

TOWARDS A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

The National Curriculum Framework 2011

Consultation Document 4 The Way Forward



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Quality Education
For All**

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2011**

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Curriculum Review Committee:

Grima Grace (Chairperson), Bezzina Christopher, Camilleri Raymond J. Caruana Horace, Fr Cilia David, Fr Mallia Charles, Micallef Joseph, Mizzi Bernie, Pace Paul, Sollars Valerie, Spiteri Sandro, Testa Mario and Ventura Frank

Ministry Representatives:

Birmingham Elaine (Phase I) and Bezzina Doriana (Phase II)

Consultation Strategy Group:

Grima Grace (Chairperson), Cachia Stephen, Fr Cilia David, Fr Mallia Charles, Pace Paul, Sciberras Micheline and Sollars Valerie

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The National Curriculum Framework

Consultation Document 4

The Way Forward

This document summarises the recommendations being proposed in the NCF and examines the implications of such recommendations. There can only be a meaningful strategy for the implementation of the NCF once the recommendations are debated and the full impact of their implications understood. This process of consultation needs to include all stakeholders in a professionally engaging manner. Moreover, the consultation and implementation strategies need to be based on the full understanding of a change management process.

This document will therefore map out the way forward by presenting:

- *a summary of the recommendations being proposed by the NCF;*
- *implications of these recommendations for implementation;*
- *ideas about the management of change which underpin the consultation and implementation strategies the NCF would like to promote;*
- *a strategy for the consultation process following the publication of the draft NCF; and*
- *a proposed timeline for the implementation process of the NCF, following consultation and agreement with the wider educational community about the way forward.*

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Message

Hon. Dolores Cristina

Minister

Ministry of Education,
Employment and the Family



The concept of a National Curriculum that guaranteed a minimum level of education provision for all learners in Malta was first introduced in the 1988 Education Act. In 1999 a new national curriculum *Creating the Future Together (1999)* was published. It presented a series of aims and objectives which still guide education decisions to the present day. The underlying philosophy focused on the holistic development of all learners, by encouraging and supporting the professional decisions of educators in schools and thus providing quality education with a long-term vision.

In effect, following the publication of the 1999 curriculum, a series of in-depth analysis and discussion on key areas took place, each presenting challenges to be addressed in this review of the national curriculum framework. These areas included *Inclusive and Special Education (2005)*, *Absenteeism (2005)*, *Early Childhood Education and Care (2006)*, *Career Guidance (2007)*, *Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools in Malta (2007)*, *Smart Learning: Malta's National eLearning Strategy 2008-2010* and *Physical Education (NAO, 2010)*.

After a decade of experience, it is now time to appreciate what we have achieved and, in the light of the increasing changes within and around our society, review our educational thinking and practice to ensure that all children succeed. Moreover, this will be the first curriculum framework to be adopted since Malta joined the EU in 2004 and hence it has also considered policy-related documents issued by the European Commission.

Employability, quality of life and lifelong learning are at the heart of the new draft National Curriculum Framework that aims at equipping young people with the key competences needed to meet the challenges of Malta's future labour market.

At a time when together with other Member States of the European Union, Malta is overcoming the economic crisis in the context of demographic changes and social cohesion, this curriculum framework will ensure that present and future generations acquire skills that will enrich their lives and secure economic growth, sustainability and the foundations of a knowledge society.

A primary goal of this Government is that all children will exit compulsory education with acquired skills and qualifications and that schools become attractive learning environments. Thanks to the heavy investment in information technology and student services in all colleges,

this curriculum framework review will transform the existing physical structures into opportunities for personal and social growth, reduce early school leavers, retain learners in formal education for as long as possible as well as give credit to informal and non-formal learning. With the development of a National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and its referencing to the European Qualifications Framework, this document will facilitate access to further and higher education, work-based learning, continuous professional development and adult learning.

I look forward to an intensive and comprehensive consultative process characterised by healthy debate from all stakeholders on where we want our compulsory educational provision to go, and what decisions we need to take to fulfil this vision, so as to ensure that all our children receive the quality education they deserve, so that they may all succeed.

Dolores Cristina

Message

Prof. Grace Grima

Director General

*Directorate for Quality
and Standards in Education*



This curriculum review stems from Part II of the Education (Amendments) Act, 2006 which puts the onus on the Directorate for Quality and Standards for updating the National Curriculum Framework, implementing it as well as reviewing the implementation process at regular intervals. The process of reviewing and updating the National Curriculum included representatives from the Directorates of Education, the Faculty of Education, the MATSEC Examinations Board, and Church and Independent schools. The draft document has been refined following feedback received by invitation from curriculum experts from the Ministry of Education in New Zealand and Learning and Teaching Scotland. This draft document is being presented for a national consultation process after which it will be refined, finalised and adopted as the national curriculum framework.

