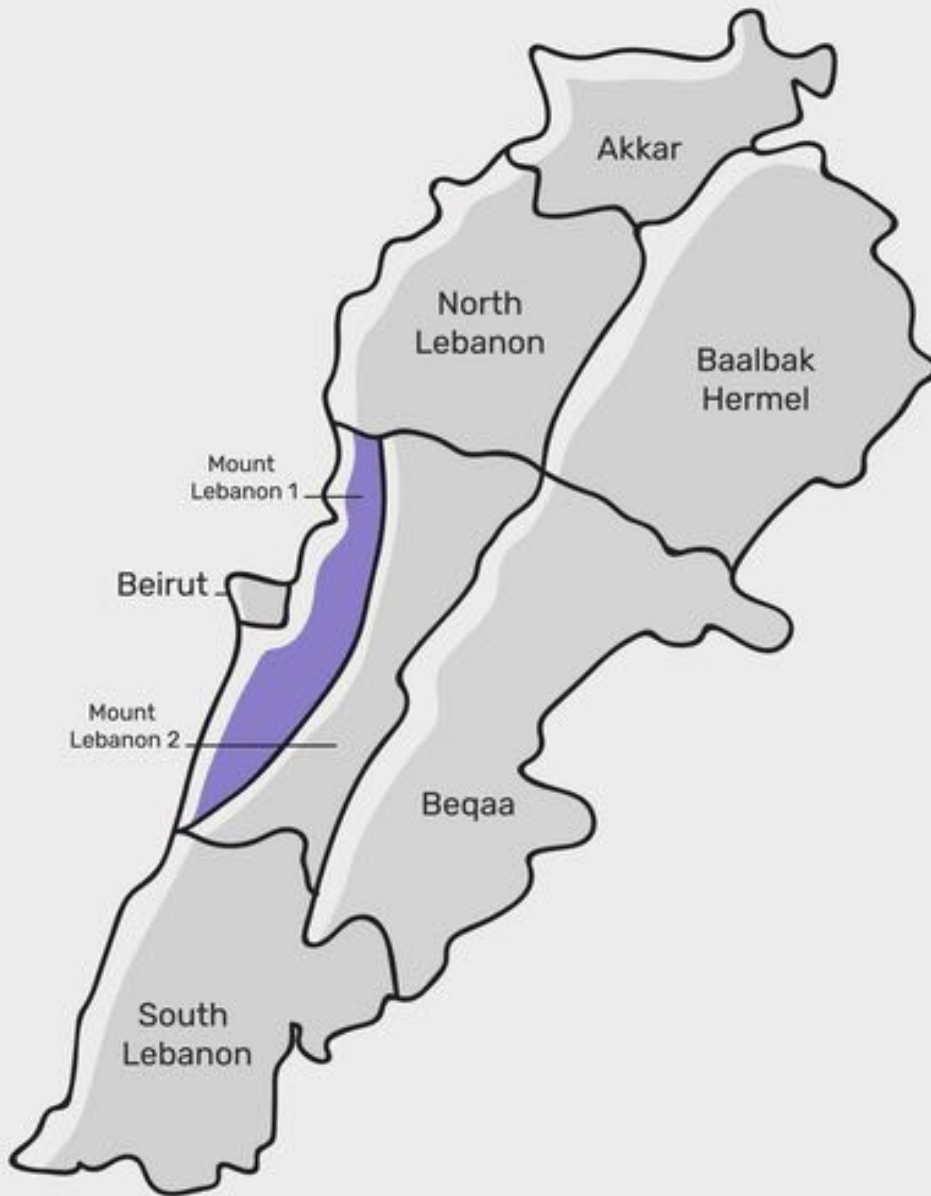


منهجنا



Mount Lebanon 1 WonderLand Report 7/8

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.

