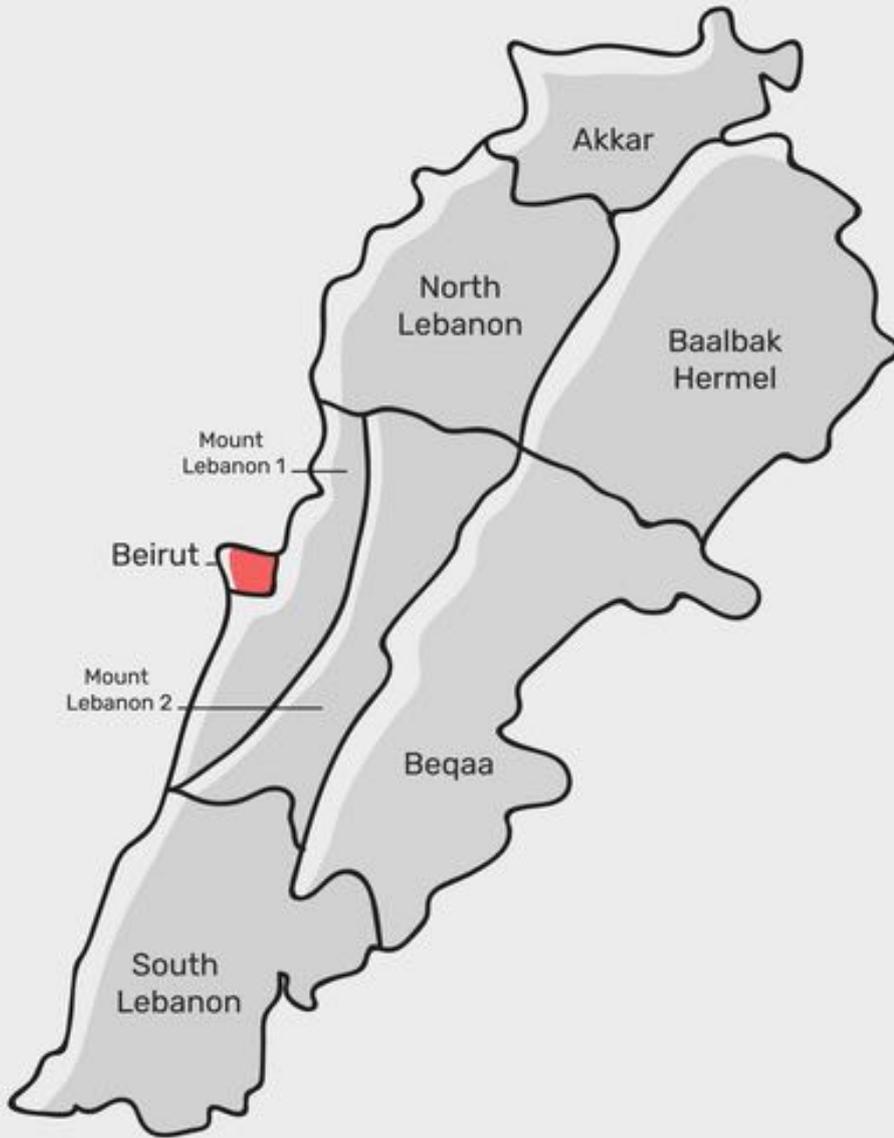


منهجنا

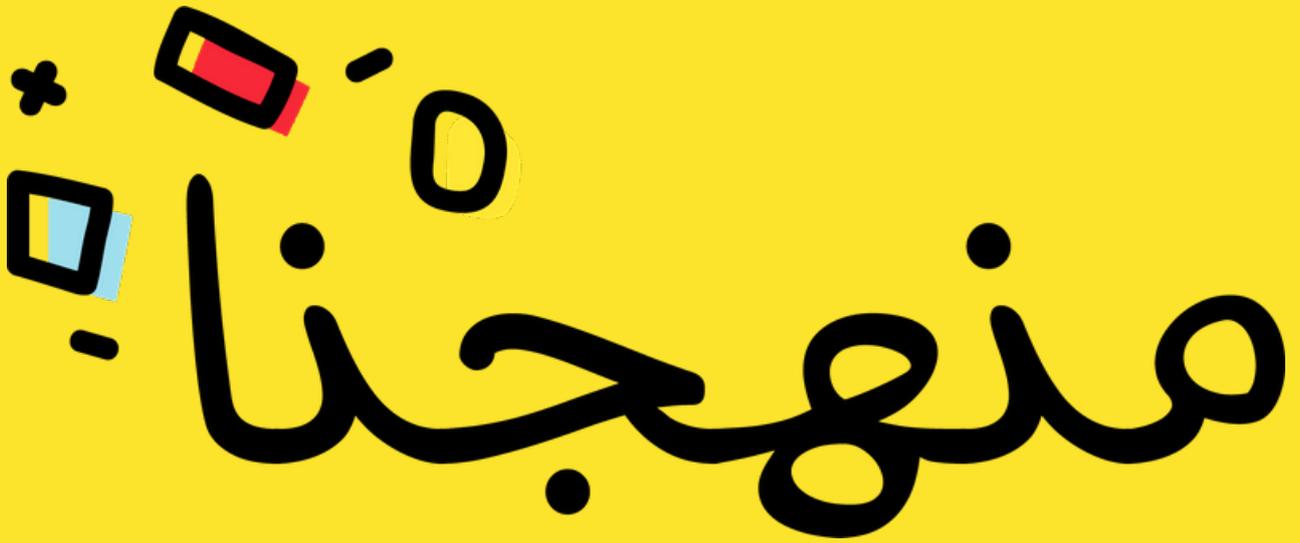


Beirut WonderLand Report 1/8

Outline

- I. About the Project**
- II. About the Partners**
- III. About WonderLand & this Report**
- IV. Whom Are We Designing For?**
- V. Wonder Pillars & Findings**
 - 1/4. Why and Where of Education
 - 2/4. What is a Curriculum?
 - 3/4. Curriculum Development Process
 - 4/4. Educator Profile
- VI. Collaborators & Co-creators**





منهجنا



Vision

Manhajna is a holistic, participatory, and visionary project that aims to democratize the processes of curriculum reform. Manhajna advocates for policy change that is envisioned and conceived by the education ecosystem in Lebanon.



Mission

The project co-creates inclusive spaces for dialogue to re-imagine the new curriculum.

