrooms). It is facilitated by a non-threatening experiences and by good relationships.
- **Learning** involves willingness to give up previous values and attitudes.
- **Learning** is situational/contextual - through interaction with the environment.
- **Learning** is most effective for different individuals, if it fits with their preferred learning style/s e.g auditory, visual, tactile
- **Learning** takes place at different pace for different individuals
Learning is facilitated by frequent and different forms of evaluation (e.g., Self and Peer Evaluation).

Learning may be categorized into cognitive learning (intellectual processes), psychomotor learning (development of bodily movements), and affective learning (personal attitudes, beliefs, values, interests, etc.).

Learning is influenced by the learning environment (physical, social, emotional, etc.).

Learning is influenced by group dynamics.

Learning is facilitated by frequent evaluation (self-evaluation).

Learning is influenced by the teacher’s expectations (also students’ and parents’ expectations).

Learning is influenced by nutritional status (the brain needs water, oxygen, protein, minerals, vitamins, etc., to function properly).

Learning is enhanced when both the right and the left hemispheres of the brain are involved (during practical experiences).

Learning is enhanced by dramatic, emotional, and unexpected experiences.

Learning is helped by brainstorming, dialogue, discussion, mind mapping, etc.

Learning is helped by critical and creative thinking.

Learning is helped by mastery orientation/metacognition (a sense of self-competence and self-efficacy).

Learning is helped by good planning skills.
### Some basic human values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Effort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>Neatness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>Benevolence</td>
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</tbody>
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## ANNEX D

### Helping learners to learn effectively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Favour active, collaborative and cooperative learning over passive teaching/learning; promote intellectual curiosity; elicits discovery and construction of knowledge rather than plain transmission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Empowered students to take control over their own learning; help them to think logically, creatively, independently and to work cooperatively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Show children that you like them and care for them by inspiring trust and confidence, by building learning commitment and by engaging and motivating them with well-paced differentiation. Differentiate by trying to use various starting points and tasks for different ability levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prevent children falling behind by providing earlier interventions to improve progress; create more and better opportunities for less able children as well as those who are gifted and talented; provide activities of sufficient variety and depth to allow for different levels of learning to take place; acknowledge that all pupils will need varying lengths of time to complete activities and that each pupil will grasp new ideas within varying timescales; Provides intellectual challenges for all levels of learner abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Create a conducive atmosphere for learning; ensure that pupils are happy, that they are treated fairly and that they are properly motivated. Motivates learners by supporting their self-efficacy- ability to succeed; adjust your teaching to appeal to different learning styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Use assessments to set individual, group and class targets. Continuously assess teaching groups and give feedback about their learning and their successes. Use marking creatively to inform pupils about their standard of achievement. Use any assessments of pupils abilities and attainments as a starting point for teaching. Anticipate and expect different outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Involve parents in their children's learning and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Demonstrates respect for diversity.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**TOOLS FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS’ KNOWLEDGE, COMPETENCIES AND ATTITUDES AND SKILLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Project work</th>
<th>Standardised tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Teacher-made tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Peer-assessment</td>
<td>Achievement tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work samples</td>
<td>Self-assessment</td>
<td>Aptitude tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Vocational interest inventories</td>
<td>Attitude inventories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>Anecdotal record</td>
<td>Observation schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals/diaries</td>
<td>Debate/quiz</td>
<td>Interview schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolios</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
<td>Sociometric devices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX F

Code of ethics for teachers

1. RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

As a registered teacher, I strive to make my foremost responsibility the education and welfare of all students in my care, and I respect the uniqueness and dignity of each student. This means that I:

❖ regard the lifelong learning of students as the main goal of teaching
  ▪ provide students with equal opportunities to learn and to value learning
  ▪ recognize each student’s unique potential and educational needs
  ▪ assess students formatively and constructively
  ▪ encourage students to always strive for high standards