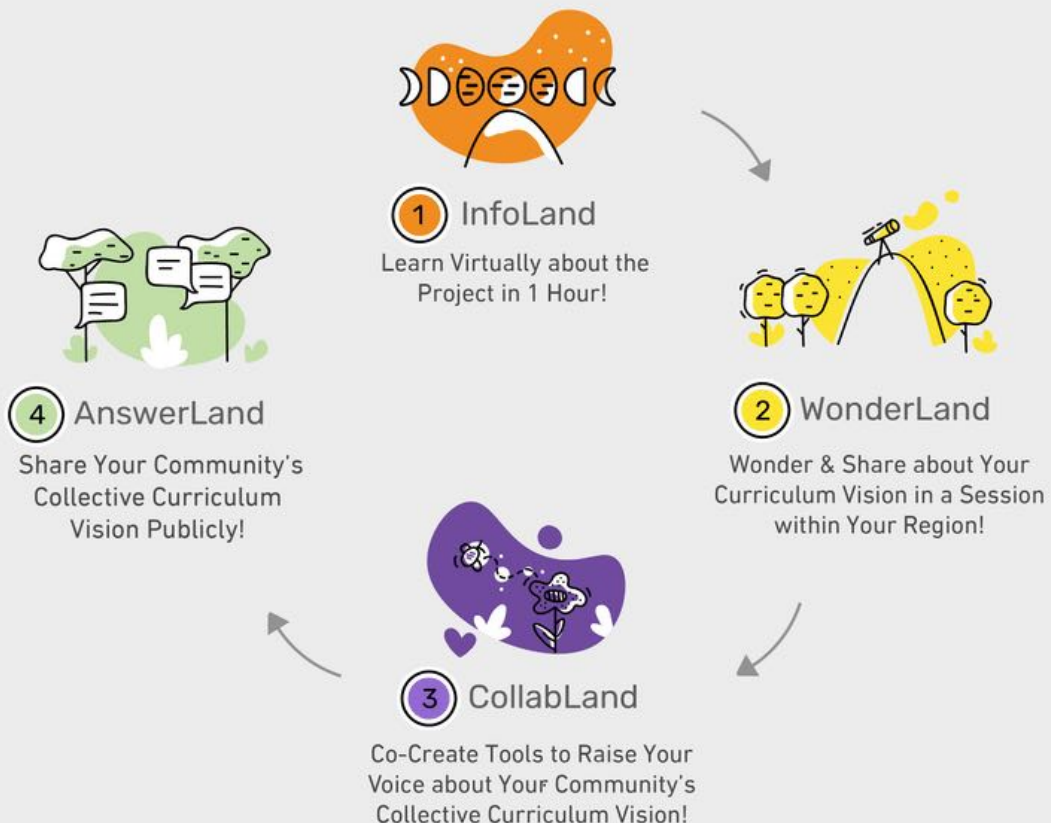
Eights spaces are being facilitated in eights governorates across Lebanon.

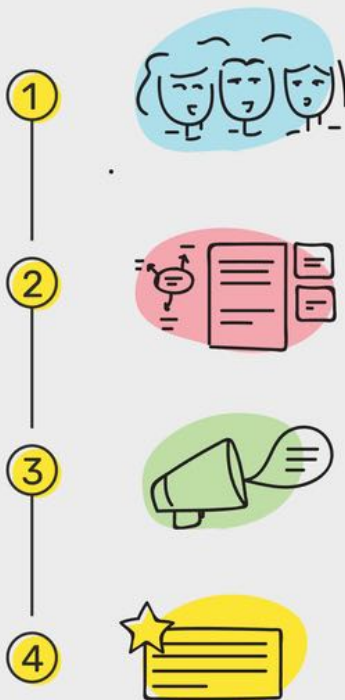
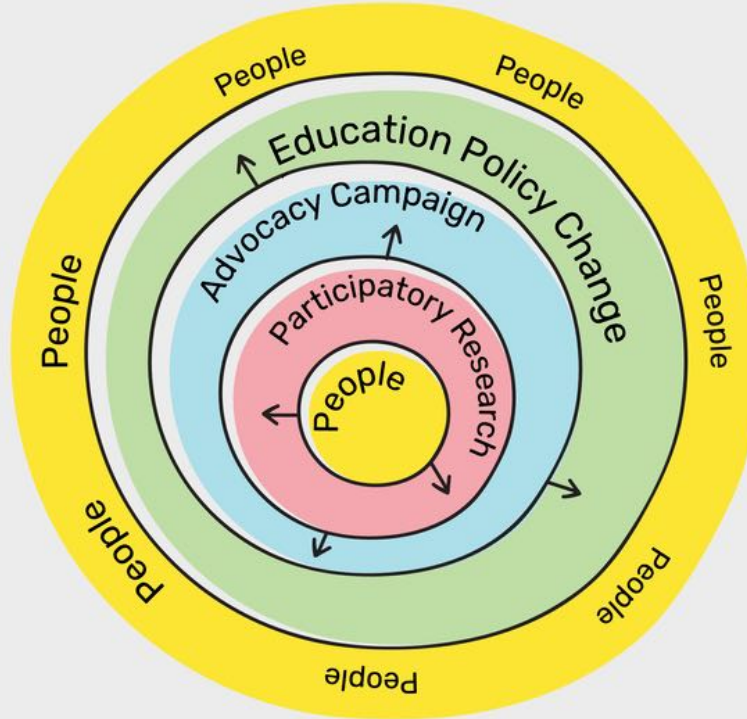
Through Manhajna's activities, we engage diverse groups from across the country to join us to envision a curriculum embedded in the values of participation, inclusion, justice and equity.