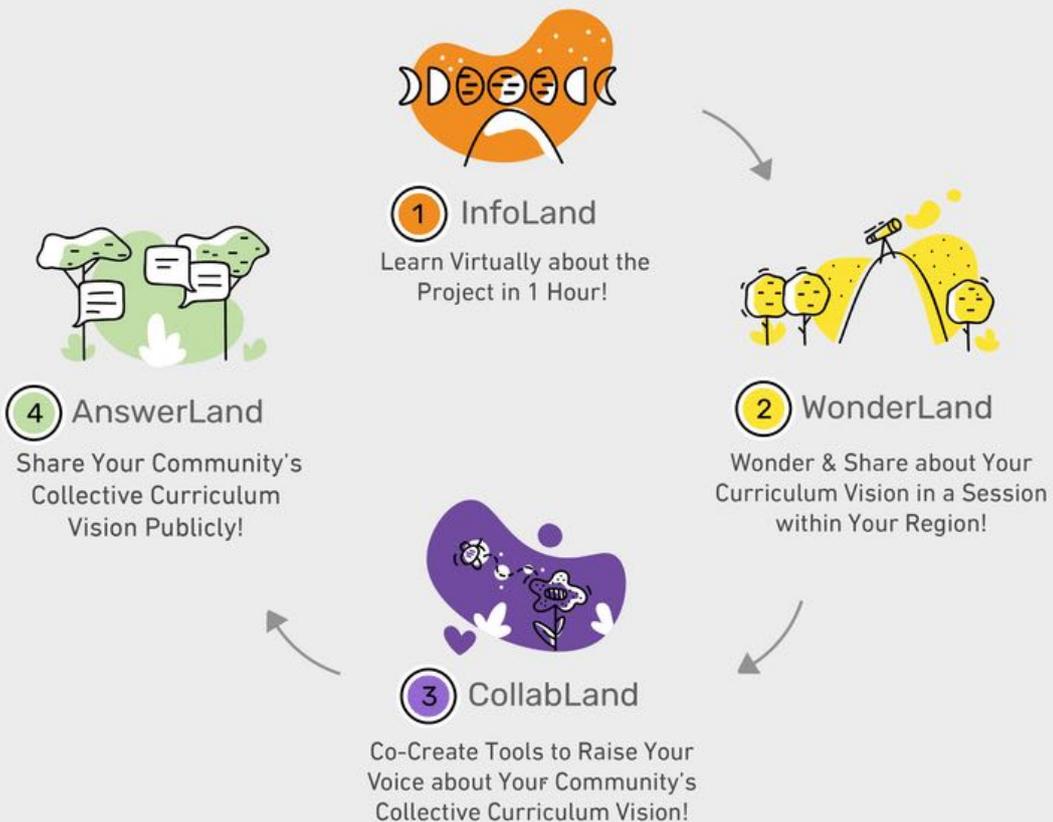
Eights spaces are being facilitated in eights governorates across Lebanon.

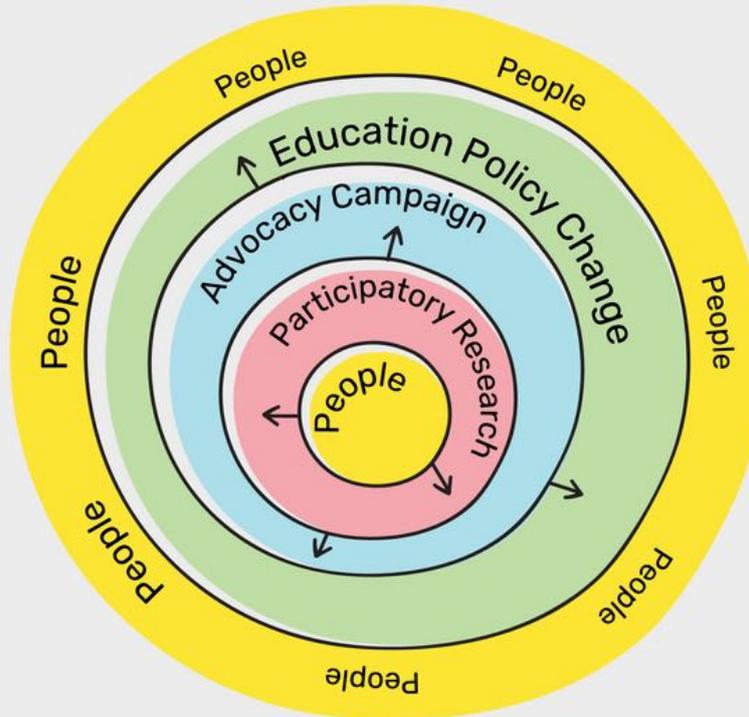
Through Manhajna's activities, we engage diverse groups from across the country to join us to envision a curriculum embedded in the values of participation, inclusion, justice and equity.

We aim to create a national network that will campaign to influence policy and curriculum creation processes to make them more inclusive and relevant to all.



Project Journey





1



People

By adopting a human-centered design, we consider people to be at the heart of this project in all its processes.

2



Participatory Research

Our project relies on the people's perceptions which are seen as central to all stages of the research process.

3



Advocacy Campaign

We will create advocacy campaigns in an attempt to initiate policy change at the national system level.

4



Education Policy Change

We aim to bring about a change at the policy level that leads to the birth of a new Lebanese curriculum.

OUR PARTNERS



About the Partners

منهجنا



Why CLS?

Center for Lebanese Studies (CLS) aims to contribute to Lebanon's education development through research and advocacy to impact education public policies.



Why Learning Land?

At Learning Land, the educators' community mission is to contribute to Lebanon's education systemic transformation through the reform of the current national curriculum and the partnership with key national institutions to influence education public policies.



ABOUT WONDERLAND & THE REPORT



About WonderLand & this Report:



WonderLand aims to collect genuine and authentic needs, wonders, interests, and reflections about people’s vision regarding the Lebanese national curriculum.

This happens through a focused group discussion format of 6 participants per group (see figure 1) with the help of dialogue facilitators.



Figure 1

All wonders are structured and documented through two main tools: 1) The Dialogue Mat and 2) visuals. The Dialogue Mat (see figure 2) is a tool used to collect the wonders of the educators while maintaining an interactive dialogue. It fosters a position-free instructional and reflective dialogue that is based on reflective professional inquiry. Educators freely share their knowledge based on their intuition, practical wisdom, habitual behaviors, and trial-and-error experiences that happened back in their classroom. The visuals (refer to figure 3 as an example) are data collection tools that help educators to visualize their thoughts, reflections, and experiences.



Figure 2

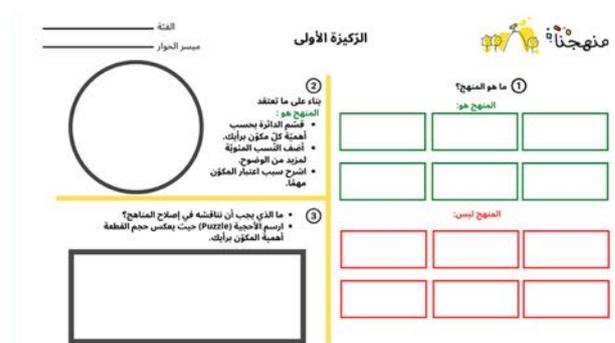


Figure 3

About WonderLand & this Report:



The report summarizes the data generated through qualitative open-ended questions during focus group discussions documented on the Dialogue Mat and visuals.

The researchers opted to analyze the data thematically in order to highlight the key ideas shared by the participants. The researchers also presented quantitative data, such as the the number of participants who presented a common answer, when they believed such an approach would add value and insight to their findings to highlight the significance of such common answers and the level of agreement.