The draft curriculum framework is presented in a set of four consultation documents, namely:

Document 1: The Executive Summary

Document 2: The National Curriculum Framework - Rationale and Components

This document includes a detailed introduction to the theoretical background against which the proposals of the national curriculum framework were conceptualised.

Document 3: The National Curriculum Framework - The Three Cycles: The Early Years, The Primary Years and the Secondary Years

This document presents details of how the national curriculum framework envisages the learning programme to be offered to children and young people in the early years, the primary years and the secondary years. This document focuses on the application of the framework in schools and colleges.

Document 4: The National Curriculum Framework - The Way Forward

This document summarises the recommendations of the national curriculum framework and examines the implications of such recommendations. The document presents ideas about the management of change which underpin the consultation and implementation strategies the framework would like to promote. In turn, the consultation and implementation strategies presented are based on an understanding of a change management process.

In essence, the updated national curriculum framework promotes these key ideas:

- the development of lifelong learners who are engaged and responsible citizens, and active in the economy.
- the support for all learners to achieve and succeed, whatever their backgrounds, needs and aptitudes.

- a clear focus in colleges and schools on meeting the needs of all learners through increased curricular autonomy.
- the creation of active, inclusive learning communities which put learning and learners at the heart of all that they do and are accountable to their stakeholders.
- seamless progression through the early, primary and secondary years in the skills and competences required for lifelong learning.
- learning which is active, personalised, relevant, and purposeful.
- learning that emphasises the application of knowledge and skills in different contexts and settings as well as breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding.
- a curriculum framework that focuses on learning areas, creating links and synergies across traditional subjects.
- assessment and evaluation which use information and feedback formatively to inform planning for improvement.
- cycles of quality assurance and evaluation which recognise that continuous professional learning is an essential part of educational practice.

The process of consultation is crucial for the success of the updated national curriculum framework. The consultation strategy presented in Document 4 has been designed with the aim of enabling a wide-ranging and authentic discussion and debate which enables all stakeholders to engage with the draft document in a positive way and participate actively in the formulation of the final version.

The consultation process itself is divided into three phases:

- **Phase 1: Reflection for action May 2011 to August 2011**
This phase will serve to present the updated national curriculum framework and prepare the various stakeholders for the consultation process. The meetings with the stakeholders will serve to highlight (i) the main recommendations of the updated national curriculum framework; (ii) the implications arising for the various stakeholders as envisaged by the updated national curriculum framework; and (iii) the role of the stakeholders in the consultation process, in terms of both their personal contribution to the process and their role in bringing together the feedback and responses of the learning communities for which they are responsible. In addition, this phase allows all participants sufficient time to read through the documents and consider in some detail their content and implications.
- **Phase 2: Reflection in action from September 2011 to November 2011**
This phase will provide stakeholders opportunities to share and consolidate their ideas within and across different institutions. The aim of this phase is to invite and encourage stakeholders towards actively participating in generating a national, reflective professional discussion and debate about the updated national curriculum framework proposals, thus initiating a process of sharing critical and constructive feedback in preparation for the final version of the updated national curriculum framework.
- **Phase 3: Reflection on Action from November 2011 to December 2011**
This phase will bring together all the stakeholders and the feedback offered by the various institutions. The highlights of this phase include a two-day national conference and the submission of written feedback. Once the working group reviews the proposed NCF in light of the feedback received, the working group will submit a final NCF document to the Minister for approval.

I invite all educators, parents, students and society stakeholders to participate actively in this consultation process so that the final approved document will be a true expression of our hopes and aspirations to provide a relevant quality education for our children which meets the current and future needs of our country.

Grace Grima

Summary of NCF recommendations

The proposed general principles, aims and achievement targets of the NCF will raise a number of challenges for practitioners, administrators and other stakeholders as they seek to adopt an agreed vision, a clear strategy and a shared pedagogical language within a common conceptual framework. To support their thinking and discussion, this section lists the **main recommendations** of the NCF which would require substantial changes to local current practices in education.