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





People

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

Participatory Research

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

Advocacy Campaign

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

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.

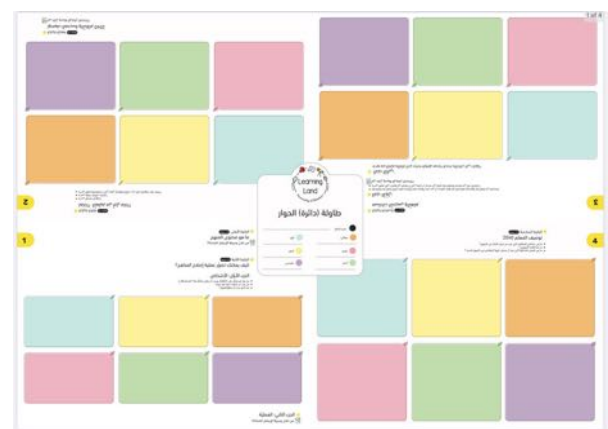


Figure 2

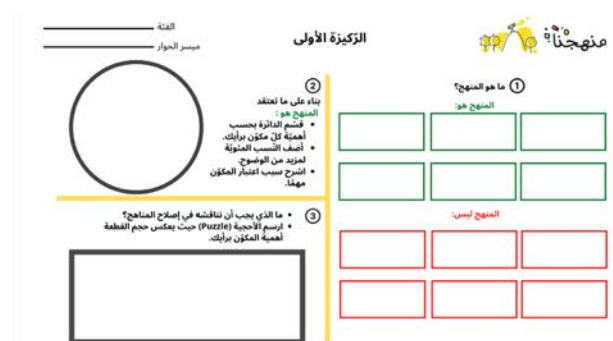


Figure 3

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.