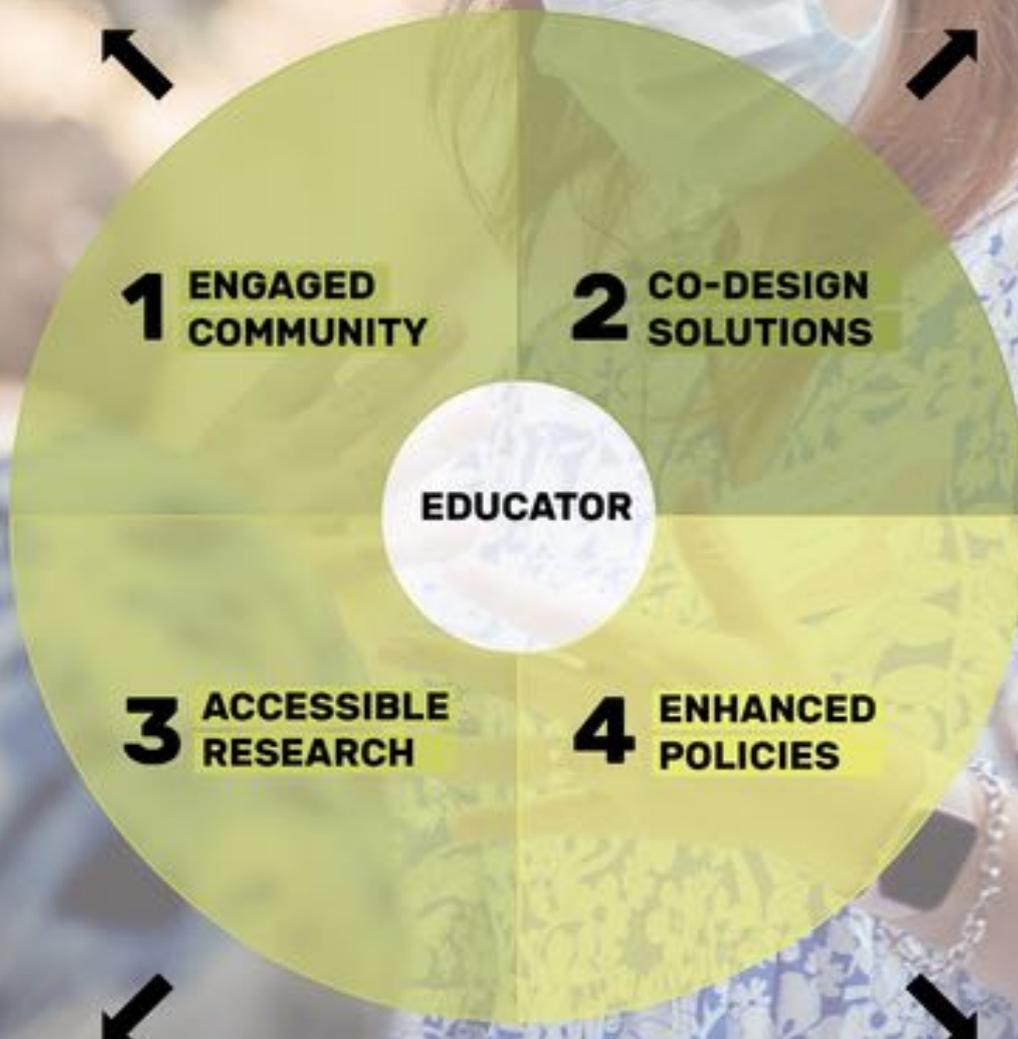
The importance of this report lies at the heart of Learning Land's methodology. Learning Land aims not only to create a community of educators, but also co-create solutions, provide accessible research, and impact practices and policies on a school level and national level. Through accessible research, school-level policymakers, national policymakers, social innovators, researchers, and various practitioners can use this report to drive decisions based on evidence. Learning Land impact pillars are listed below.



Learning Land Impact Pillars

We connect diverse educators coming from public, semi-private and private schools with experts, researchers, academics and social innovators through our transformational learning journeys to exchange knowledge, enhance learning and consolidate their know-how.

We foster a setting for all to codesign sustainable solutions based on diverse school-based needs while building educators' non-positional leadership.

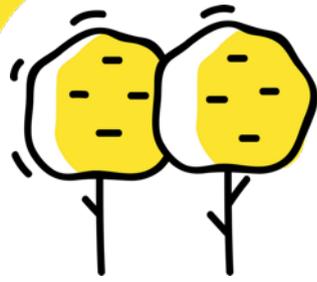


We provide easy-accessible research, centered on teaching and learning, for the education ecosystem players to drive evidence-based decision making.

We promote an inclusive school-policy dialogue with our community members in an attempt to build a grassroots movement that impacts the policy process on a national level.

WHOM ARE WE DESIGNING FOR?





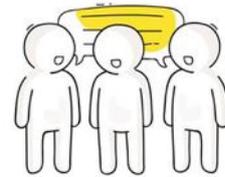
WONDERLAND PARTICIPANTS



41
Attendees



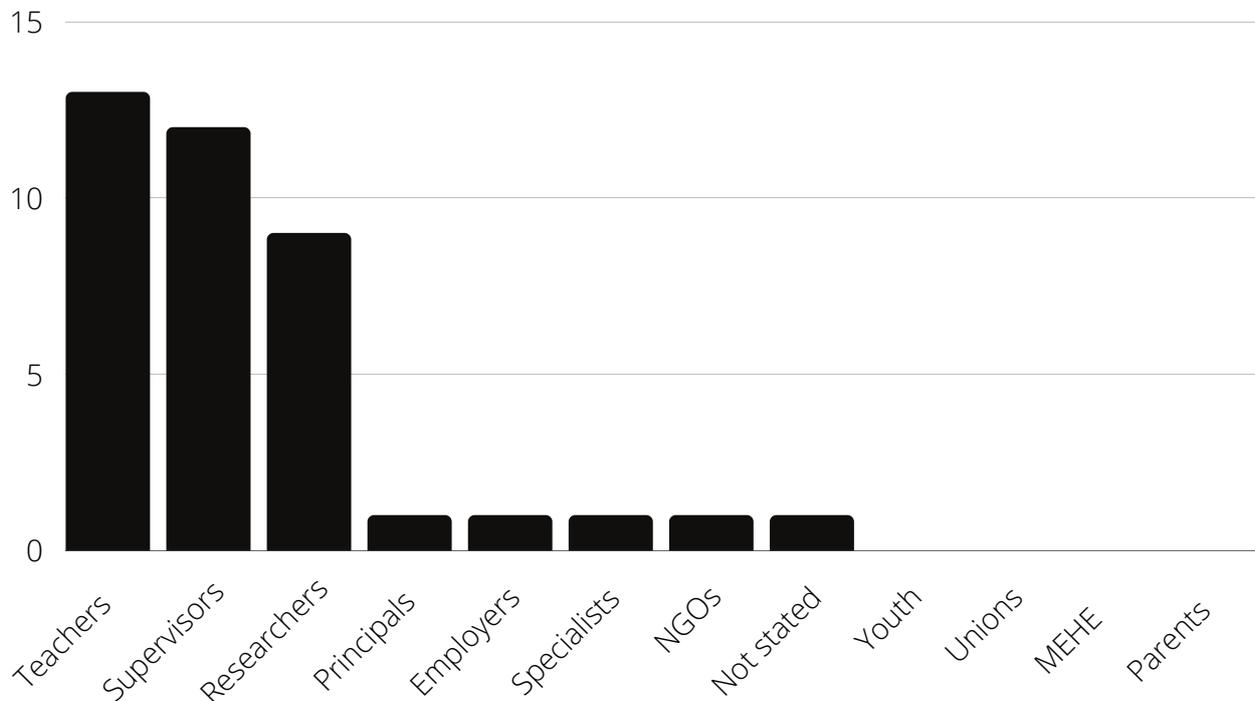
7
Dialogue
Facilitators



5
Team
Members

41 ATTENDEES:

BACKGROUND

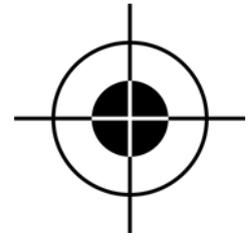


1/4

**WHY & WHERE
OF EDUCATION**



Why and Where of Education



This pillar describes what the participants believe should be the main aims of the new curriculum. The pillar also describes the successful student profile and the values the participants think students should acquire through the curriculum, and why those values and characteristics are perceived to be important.

The participants shared the following as what they considered the aims of the curriculum should be. The results are stated in order starting with the one with the highest consensus.

Aims of the curriculum



Career development

Participants stated that the curriculum should consider the market needs in order to guarantee students the best chance to build a successful career which could result in true social mobility. According to participants, this could be facilitated by providing students with career orientations as part of the curriculum and allowing students to choose their courses based on an embedded career orientation program within the Lebanese curriculum.