Approach to Education

The NCF **recommends** a developmental approach to education, focused on learning and the learner, where the curriculum meets the needs of all children and young people in a fully inclusive way. To achieve this recommendation, the NCF proposes:

- the development of early childhood, primary and secondary education curricula in a seamless manner to ensure continuity in the educational paths followed by learners;
- the adoption of a socio-cultural/constructivist approach to learning, where learners are provided with opportunities to make sense of new knowledge in a co-operative context, allowing them to interact with the teacher and other learners to explore and consolidate their understanding and skills;
- the identification and publication of learning outcomes which reflect this socio-cultural/constructivist model of learning, with progressive development;
- the adoption of student-centred learning and teaching approaches that actively encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning; and
- the appropriate and widespread use of ICT-based technologies to support student-centred learning.

Curriculum Design

The NCF **recommends** the grouping of the various subjects that comprise the primary and secondary curricula into eight learning areas as the entitlement for each student. To achieve this recommendation the NCF proposes:

- Learning Areas of Languages, Mathematics, Science, Technology Education, Health Education, Religious Education, Citizenship Education and Arts Education; and revision of subject content in all these areas;
- Cross-curricular themes – eLearning, Education for Sustainable Development, Intercultural Education, Education for Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation – to provide connecting, integrating strands across the learning areas;
- a competence-based rather than a mere knowledge-based curriculum, which allows

teachers to experiment with various learning/teaching strategies and provides learners with a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between social, cultural, political, economic and environment aspects;

- the development of a Teaching Objectives Framework to outline the syllabus to be delivered, as well as a related Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF) for every year in every learning area, indicating objectives, content, approaches to learning and teaching, and differentiated outcomes;
- the adoption of a ten-point scale for levels of achievement and the development of strand-related achievement level descriptors for the 5-16 years to indicate progression in student learning and support differentiation in lesson planning for all learners;
- the development of clear and unambiguous curriculum guidelines that allow colleges, schools and teachers some degree of flexibility and choice to suit the interests and capabilities of the whole range of learners within nationally accepted parameters;
- an assessment policy that values and assesses both the processes and the products of learning; and
- teacher training and professional learning opportunities in the use of pedagogies that promote the development of cognitive, psychomotor, social and affective skills and are consistent with the availability of opportunities within the EU.

The Early Years

The NCF **recommends** an Early Years curriculum that focuses on children's experiences and provides for positive dispositions towards learning to be developed and extended in later years. To achieve this recommendation the NCF proposes:

- Programmes of activities which move away from specific subject or content teaching in favour of pedagogies which enhance cross-curricular links and facilitate learning processes that respond to children's interests and prior knowledge.

The Primary Years

The NCF **recommends** the development of a primary school curriculum in which learning is an on-going, continuous process; builds upon the sound foundation laid during the early years; and links closely with the Secondary years to ensure smooth transitions between the cycles. To achieve this recommendation the NCF proposes:

- approaches to learning and teaching that respect individualised learning patterns, address all children's needs and successfully develop children's full potential as lifelong learners;
- the development of activities and experiences that support children to become confident learners with a positive self-image, high self-esteem and who are socially adept, critical, creative and innovative thinkers;

- the grouping of learners in mixed ability classes throughout the primary years;
- examinations in the upper primary years that feed into the teaching and learning process;
- primary school teachers who are responsible for Maltese, English, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Religion, Citizenship and Health Education (including Physical Education and Home Economics aspects);
- curricular support teachers for Science, Physical Education, Technology and IT, to assist class teachers to develop the curricular area and to offer assistance with content and resources, as may be required;
- subject specialist primary school teachers to replace class teachers for Art, Music, Drama, Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE), and the awareness programmes in foreign languages;
- support at college and national level for planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes that reflect the NCF's principles, aims and cross-curricular themes, and for implementation of specific policies through a whole school approach; and
- review and re-organisation of the current system of peripatetic teachers.

The Secondary Years

The NCF **recommends** a secondary education that consolidates and builds on the learning experiences of primary education and prepares learners for the wider challenges they will have to face beyond compulsory education. To achieve this recommendation the NCF proposes:

- the present system of two years in the junior Secondary Cycle followed by three years in the senior Secondary Cycle for the State sector, although other schools are free to consider alternatives;
- management structures and timetabling that maximize learning time, offer a measure of curricular flexibility, and ensure regular time for the school professional community to discuss and/or address school-related and professional development issues;
- the design of learning programmes that make connections within and across Learning Areas, and take account the local context and setting for learning;
- the development by schools of curricular programmes for students who are still experiencing difficulties in the core languages and mathematics;
- the possible inclusion of foreign languages other than Arabic, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish, should this be sustainable and educationally viable;