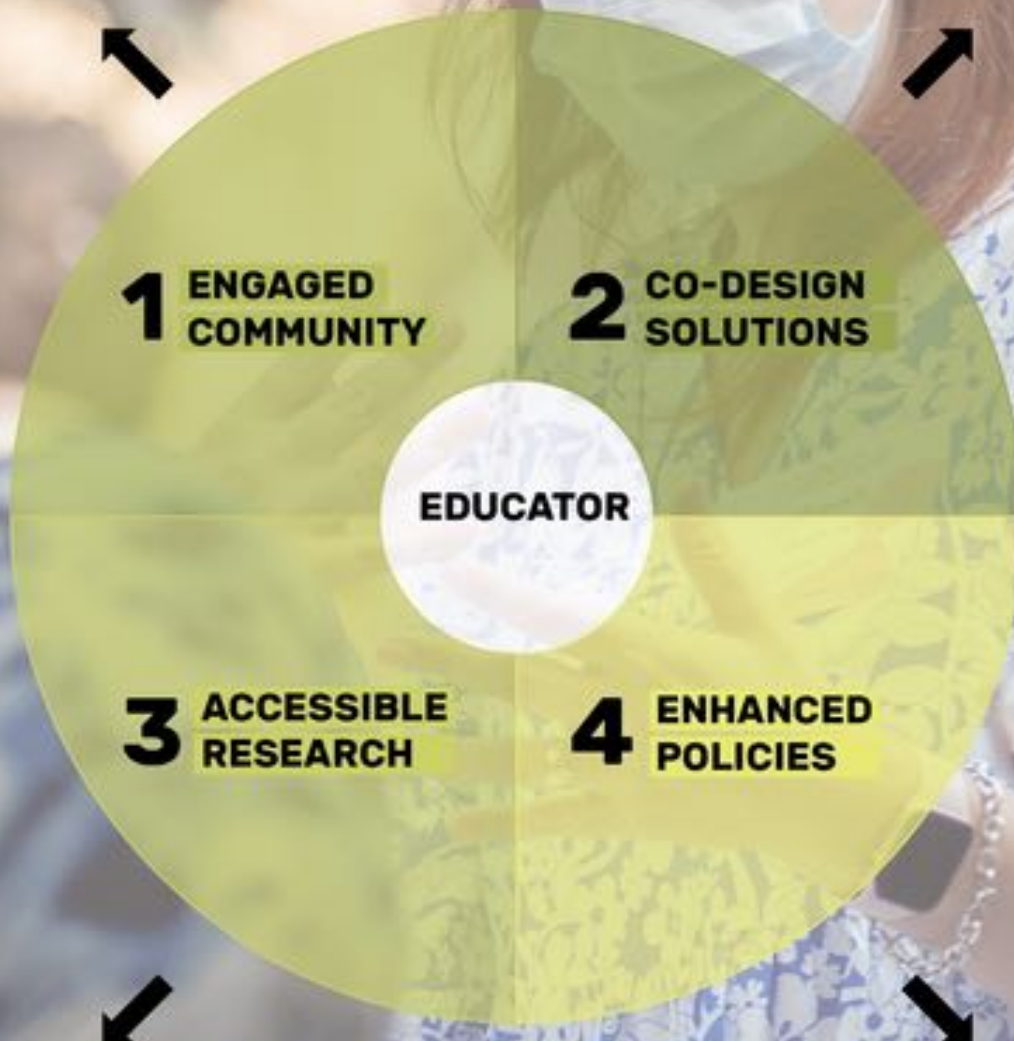
The importance of this report lies at the heart of Learning Land's methodology. Learning Land aims not only to create a community of educators, but also co-create solutions, provide accessible research, and impact practices and policies on a school level and national level. Through accessible research, 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.

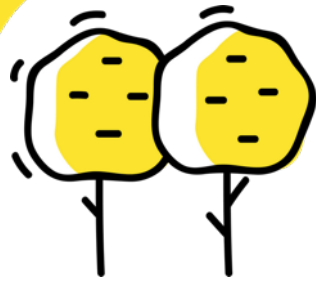


We provide easy-accessible research, centered on teaching and learning, for the education ecosystem players to drive evidence-based decision making.