Personal development

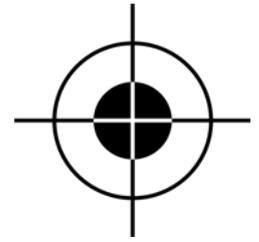
Participants displayed an awareness that building towards a successful career is but a single aim of a successful curriculum. The participants claimed that the curriculum should promote students' personal skills and well-being, and work towards facilitating the rise of a critical citizen that makes use of their technological skills and 21st century skills to his or her personal betterment as well as the advancement of society as a whole.



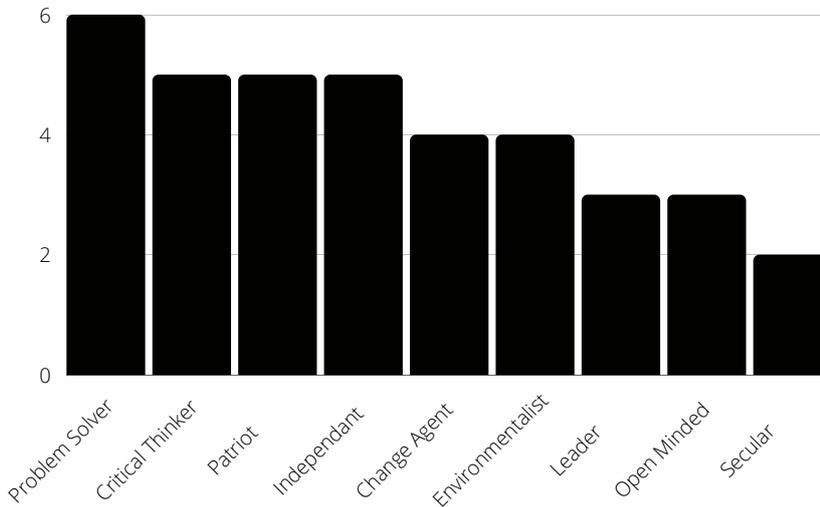
Societal development

Finally, participants believed that the curriculum should open the gate to building a strong nation and a capable society. According to the participants, this could be done through building awareness of the rights and duties that students have toward their society, which requires enhancing the relationship between the school and its community.

Why and Where of Education



Successful student profile



Top 6 Values the curriculum should promote

- Respect
- Compassion
- Tolerance and acceptance of different opinions and thoughts
- Equity
- Empathy
- Integrity



Participants were asked about their thoughts regarding learning venues, in addition to schools, which can be used to further promote the aforementioned values which will aid in the construction of the student profile they seek. The following venues were the most mentioned and are placed from most to least. Unfortunately, participants did not make explicit the link between the venues and the values they believed would be promoted.

Additional learning venues

- Nature
 - Gardens
 - Beach
- Work places
 - Hospitals
 - Factories
- Home
 - Care facilities
 - Orphanages
 - Elderly homes
- Art facilities and theaters



Why and Where of Education



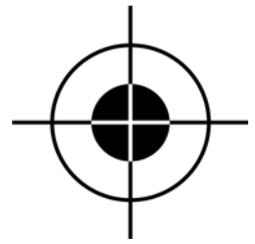
Researcher's insights

On the aims of the curriculum

The participants highlighted three main aims that they believed the curriculum should focus on: career development, personal development, and societal development. Those aims are aligned with the participants' vision of how the process of curriculum development should be carried out, which will be discussed in detail in the upcoming pillar. The aims also reflect the philosophical approaches toward the curriculum that the participants, consciously or unconsciously, have adopted.

The three overarching aims, under which the participants' feedback was grouped, reflect three main philosophical approaches: behaviorism, essentialism, and reconceptualism. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2017), considering career development as a primary aim of the curriculum reflects a behaviorist approach to the curriculum, whereas focus on the student as the center of the curriculum aligns with progressivism. Considering social benefits is a reflection of a reconceptualist philosophical approach. We believe that even though the participants may not be aware of those approaches per se, seeing as not all of them have the educational research background required to build such conception, they have displayed an awareness that the curriculum should consider all those aims to be successful. This is evident through the participants' discussions and written feedback where the majority mentioned several aims that fall under more than one category. It is granted that some might lean towards one approach while others toward another, but the value of the discussion and dialogue which was present throughout WonderLand lies in the fact that such dialogue leads to a harmony and balance that we believe is essential for the success of the curriculum, and we hope that such dialogue would be the base of future development plans set by MEHE and CERD.

Why and Where of Education



Researcher's insights

On the relationship between the curriculum and values

The participants highlighted five main values they believe students should attain through the curriculum which are respect, acceptance, tolerance, equity, empathy, and integrity. The researchers believe that focusing on the meaning of values in terms of the curriculum is imperative on more than one level.

On one level, the delineation of values reflects an understanding from the participants that the curriculum is more than a mere textbook and the elements that revolve around it like subject matter delivery, assessment, and in-class activities. This is due to the fact that this discussion brings the importance of the hidden curriculum to the forefront. The hidden curriculum, which centers on the lessons students learn informally and usually unintentionally, is comprised of the attitudes, values, norms, and beliefs which are important constituents of inner school communication and social interaction (Cubukcu, 2012). Therefore, a successful and encompassing curriculum should consider how the hidden curriculum should be addressed through supporting activities that are not related to a single subject, such as civics, but should be at the heart of the education process.

On another level, it is important to address the values that were mentioned and understand the reasons behind why the participants deemed them important. Khamis (2014) studied bullying in the greater Beirut area and found that the majority of the participants have been affected by bullying in school, which in turn has resulted in PTSD for many of them. The participants' belief that respect, tolerance, empathy, and acceptance should be infused in the curriculum could be seen as an indicator of the severity of the problem of bullying and the importance of the role of the school in dealing with it systematically.



2/4

**WHAT IS A
CURRICULUM?**



What is a Curriculum?



First, we aimed to explore participants' conceptualization of what the curriculum is and what it entails. This was achieved through asking them "what is a curriculum?" and "what is not a curriculum?" The participants' answers were grouped under two main themes.

2.1 Curriculum as a Developmental Process

The first theme is the curriculum development process which encompasses the overarching curriculum aims, goals, vision, and philosophy that aids the curriculum development.

2.2 Curriculum as a Design

The second theme is curriculum design which encompasses the components of a curriculum. These components are themed under four titles: objectives, learning experiences, content, and evaluation.

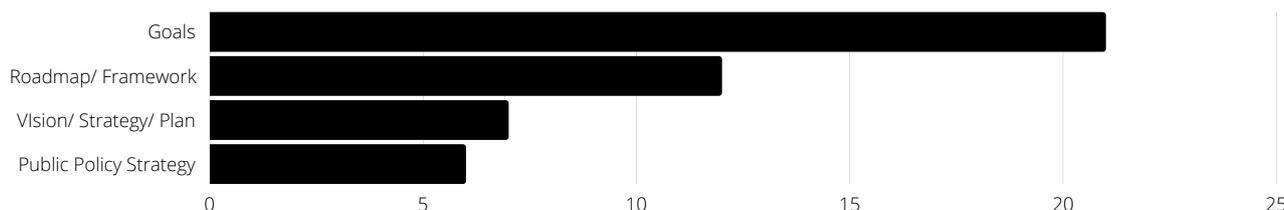


What is a Curriculum?



2.1 Curriculum Process

The curriculum development process encompasses the overarching curriculum goals, framework, roadmap, vision or strategy, and public policy strategy.