❖ base teaching on the best theoretical and practical knowledge and knowledge of each student’s development
  ▪ create a classroom environment which is conducive for learning
  ▪ teach according to each student’s educational ability and potential
  ▪ accept the responsibility for providing quality teaching
  ▪ seek available support for and resources to improve teaching practice

❖ recognize, respect and promote the understanding of diversity
  ▪ encourage students to respect all persons
  ▪ encourage students to understand the diversity in human values, beliefs, practices and actions
  ▪ accept the expression of different opinions and perspectives
  ▪ provide students with access to different opinion and views
  ▪ consider fairly all viewpoints in debates of contentious issues
  ▪ ensure that any discriminatory treatment of specific students is justifiable.
❖ **Provide an environment which promotes the physical, emotional, social and intellectual well-being of all students**

- protect and support the physical development and well-being of all students
- provide a safe and supportive physical environment
- recognize and develop each student’s strengths, competencies and talents to the highest possible level
- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, degradation or harm
- enhance student autonomy and sense of self-worth
- encourage students to develop and evaluate their own values
- support the relationship between student and family
- provide an environment in which students can express and understand a range of emotions

❖ **create and maintain appropriate professional relationships with students**

- develop and maintain professional relationship with students which serve their best interests
- show consistent justice and consideration in relation to students
- strive to be honest and open in my communications with students
- ensure that students understand the rules, regulations and procedures that affect them in their interactions with their peers and with the teaching profession
- always consider the student’s best interest over personal interest and benefit
- foster within students a respect for the profession and for my other colleagues

❖ **Protect students’ rights to privacy and confidentiality**

- respect the student’s privacy
- maintain the confidentiality of information unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law, or unless the personal safety of the student is at risk
- handle information with honesty and integrity
2. RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS’ PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND FAMILIES

As a registered teacher, I strive to build relationships with students’ families, as appropriate, that contribute to students’ welfare and education. This means that I strive to:

- **Establish relationships with parents based on courtesy, mutual trust and open communication**
  - encourage parents to participate actively in the education of their children
  - negotiate constructively with parents to achieve the best possible outcome for students.

- **Respect family privacy and treat information with an appropriate level of confidentiality**
  - maintain the confidentiality of information unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law, or unless the personal safety of a student is at risk

- **Respect parents’ and guardians’ rights of inquiry, consultation and information with regard to their children**
  - use professional honesty and discretion in presenting facts regarding the educational development of their children
  - share general knowledge of child development to parents

- **Respect the uniqueness and characteristics of family backgrounds**
  - respect cultural diversity
  - respect family values and opinions whilst enabling students to examine a variety of viewpoints
3. COMMITMENT TO COLLEAGUES AND TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION GENERALLY

As a registered teacher, I strive to promote mutual respect and trust in my relationships with colleagues (both teachers and others), I assist newcomers to the profession, and I behave in a way which enhances the status of the profession. This means that I strive to:

❖ Build an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and openness
  ▪ recognize and respect the individual potential and talents of colleagues irrespective of race, gender, age, religion etc.
  ▪ encourage openness and tolerance among colleagues
  ▪ use constructive methods of resolving any conflict which may arise
  ▪ observe the principle of justice in dealing with any complaints against colleagues
  ▪ protect the professional reputation and career prospects of colleagues from malicious damage.

❖ Act within the educational and wider community in a way which enhances the status of the profession
  ▪ foster unity, harmony and cooperation in working relationships
  ▪ respect the ethical professional practice of colleagues
  ▪ adopt a code of conduct that engender public respect for the profession

❖ Commit myself to ongoing professional; learning and continually improve my teaching and learning strategies
  ▪ participate in professional development whenever the opportunities arises
  ▪ support and cooperate in research to strengthen and expand the knowledge base of teaching
  ▪ network professionally with colleagues to improve practice.