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



45
Attendees



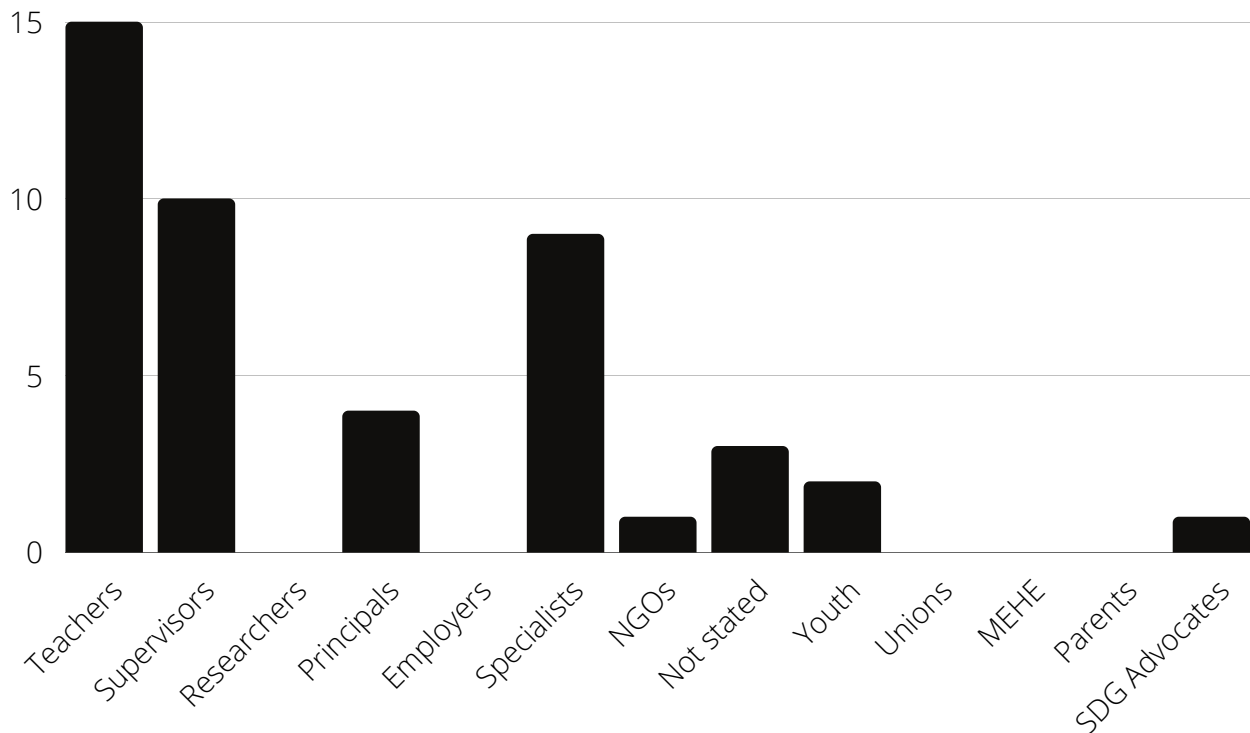
8
Dialogue
Facilitators



3
Team
Members

45 ATTENDEES:

BACKGROUND

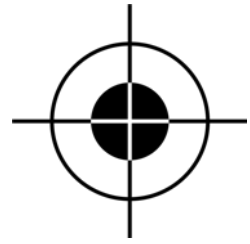


1/4

**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



Personal development

Participants linked the curriculum to students' personal development in terms of enabling them to acquire various personal and professional skills. Many participants stated that the curriculum should instill the love of knowledge where that becomes the goal rather than only being a means. They believed that to be essential in building a well rounded critical and successful individual.



Societal development

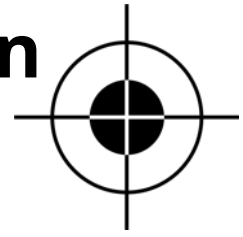
Participants believed that the curriculum should develop students and their capabilities to play an effective role towards promoting social change and development. Many participants stated that one of the main roles of the curriculum is to provide future leaders with skills they need to build a better version of Lebanon. The curriculum was also seen as important in ensuring social cohesion and integration.



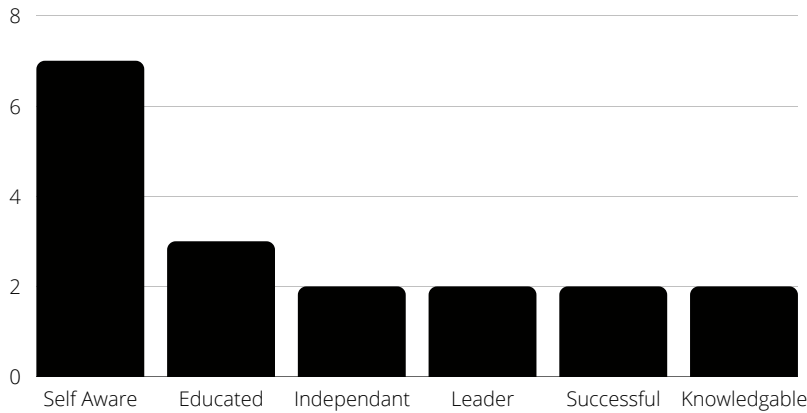
Career development

Finally, participants stated that the curriculum should introduce students to market needs and opportunities. The curriculum, they added should provide hard and soft skills that would increase the chances of students of succeeding professionally and leading productive lives in the future.