2.1.1 Goals. Twenty one ideas were linked to goals. Some of these ideas were repeated more than once over the focus group discussion tables. Below are the participants' exact explanations:

- Helps students prepare for real-life
- Helps kids find their passion
- Is a journey for self-development
- Focuses on student strength
- Prepares students for university
- Caters to individual needs
- Creates connections to the outside world
- Reflects real-life through
- Builds student identity and character
- Is personalized to promote individuality
- Introduces students to happiness and life satisfaction
- Provides students with an appreciation for the environment around them
- Creates a hub for creativity that provides the needed opportunities
- Prepares student to become a citizen and accept rules and conform
- Builds a research-based human who is curious and wants to develop their society
- Covers international curriculum for utility purposes

2.1.2 Roadmap/ framework. Twelve ideas were associated with roadmap/ framework. Perceptions that were related to a broad framework that explains to the educators the intended aims and leaves more autonomy to choose the tools to deliver a certain curriculum. Some of the participants' ideas were: "general roadmap, general map, guidelines, flexible curriculum, a roadmap to achieve one's self and a group, a roadmap to where we want to get to or guidelines for teaching methods."

What is a Curriculum?



2.1.3 Vision, strategy, or plan. 7 ideas were associated with vision, strategy, or plan. All perceptions that described the education planning to formulate, implement or evaluate a national curriculum were listed under this title. Some of the participants' ideas were: "constructive plan, strategies, vision, planner or forward-looking".



2.1.4 Public policy strategy. 6 ideas were associated with public policy strategy. Public policy is considered as the created or enacted strategy that is typically done by the governmental agencies (ex. Ministry of Education and Higher Education [MEHE], Center for Education Research and Development [CERD], the Cabinet, or the Parliament). Some of the participants' ideas were: "teaching and learning national policy, education policy to build a country, education political vision for a country, country's policy, a political pillar, education governance policy or education political orientation".



What is Curriculum?



2.2 Curriculum Design Components

Curriculum design components are considered the essential components that make up the curriculum. These components were divided into four categories: objectives, learning experience, content, and evaluation.

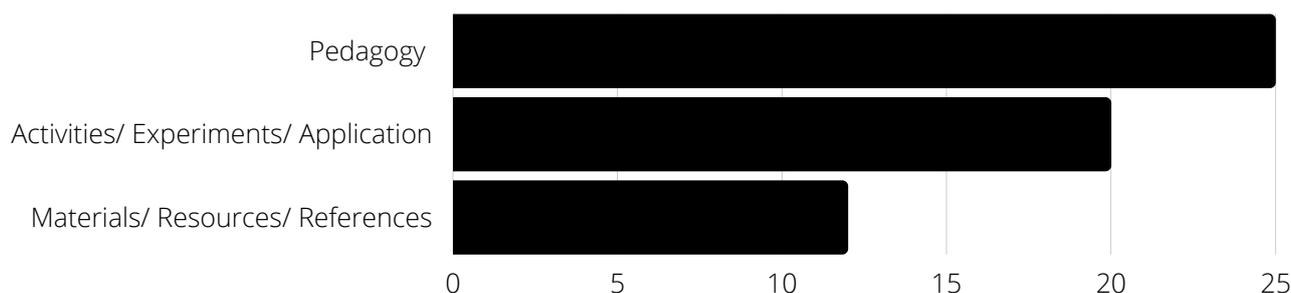
2.2.1 Objectives: The participants expressed that the curriculum should be designed based on specific objectives, outcomes, and competencies.

Twelve ideas were associated with **objectives**. There were no direct explanations of the objective as the participants explained objectives differently:

- Breadth versus depth of objectives (ex. general or specific objectives)
- Student objectives (ex. student learning objectives)
- Class or cycle level (ex. subject objectives or cycle objectives)

2.2.2 Curriculum Learning Experience:

Curriculum Learning Experience is defined as how the curriculum is being delivered. Answering what is a curriculum, below are the people’s perceptions that were divided under the learning experience category.



It is interesting to note that the participants did not mention “pedagogy” as a term. They rather used: “teaching strategy, teaching method, teaching practices, teaching instructions, way of teaching or way of delivering information” around 25 times throughout the data collection tools.

Activities, experiments, and applications that were meant as hands-on experiences were mentioned 20 times. Materials, resources, and references including tools and labs were repeated 12 times. Reading research, doing research, and creating research communities were repeated 4 times. Change and development were repeated 4 times. Reading was repeated 4 times.

What is a Curriculum?



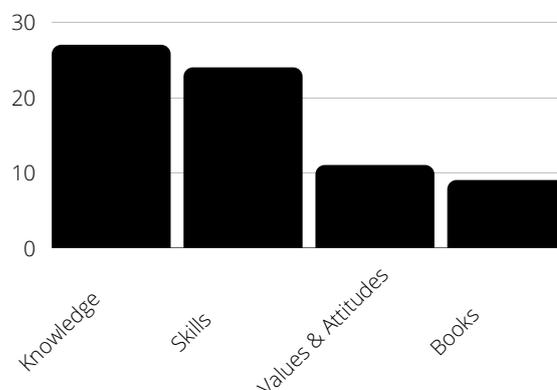
2.2.3 Curriculum Content:

Curriculum knowledge was repeated 27 times under different explanations. Some linked knowledge to concepts, big concepts, units, information, or sequence of planned content.

Skills were mentioned around 24 times. This included interpersonal skills, life skills, critical thinking skills, creativity skills, thinking skills, language skills, cognitive skills or just skills.

Values and attributes were mentioned 11 times. Participants did not specify what values but they described the curriculum as "values." In the first pillar, we have taken into consideration the top 6 values the participants believed the curriculum should cater to.

Books were mentioned 9 times. There was a pattern detected as having the book as the primary reference for both teachers and students.



Participants' Views Regarding Curriculum Content

Participants were asked to share their thoughts regarding the content that should be delivered through the new curriculum. The purpose of this question was to discover whether the participants possessed a different take than what is currently being applied on what is considered essential in terms of knowledge and learning outcomes. The participants contributed by discussing subjects and skills, in addition to touching on the venues that best suit delivering the content. The participants' insights were as follows:



Include electives

Participants stated that students should be able to have their say regarding their own education by being able to choose some of the courses they want to study based on their preferences. Subjects including art, drama, music, dancing, and workshops were highlighted as options to be chosen from. Participants considered middle school and high school to be more suitable for electives, whereas primary levels should provide the basics needed for all students. Those electives were considered a much-needed addition to the traditional subjects that are currently at the center of the Lebanese curriculum.

What is a Curriculum?



Traditional subjects

The majority of the participants reiterated the significance of what was considered as traditional or core subjects throughout the learning journey. Those subjects were considered to be: languages, mathematics, and sciences. Participants highlighted the importance of horizontal alignment between those subjects, in addition to restudying the time slots those subjects are given. Many participants considered that less time should be granted to those topics, especially in middle and high school to allow space to teach life skills and introduce new subjects.



Teach various skills

Participants stressed the importance of teaching different skills as part of the new curriculum. Many participants stated that the new curriculum should teach 21st century skills, where technology literacy was among the most skills mentioned. Other subjects that were mentioned dealt with enabling students to learn how to become future leaders who are capable of solving problems, resolving conflict, and addressing the various environmental problems facing our planet as a whole.



Vocational subjects

Participants also mentioned the importance of teaching social skills that enable students to be more effective in their community. Participants also focused on the importance of providing students with space to learn hands-on skills such as carpentry, and agriculture which can help them choose a career path that differs from the traditional one that is promoted by the current curriculum.



New venues

The results revealed that the objectives of both traditional and new subjects could be further reached through considering a wider scope of venues, where traditionally only the school and classroom were utilized. Participants considered workshops to be suitable learning settings to teach students different hard skills and introduce them to different opportunities they can build a career out of, while also building their subject knowledge. They also considered community service to promote the soft skills and values that students need to be effective agents in the 21st century.

What is a Curriculum?



2.2.4 Curriculum Evaluation:

Curriculum evaluation is concerned with the strategies, tools, and tasks used to assess its aims. The following are the people's perceptions that were categorized under evaluation based on two major questions in the event. The first question was "what is a curriculum?" and the second question was "how could the new curriculum assess student capabilities?"