❖ Assist, support and encourage newcomers to the profession
  ▪ be committed to the preparation of the next generation of teachers
  ▪ be prepared to develop supervisory or mentoring skills in order to assist pre-service teachers and beginning teachers.
  ▪ support beginning teachers in their professional development
  ▪ share expertise and knowledge with other members of the profession
4. RESPONSIBILITIES TO EMPLOYERS, THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

As a registered teacher, I do my best to fulfill my responsibilities to my employer, my community and society. This means that I strive to:

❖ **Be truthful when making statements about qualifications and competencies**
  ▪ disclose all relevant information and materials when making an application to an employer
  ▪ encourage and assist only those with suitable attributes and qualifications to enter the profession

❖ **Observe contractual commitments**
  ▪ respect the proper administrative authority of the employer
  ▪ abide by the rules and by-laws of the school or institution
  ▪ ensure that criticism or complaints are made through the correct grievance mechanisms

❖ **Promote actively the improvement of the school/institutional policies**
  ▪ contribute to or support amendments to rules and policies in the best interests of the students and in response to changing social needs
  ▪ where possible, contribute constructively to decision making regarding school policy

❖ **Provide a high standard of professional service**
  ▪ Participate in professional development programmes
  ▪ Access available support and resources to improve teaching practice
  ▪ Use resources efficiently to avoid waste or extravagance

❖ **Develop in students the values of a democratic society: respect for others, freedom, equality, integrity, participation and the pursuit of truth**
  ▪ provide students with a positive model
  ▪ support and promote active and informed citizenship
  ▪ integrate values education into the curriculum
  ▪ provide opportunities for students to participate in democratic processes
❖ **Promote cooperation among all agencies and professionals working in the best interests of students and families.**
- foster links between the school and the community
- cooperate with other professionals in the best interests of students
- participate in relevant forums beyond school

❖ **Provide a professional service which is responsive to the needs of the community**
- encourage community participation within the school
- be aware of current concerns or social issues within the community
- promote an interest in community and environmental issues
- provide leadership in identifying the educational needs of the community

❖ **Develop, by precept and example, a respect for laws and policies which protect and promote the well-being of students, families and the community**
- set a positive example in the performance of civic obligations
- work to change laws or policies that interfere with the well-being of students
- obey laws and policies that relate to the work of teachers
ANNEX G

How to implement differentiation?

1. *Providing multiple assignments within each unit*, tailored for students of different levels of achievement, interest, and/or learning styles.

2. *Allowing students to choose*, with the teacher’s guidance, ways to learn and how to demonstrate what they have learned.

3. *Permitting students to opt out of material* they can demonstrate they know and to progress at their own pace through new material.

4. *Structuring the class assignments* so they require high levels of critical thinking but permit a range of responses.

5. *Having high expectations for all students* allows teachers to provide instruction aimed at a high level of understanding; all students are expected to achieve at optimal levels.

6. *Implementing flexible grouping strategies* that cluster students by achievement in a particular subject area, interest, learning style, personal choice, and ability.

7. *Creating learning centers* with activities geared to different learning styles, levels of thinking, levels of interest, and levels of achievement.

8. *Providing students with opportunities to explore topics* in which they have strong interest and find personal meaning.
PROPOSED ORGANIGRAM FOR EDUCATION SYSTEM

Job Market

20 years
University Yr 3
Polytechnic Yr 3 - Degree

19 years
University Yr 2
Polytechnic Yr 2 - Diploma

18 years
University Yr 1
Polytechnic Yr 1 - Certificate

17 years
A Level - 2nd Year
TVET Institution – Yr 2

16 years
A Level - 1st Year
TVET Institution – Yr 1

15 years
O Level - Academic stream
Technical & Digital
Commercial Artistic & Sports

14 years
O Level - Academic stream
Technical & Digital
Commercial Artistic & Sports

13 years
N Level - Grade 9 – Lower Secondary

12 years
N Level - Grade 8 – Lower Secondary

11 years
N Level - Grade 7 – Lower Secondary

10 years
Grade 6 primary

9 years
Grade 5 primary

8 years
Grade 4 primary

7 years
Grade 3 primary

6 years
Grade 2 primary

5 years
Grade 1 primary

4 years
PP2

3 years
PP2
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