Why and Where of Education



Successful student profile



Top 5 Values the curriculum should promote:

- Honesty
- Acceptance of others
- Respect
- Humanity
- Courage



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
- Humanitarian Organizations
 - Red Cross
 - Civil defense
- Civil courts
- Army
- Medical institutions
 - Hospitals
 - Laboratories
- Religious institutions



Researchers' Insights:



The larger number of participants considered societal and personal development to be the main aim of the curriculum. This could be attributed to the prominence of social values especially in rural areas. This reflects in the student profile and additional learning venues the participants highlighted.



2/4

WHAT IS A CURRICULUM?



What is a Curriculum?



We aimed to explore how participants perceived and understood curricula by asking them “what is a curriculum?”

After going over their answers within the focus group discussions, the participants’ answers were grouped under two main themes:

2.1 Curriculum as a Development Process

The first theme is the curriculum development process which encompasses the overarching curriculum aims, goals, vision, and philosophy that guide the curriculum developers in what to consider during the development process.

2.2 Curriculum as a Design

The second theme is curriculum design which encompasses the components of a curriculum. These components aid the curriculum developers to break-down the design of the curriculum. These components are themed under four titles:

- Objectives
- Learning Experiences
- Content
- Evaluation

What is a Curriculum?



2.1 Curriculum as a Development Process

The curriculum development process was themed under three sub-goal categories that the curriculum developers could look into while designing the curriculum. These categories are: student, curriculum, and planning goals.

2.1.1 Student Goals. When answering “what is a curriculum?”, participants associated the question to student goals. Some of the participants’ ideas were:

- Building the learner's personality
- Acquiring skills
- Contributing sufficiently to create creativity and openness in the learner
- Transferring the student to a safe environment
- Developing the identity of the student as a citizen
- Building the human being as the foundation of society
- Contributing to the development of society and individuals
- Building an individual's personality that integrates him or her into his or her society
- Striving to improve the life of the citizen
- Activating the student's personality and discovering his or her talents and strengths

2.1.2 Curriculum Goals. When answering “what is a curriculum?”, participants associated the question to curriculum goals. Some of the participants’ ideas were:

- Emphasize the fact that development and maturity are more important than academic pursuits
- Define lessons with goals that benefit the learner
- Emphasize how to teach the content and to include all types of learners
- Promote creativity in the arts and interdependence between materials
- Have only the country's supervision of the curriculum only determine the frameworks for learning

What is a Curriculum?



2.1.3 Planning Goals. When answering “what is a curriculum?”, participants associated the question to planning goals. Some of the participants’ ideas were:

- Educational plan
- A coherent action plan
- Plan for delivering quality education
- Basic materials and an educational plan that takes into account the needs of students

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 a specific set of objectives, goals, and outcomes.

2.2.2 Learning Experience: Curriculum Learning Experience is defined as how the curriculum is being delivered. Answering what is a curriculum, participants stated that the learning experience could be delivered through different teaching strategies, teaching environments, and teaching tools.

Teaching Strategies:

- Research
- Reading
- Writing
- Analyzing and studying rules
- Sensory and kinesthetic experiences
- Discussing education through recreational means
- Standard-based sequence of planned experiences where students should practice and achieve proficiency content and skills
- Different ways to build mental abilities
- Training courses for all that is required and renewed

What is a Curriculum?



Teaching Tools:

- Material from a CD or cultural film for each subject while ensuring a clean and valid environment according to students' age
- Means of communication with the learner
- Educational films
- Training courses
- Books
- Techniques
- Demonstration tools
- Educational tools

2.2.3 Curriculum Content: Participants elaborated that the curriculum content could include general knowledge, skills, and values. They specified that curriculum could be delivered based on a subject-matter division.