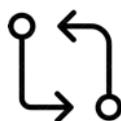
Assessing What?

- Personal Growth
- Practical Skills
- Soft Skills
- Research Skills
- Practices Skills
- Knowledge
- Holistic Assessment
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Values
- Real life and relevant issues
- Goals and aims aligned with assessment
- Thinking skills
- Higher order thinking skills
- Innovative thinking



Assessment Strategies

- Project-Based Learning
- Performance Assessment
- Formative Assessment
- Summative Assessment
- Portfolio-Based
- Diagnostic Assessment
- Inquiry-Based Assessment
- Process-Focused Strategies
- Open-Ended Tasks



Assessment Tools & Tasks

- Fairs
- Illustrations
- Exhibitions
- Case studies
- Open book
- Debates
- Choice boards
- Station rotations
- Reporting
- Observations
- Rubrics
- Multiple-choice questions



Issues in Official Exams

- Should attend to Differentiation
- Currently, the assessment is not aligned with the goals of the curriculum
- Does not prepare students to become problem solvers
- Student must be independent
- No pen and paper
- Focus on understanding not reciting
- Real life and relevant

What is a Curriculum?



Researcher's Insights On Curriculum Definition

Ornstein and Hunkins (2017) claimed that there are several challenges to defining a curriculum. They claimed that the more precise the definition, the greater the tendency to miss sociopsychological factors related to the teaching and learning process. This becomes particularly important when we speak about the planned, unplanned, taught, hidden, and null curricula. It is remarkable to note that although the majority of the audience are educators, education researchers, and specialists (31 out of 40), they have attended only to a superficial layer of what is a curriculum. Our data shows no attempt to attend to the hidden or null curricula neither by naming them nor by giving examples around them.

Our analysis of this phenomenon is that the audience has focused too much on the technical part of the teaching and learning process and forgot to unpack what is beyond the objectives as objectives, pedagogy as pedagogy, or content as content. We assume that many of the audience adopt Western buzz terms without questioning their validity and leaving the question of “what philosophy is behind this term in our context and culture?” unchallenged. This could be attributed to the adoption of a top-down approach to curriculum development, where teachers and professionals are only considered for technical needs assessment rather than being true partners in the development process. The core curriculum practitioners are left to solely focus on content delivery and assessment administration.

Although the audience has attended to the curriculum development and design, few are those who went deeper than that--into the curriculum foundations or approaches to the curriculum (Figure 2A) . Only 1 participant out of 40 has briefly attended to the philosophy behind the curriculum when asked to illustrate in a circle what a curriculum is (Figure 2B).

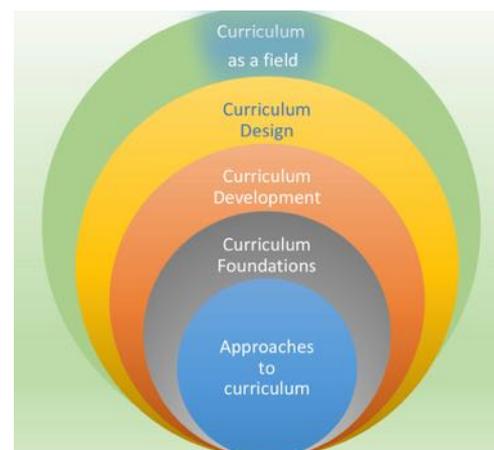


Figure 2A :Hilal-Jurdi (2020)



Figure 2B

What is a Curriculum?



Researcher's Insights

On Curriculum Goals and its Reflection in the Design

Fullen (2013) noted that there are 6Cs that underlie the whole student and society's well-being: character education, citizenship, communication, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, and creativity and imagination. He explains that people have been talking about 21st century skills for at least a quarter of a century but the conversation has been described as superficial, filled with vague notions.

Many participants wanted the curriculum goals to promote student happiness and life satisfaction, student preparation for life as well as help children find their passion and foster student appreciation to the environment around them. We were able to capture weak links of how the curriculum can promote this when asked "what is a curriculum?" For instance, the above-selected goals can be directly linked to character education and citizenship. However, there is a clear gap on how we can promote these two Cs whether in content as knowledge and skills, as they describe, or even the curriculum as a general roadmap.

Researcher's Insights

On Curriculum Managerial Approach to Curriculum

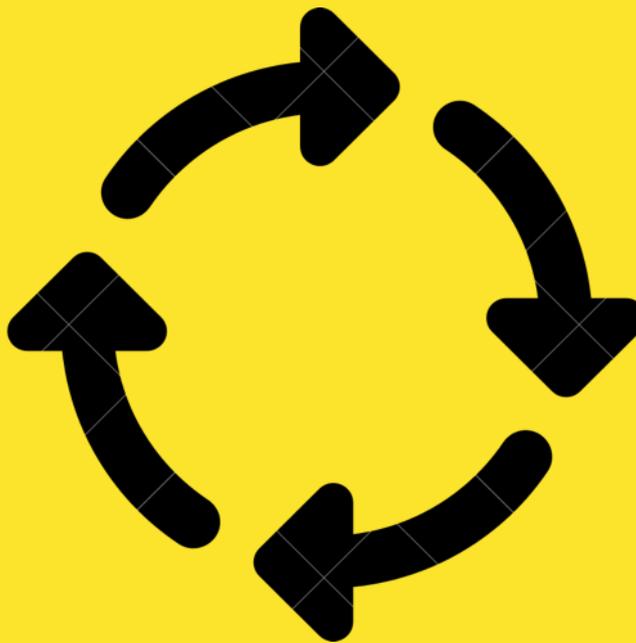
We were able to capture that the curriculum conversation in this pillar was more directed into meanings, functions, and roles rather than talking about true emancipation in the curriculum. When asking "what is a curriculum?", only 2 participants explained that it can be defined as a schedule but they did not attend to how this schedule or curriculum may be managed, considering that curriculum management and leadership as something not within their territory.

An essential part of the curriculum is critical curriculum leadership. Critical curriculum leaders are concerned with managing the relationships of suffering and oppression, cultural politics, and social inequities. They believe in the democratic imperative of curriculum leadership and work toward the agency, growth, and empowerment of children, adults, and communities. They rely on critical discourse as an analytical tool aimed at social change since they believe that discourse shapes practices that in turn produce discourse.



3/4

**CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT
PROCESS**



Curriculum Development Process



This pillar focuses on the process of curriculum development through reflecting on the participants' knowledge and past experiences of how the Lebanese curriculum was developed, the 1997 curriculum in particular, and sharing insights regarding how the process should transpire in the current reform process.

3.1 - Curriculum Reality in Lebanon

The participants' thoughts and perceptions regarding the state of the Lebanese curriculum that is currently being used where the focus is on content, culture, and evaluation.

3.2 - 1997 Curriculum Development Process

The participants' take on the curriculum development process that took place in 1997 and led to the birth of the Lebanese Curriculum that is still used today.

3.3 - 2021 Curriculum Development Process

The participants' vision regarding how a successful curriculum development process should be undertaken for it to yield what they consider to be a success.

Curriculum Development Process



3.1 - Curriculum Reality in Lebanon

Curriculum reality in Lebanon encompasses all realities that the participants described as the status-quo of the Lebanese curriculum.