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, music, sports, and theater were highlighted. 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 believed that lower grades should focus on those subjects to promote building a good foundation for students to build on as they transition to higher levels.



Develop social values

Participants stressed the importance of promoting and developing social values through the curriculum. They believed that several hours should be dedicated to helping students learn about equity, citizenship, and human rights.

Researchers' Insights:



Participants acknowledged that the curriculum should go beyond the subject matter and expose students to different soft and hard skills they would need later on. They advocated for a balance between the importance of teaching traditional subject matter and including new innovations.

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?

- Learning Objectives
- Competencies
- Skills



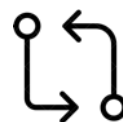
Issue in Official Exams

- Should be equitable
- Should be inclusive
- Should be canceled
- Should assess student capabilities



Assessment Strategies

- Project-Based
- Practice-Based
- Differentiated
- Play-Based
- International Assessments (MAP)
- Summative Assessments
- Formative Assessments



Assessment Tools & Tasks

- Oral Exams
- Interviews
- Portfolios
- Gamified platforms
- Online activities
- Collaborative boards
- Case Studies



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 used till this day.

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 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
- Psychologists
- MEHE and CERD representatives
- The work sector
 - Business owners
 - Businessmen
 - Employers
- Education Researchers

Describe the 1997 curriculum development process

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



Adopted but
not adapted

Some participants stated that the curriculum was adopted from external contexts without considering the needs and particularities of the Lebanese social fabric. Those participants believed that to be the reason behind the shortcomings of the 1997 Lebanese curriculum.

Curriculum Development Process



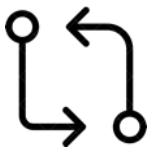
Political and religious influence

Participants stated that the curriculum founded in 1997 was influenced by both politics and religion. They considered that evident mostly in the history curriculum where such influences led to the lack of consensus regarding this subject.



Did not focus on students' abilities

Participants stated that the curriculum centered around including new subjects as well as material within already-existing subjects. Some participants added that those new requirements were impossible to cover properly within the designated contact school hours. In addition, the new subject matter did not take into consideration the needs and abilities of students which led to adding extra burden on students in addition to a state of resistance towards the educational process.



Needed follow up

Some participants considered the 1997 curriculum to be a positive change from its predecessor. However, it did stay updated with the requirements and needs of the 21st century.

What is a Curriculum?



Researcher's Insights

On the 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 Center for Education Research and Development (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 of seeing 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 its 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 described the content as great but there is a shortcoming 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 to be 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 and build 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?
- What 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 be undertaken. 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.

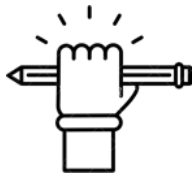
Who should be represented?

- Students
- Policymakers
 - Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)
 - Government representatives
- Parents
- Social workers
- Education experts
 - Teachers
 - Curriculum experts
 - Coaches and trainers

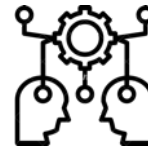
Curriculum Development Process



Who should have the main role in developing the curriculum?



Education professionals



Policymakers

Researchers' Insights:



Participants stated that education professionals should play a main role in curriculum development. However, they believed that the status of MEHE and CERD should not be disregarded, as they are the main authority for educational matters in Lebanon.

What the curriculum development process should look like:



Research based

Participants stated that they believe 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.



Teacher Preparation

Participants stated that teachers and school professionals should be trained and prepared in order to implement the new curriculum successfully.



Student based

Participants stated that they believe that the curriculum development process should be student based. This could be done through focusing on the contextual needs of students and differentiating between those needs to make sure all students receive the quality education they deserve.

Researchers' Insights:



Even though the participants were asked about the curriculum development process, many opted to focus on content rather than the process as a whole. This misconception could spring from the reality that those participants have rarely been involved in a dialogue that focuses on the curriculum development process.

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 teacher 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 the future teachers could uphold so that they could increase the chances of success in the curriculum. Below were the answers:



Knowledge

- Good subject matter knowledge
- Good language capabilities
- Updated regarding teaching and learning

Educator Profile

Educators' Characteristics



Skills

- Leader in class
- Facilitator
- Self development
- Creative
- Calm
- Ability to work well under pressure
- Ability to use technology
- Positive
- Innovative
- Good communication skills
- Flexible
- Always up to date
- Good conflict resolution skills
- Problem solver
- Patient

Values

- Tolerance
- Inclusiveness
- Open-minded
- Honest
- Respect towards others
- Empathy
- Fairness
- Professionalism
- Patience
- Friendliness
- Passion

Educator Profile



Educational Leaders' Characteristics

We asked the audience what characteristics the future school leaders could uphold including principals, instructional supervisors, and general supervisors. The answers are as follows:

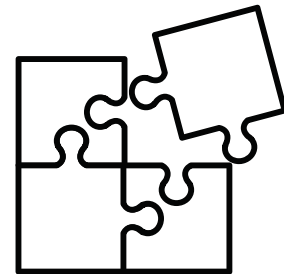
- **Values**

- Humble
- Supportive
- Protective



- **Skills**

- Strategic Planner
- Good communicator
- Good listener
- Promotion of self-knowledge
- Self-awareness
- Ability to raises awareness
- Problem solver
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Ability to involve the team in decision-making
- Coaching and guidance for teachers
- Development of clear plans and objectives
- Facilitation of development and training opportunities for teachers
- Role in community development
- Role in developing the Lebanese curriculum
- Ability to help raise a critical generation



Educator Profile



Curriculum Opportunities

We asked about the general opportunities that the new curriculum could bring to help teachers achieve the envisioned reform. The answers are as follows:

Teacher Rights

- Social security and health insurance
- Maternity leave for more than 70 days
- Social benefits on an equal basis with other professions
- Consideration of work done outside contact hours



Rewards

- Salary increase
- More days off



Professional Development

- Sharing knowledge and participating in dialogue sessions
- Providing continuous training courses
- Finding ways to help teachers teach better
- Attending ongoing workshops, seminars, and meaningful meetings



Role Outside the Classroom

- Involved in the society
- Participation in school policies



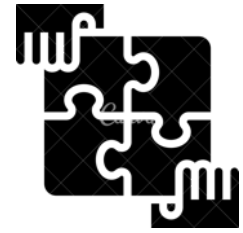
School-Based Autonomy

- Participation in decision-making
- Teachers' opinions taken into consideration





COLLABORATORS & CO-CREATORS



Mount Lebanon 1 Region Champion & Dialogue Facilitators



Amal Moghrabi

Mount Lebanon 1 Community Champion

Principal at Thimarina School for Learning Difficulties -
Hammana



Alia El Moughrabi

French Teacher and
Educational Counselor
Aley First Official Intermediate



Ghinwa Sanjad

English Teacher
Themarona School



Jamal Al Khatib

Biology Teacher
Modern National High School
Modern Education Center



Majida Abouzaki

English Teacher and Coordinator
Qurnayel Public School



Rajaa El Moghrabi

Chemistry teacher
Saint Anthony's College
Hammana



Rita Milan

Head of the Learning
Difficulties Department
Al Manar modern school



Rouba Makarem

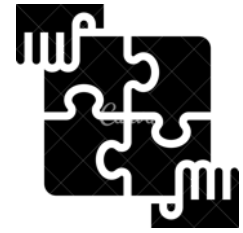
French Teacher
Al Manar Modern
School



Sabah Breich

Arabic Teacher and
Coordinator
Abadiyeh Pfficial High School

COLLABORATORS & CO-CREATORS



Inspiration Garden & Learning Land Team



Fahd Jamaledine
Co-Founder & Chief
Visionary
Lead Manhjna Researcher



Naji Talhouk
Impact Imagineer
Lead Manhjna Researcher



Alaa Al Zahab
Programs Manager
Research Assistant



Sara Ardati
Programs Coordinator
Research Assistant

Center for Lebanese Studies Team



Mai Abu Moghli
Senior Researcher
Manhjna Project Lead



Maha Shuayb
Director

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