- One size fits all
- Limited
- Prescriptions of how teachers should teach
- Non-updated books
- Punishment
- Memorization/ recitation
- Official exams
- A tool to pressure the students
- One way of teaching
- Unchangeable/ Outdated
- General to all learners
- Focused on theory and not practice
- Focused on the syllabus
- Set of instructions
- Set of subjects
- Set of books
- General to all learners
- Should not be centralized
- Should encompass everything that should be taught
- Should include professional development sessions
- Should not be a public policy
- Should not be a calendar

Curriculum Development Process



3.2 - 1997 Curriculum Development Process

The participants were asked about their insights regarding how the curriculum development process was carried out in 1997. The participants shared their thoughts regarding who they thought was not included in the process and in what capacity as well as their feedback of the curriculum development process that was carried out back then.

Who was not represented?

- Parents
- Students
- The work sector
 - Business owners
 - Businessmen
 - Employers
 - Economists
- Education experts
 - Researchers
 - Teachers

Describe the 1997 curriculum development process



Limited/no knowledge: 17 out of the 41 participants stated that they have minimal to no information regarding how the Lebanese curriculum was developed in 1997. This was attributed to either the participants being too young, previously disinterested, or having limited access to information regarding the process since it was mainly carried out behind closed doors. Those with prior knowledge stated the following regarding the process.

Curriculum Development Process



Participants who possessed knowledge pertaining to the 1997 Curriculum development process described it as follows:



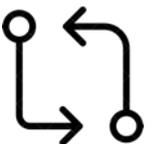
Western influence

Participants stated that the curriculum was adopted from the West. Many participants highlighted France as the main source of the curriculum.



Politicized

Participants stated that the curriculum founded in 1997 was influenced by politics where politicians had a say in what was to be included and excluded.



Needed follow up

Participants stated that the curriculum was intended to be evaluated after a particular time of implementation. Some stated that the original set time was three years. The curriculum however was never revisited.



De-contextualized

Participants stated that due to the fact that the curriculum was adopted from western countries, many lessons did not fit the Lebanese context and culture.



Bureaucratic

Participants stated that the curriculum development process was centralized and carried behind closed doors in a top-down manner without considering the input of teachers and professionals.

What is a Curriculum?



Researcher's Insights

On Curriculum Development Process as a Journey not a Destination

The curriculum development process is defined as how the curriculum is planned, implemented, and evaluated (Onstein and Hunkins, 2017). We have reviewed the CERD curriculum development plan and saw that it falls into logical steps that are rooted in a behavioral, managerial, and scientific approach to curriculum development. This managerial approach is needed to develop a national highly centralized curricula. However, it might not be compatible with the vision of the audience that view the curriculum as a flexible roadmap that provides more autonomy and ownership to the school staff and thus to the students. This is questionable and needs further investigation as CERD rolls out their curriculum development.

Lucchi and Malone (2011) claimed that successful curriculum developers often create long-term curriculum development projects that encompass the ongoing work of the developers as they design, disseminate, support, and continuously improve the materials. We can see that this is CERD's plan but we are not sure about the methodology they are using to reach the intended aim of the curriculum development process. The plan is vague in terms of the support to disseminate the curriculum to the pilot schools. It only shows that there are one-shot workshops provided to disseminate the curriculum developed (see the CERD project logical framework - activities 5.03, 5.04, and 5.05). In the 1997 curriculum, researchers often said that the content was great but the lack falls in the school implementation. So, did we learn enough from the 1997 experience?

We are afraid that the pattern of waiting for grants to develop the curriculum, putting the steps into a logical framework, and recruiting an expert team for development is repeated over and over since it is quite similar to the development process in 1997.

The only way we see this can be executed is by decentralizing the development process. CERD has to adopt a humanistic approach to curriculum development where we put the citizens at the center of the development process, building their capacity so that they have the tools to co-build and re-build their curriculum as a process. This will help everyone to see the development as a journey and not a destination.

Curriculum Development Process



3.3 - The 2021 Curriculum Process

Many participants believed that everything stated before in this section should be part of the curricular reform discussions. However, below are some questions that were captured as different from how the participants expressed their perceptions compared to the earlier section.

- Who is responsible for reforming the curriculum and what are the individuals' roles in this reform process?
- How should the reform process look like?
- What is the aim of teaching and learning?
- What is the general philosophy that will guide the development of students' cognitive, psychological, and social capacities?
- What objectives, skills, and broad topics do we need to include?
- How can we ensure the development of a locally rooted citizen while being globally informed?
- What are the values that the curriculum should address?
- What is the learner profile?
- How can we tolerate oppression in education?
- To what extent should we keep "stuffing" the students?
- How can we change the official exams?
- How can we keep developing with technological advancement?
- How can we maintain good mental health for our students?



Curriculum Development Process

The 2021 Curriculum Reform

The participants were asked about their insights regarding how the curriculum reform process should take place. The participants shared their thoughts regarding who they thought should be included in the process and in what capacity, and what, in their opinion, the curriculum development process guidelines should be.

Who should be represented?

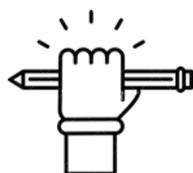
- Parents
- Students
- The work sector
 - Business owners
 - Businessmen
 - Employers
 - Economists
- Education experts
 - Researchers
 - Teachers
 - Professors
 - Curriculum experts
- Policymakers
 - MEHE
 - CERD
 - Government representatives
- Mental health professionals
 - Psychologists
 - Life coaches



Curriculum Development Process



Who should have the main role in developing the curriculum?



Education professionals



Policymakers

What the curriculum development process should look like:



Focused on student needs

Participants stated that the curriculum development process should be based on students' needs. Those needs are related to preparing students for the work market, providing them with the knowledge they require to be active members of the society, and become capable citizens that can help Lebanon progress and move forward.



Focused on societal needs

Participants stated that the curriculum development process should consider the needs of the society to which the student belongs. They added that the curriculum should play a central role in building a better community for the future.



Collaborative

Participants stated that the curriculum development process should be collaborative where all stakeholders have a role to play. Participants stated that teachers, curriculum experts, CERD, and researchers should construct the curriculum while taking the feedback and suggestions of different stakeholders including parents, psychologists, and economists into consideration.



Research based

Participants stated that the curriculum development process should be based on research conducted by curriculum and educational experts. The research will form a base to construct the new curriculum upon it.



Equitable

Participants stated that the curriculum development process should consider the capabilities of both public and private schools in order to ensure that all students receive quality education. They also stated that teachers from all areas should have similar professional development opportunities.

Curriculum Development Process



Researcher Insights

The decentralization of the curriculum development process

The collected data reflects the participants' vision regarding how the curriculum development process should be carried out. 8 participants out of 45 believed that the curriculum development process should start from the needs of the students, with two participants stating that the teachers' needs should be addressed to enable them to play a facilitating role in the education of those students. Those needs of the students, according to Tuckman (1969), are broken down into three broad areas: occupational, civic, and social. The alignment between what Tuckman (1969) stated and the data collected is evident when examining what the participants believe the aim of the curriculum should be as stated prior. Considering the difference in occupational opportunities between a geographical area and another, and the diversity in the social context, the needs of students could best be attended to through decentralizing the curriculum development process.

8 of the 41 participants stated that the curriculum development process should move away from the "centeredness" that was experienced in the 1997 curriculum reform to be more inclusive and collaborative. None of the participants stated that they hoped the 1997 process would be replicated, and the emancipation of the curriculum development process from the influences of religion and politics was explicitly stated. The participants stressed the role of teachers and education professionals in particular. This understanding of the curriculum development process aligns with Hilda Taba's Grassroots Rationale model that considers teachers and professionals to be the leaders of the curriculum development process (Ornstein and Hinkins, 2017).

Professionals-led curriculum development requires the reconceptualization of the roles of teachers, principals, and central bodies. Teachers should be perceived as more than knowledge transmitters, and be seen as what their role was always intended to be, transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1991). This role requires teachers to acquire a higher level of agency within their school context in order to become agents of change (Priestly et al., 2013).

Curriculum Development Process

Teacher agency is promoted internally through the support of leadership, principals in particular. The fact that none of the participants mentioned principals as contributors to the curriculum development process could reflect their perception that principals play the role of surveillance rather than support, or what Foucault delineated as the panopticon in his book "Discipline and Punish." This highlights the need to reconsider the role of the principal in the curriculum reform process.

Finally, the role of central bodies, MEHE and CERD, should be addressed. The principals mentioned above act in response to policies that stress accountability rather than development (Fullan, 2011). Such an approach, a behaviorist approach that focuses on outcome and standards (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2017), limits the agency of teachers and compartmentalizes them in islands with their contribution limited to transmission. In order to empower teachers to play a central role in curriculum development, central bodies should facilitate the professional learning process to reach the needed teacher profile which will be discussed in detail in pillar 4.

Limitation

It is important to highlight the main limitation that was highlighted through the analysis of this pillar. When asked about the curriculum development process, some participants opted to focus on content rather than the process as a whole. Answers like: "focus on life skills," "critical thinking in education," "work on content," and "focus on 21st-century skills" were ever present. The researcher believes that this misconception springs from the reality that those participants have rarely been involved in a dialogue that focuses on the curriculum development process. The process has been considered as an endeavor that occurs behind closed doors. This could narrow their perception of what a curriculum is, leaving the question of "What is the purpose of the curriculum?" un-visited.



4/4

EDUCATOR PROFILE



Educator Profile



To achieve the curriculum aims, values, objectives, and plans, we asked about the ultimate teacher profile that can participate and carry out the curriculum reform. This pillar is divided into three main sections.

First, we asked about teachers' characteristics that can increase the chances of success in the curriculum. Second, we asked about the role and characteristics of the educational leaders and instructional supervisors. Finally, we asked about the general opportunities that the new curriculum could bring forward to help teachers achieve the envisioned reform.

Educators' Characteristics

We asked the audience what characteristics could the future teachers uphold so that they could increase the chances of success in the curriculum. The answers are as follows:



Knowledge

- Background in Psychology
- Knowledge in technology
- Knowledgeable in the area
- Knowledge of the educational tools
- Awareness of global problems
- Knowledge about instructional strategies
- Knowledge about special education
- Knowledge about pedagogical content knowledge
- Conceptual
- Knowledge in curriculum

Educator Profile

Educators' Characteristics



Skills

- Promotion of a safe environment
- Emotionally intelligent
- Flexible
- Agile
- Social-emotionally intelligent
- Researcher oriented
- Self-learning
- Communicative
- Good listener
- Influencer
- Forward-thinker
- Has a holistic approach
- Life skills
- Researcher
- Facilitator
- Leader
- Comprehension of the age group and its need
- Decision-maker
- Ability to deliver information in different ways
- Reflective
- Development of a community
- Planner
- Self-directed
- Self-efficient
- Vision Orientation
- Self-aware

Values

- Tolerance
- Inclusivity
- Open-mindedness
- Acceptance of others
- Respect towards others
- Empathy
- Lack of judgement
- Principled
- Professionalism
- Progressiveness
- Hope
- Friendliness
- Passion
- Fun
- Assertiveness
- Courage
- Patience
- Responsibility
- Up-to-date
- Creative
- Open to change
- Transparent
- Commitment to teaching
- Motivation for education

Educator Profile



Educational Leaders' Characteristics

We asked the audience what characteristics the future school leaders could uphold including principals, instructional supervisors, and general supervisors. Below were the answers:

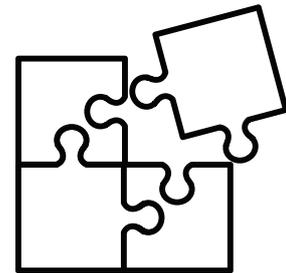
- **Values**

- Visionary
- Shared goals
- Fair and firm
- Non-authoritative
- Up-to-date
- Supportive
- Down to earth
- Positive
- Acceptance of different beliefs
- Flexible
- Involved in research



- **Skills**

- Critical thinker
- Good listener
- Planner
- Facilitator
- Problem solver
- Cooperative
- Instructional supervision
- Inclusion



Educator Profile



Curriculum Opportunities

We asked about the general opportunities that the new curriculum could bring to help teachers achieve the envisioned reform. Below were the answers:

Mental Health

- Work life balance
- Avoidance of burn out
- General mental health services



Rewards

- Motivation: emotional and financial returns
- Placement based on skills
- Better salaries
- A more impactful social role for teachers
- Equal resources in public & private schools



Professional Development

- Sets achievable goals
- Follows up inside the school
- Being proficient in teaching online
- Training before and during the practice
- Teaching diploma
- Attending continuous Professional Development
- Providing time for research



Role Outside the Classroom

- Gets involved in the society
- Places school policies



School-Based Autonomy

- Sense of ownership in the teaching content
- Hierarchy with a sense of collaboration



Educator Profile



Researchers' Insights

Teachers as Intellectuals & not Technicians

The Problem:

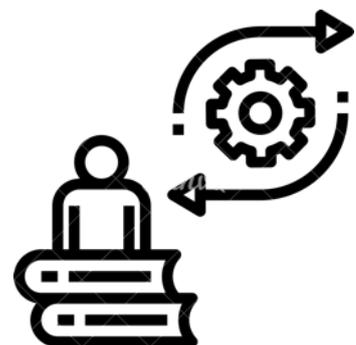
The Problem: 2 out of 40 participants realized that teachers must have a role outside the classroom. Although only one participant wrote "get involved in society" and another one wrote "place school policies," the Beirut sample clearly failed to recognize the essential role of teachers in their political participation to shape national curriculum and policies. We saw the answers as realistic to what we have now and not visionary to set the upcoming education vision in Lebanon.

This result is a product of what the political class has designed for teachers early in the 1960s, 1997, and 2010. Many politicians believed that teachers do not have a role outside the classroom:

1) Public school teachers cannot participate in union work that gives them the right to shape and reform national policies. Public school teachers can only participate in leagues (primary and secondary) where work and activities are dictated by the minister (Ghosh and Karami-Akkary, 2020).



2) Shuayb (2020) claimed that teachers were not inclusively represented in shaping the policy processes. In both the 1997 and 2010 reforms, teachers were positioned as receivers rather than co-creators in shaping educational policies in Lebanon.



Educator Profile



Researchers' Insights

Teachers as Intellectuals & not Technicians

Moving Forward:

Giroux (1991) explained that **teachers' role should not be restricted to managing competencies** in the classroom. Teachers and administrators must have conditions that allow them to work as intellectuals and not as mere technicians.



Educators should **have the power to shape the conditions that help them to produce a curriculum that suits their interests and their students' interest**. This is the opposite of how Shuayb (2020) described the 1997 and 2010 reforms in Lebanon as top-down and centralized reforms.



Another 2 out of 40 participants advocated for school-based autonomy by asking for **more ownership in the teaching content and a school hierarchy that promotes collaboration**.



In order for teachers to become intellectuals, they need space and autonomy. Giroux (1991) explained that **teachers must be given the time and power during the school day to work collectively in shaping policy**.

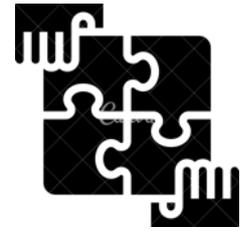


We believe that teachers should not just represent their voice through a survey or a focus group discussion in a one-shot funded project but rather that **the government should provide a system that enables teachers to democratically voice out concerns and shape their own profession**.





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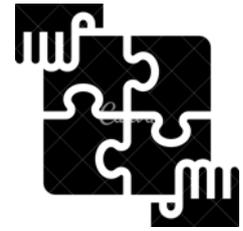
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