- Core Science for all students in Years 7 and 8¹. In Years 9, 10 and 11, students who do not wish to specialise in Science continue with Core Science leading to a SEC examination. Students who wish to specialise in Science can opt for two or three of the following: Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Materials Science.
- the re-introduction of Accounts and Economics as options at the end of Year 8;
- the introduction of four initial vocational subject areas - **Engineering, Hospitality, IT Practitioner** and **Health and Social Care** to the list of subjects that students may opt for, to cater for the interests and aptitudes of all students in compulsory education, piloted from September 2011 and rolled out nationally from 2013;
- a more flexible approach towards annual examinations in State schools, whereby in particular year groups, the examinations continue to be organized centrally, whereas in others they may be organized at a college level and externally monitored by the Curriculum and eLearning Department;
- alternative forms of assessment for students following individual learning programmes; and
- differentiated learning and teaching. Initially setting may be organized for the core subjects: Maltese, English and Mathematics. In the remaining subjects the grouping of students will need to be organized taking different factors such as subject options into account. Eventually the grouping of students will take on more differentiated scenarios as is the case in primary schools and in a number of secondary schools in the Non-State sector.

Language Policy

Considering the importance of proficient bilingualism as the general standard of achievement for young people in Malta, the NCF **recommends** the revamping of the language policy that promotes multilingualism in Maltese schools and gives clear direction on the language of instruction and assessment. To achieve this recommendation the NCF proposes:

- the review of the National Language Policy that includes clear direction on the language of instruction and assessment, which is updated from time to time as the linguistic needs of our nation evolve;
- adoption by all colleges and schools of a language strategy to implement a National Language Policy, with a strong family/community participation component, especially in the early and primary years;
- particular attention to effective language acquisition and secure grasp of age-appropriate reading comprehension and fluency in the mother tongue, together with exposure to the second language in the early years and the beginning of the Primary years;

¹ In line with the philosophy of a seamless curriculum, it is recommended that the primary and secondary cycles within compulsory education are referred to as Years 1 to 11.

- awareness of a foreign language consolidated or introduced towards the end of the Primary years;
- attention to bilingual oral and written language competence in both English and Maltese for all teachers, including through pre-service and continuous professional development;
- participation in a carefully structured language immersion programme for foreign learners who cannot communicate in English and/or Maltese, and in addition bilingual native speaker support during their initial integration into school life, where possible; and
- a focus on mastery of English in the language learning of young immigrants or refugees.

Diversity of students

The NCF **recommends** the drawing up of a policy of diversity and inclusion to regulate the implementation of processes and use of resources in this area. To achieve this recommendation the NCF proposes:

- a curriculum that allows for an education based on a continuum of achievement;
- a curriculum written in such a way that it allows teachers to appreciate how every student can access the same curriculum in every subject; and
- the development of ‘inclusive objectives’ that divide the main objectives into more manageable steps of progression for all learners.

Parental and Community involvement in education

The NCF **recommends** the development of a national policy by the Education Directorates with the assistance of other stakeholders to strengthen parents’ active involvement in their own and their children’s educational development and to formalize and promote different forms of community participation in education. The following recommendations are integral to the policy:

- that schools becomes a locus for lifelong learning within the community;
- that schools establish strong ties with the various members, groups and agencies within the community, as a two-way process which is of mutual benefit; and
- that colleges establish partnerships with the different sectors of the economy and explore different forms of engagement that can be of benefit to students and educators alike.

Assessment and Evaluation

Considering that Assessment is an essential component of the curriculum at all levels, the NCF **recommends** that schools make use of both assessment **for** learning (assessment for formative purposes) and assessment **of** learning (assessment for summative purposes), where possible integrating these two approaches. To achieve this recommendation the NCF proposes:

- the development of local **assessment policy** at the school and college level to outline their approaches to assessment and monitoring of learners' progress and achievement during the year, for formative and assessment purposes;
- clear focus in colleges and schools on building their capacity to be communities of reflexive practice, through the process of school development planning and self-evaluation; through mentoring; through the Performance Management and Professional Development Plan (PMPDP); and
- external reviews carried out by the Quality Assurance Department within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education.

Educational Leadership

The NCF **recommends** the adoption of a leadership model that promotes distributed forms of leadership. To achieve this recommendation the NCF proposes that:

- school leaders both play a visionary and strategic role, and focus on developing a collaborative culture which draws upon the full range of professional skills and expertise to be found among the members of the organization;
- Senior Management Teams be supported to dedicate effective, quality time to work together as they lead the schools, critically reflect upon issues concerning learning and teaching, and engage with teachers and other support staff in order to enhance the quality of education being provided; and
- the role of teachers as educational leaders and curriculum managers, according to their specific roles, be affirmed and highlighted.

Support Structures

The NCF recognises that a high quality education requires a supportive infrastructure that provides the conditions and opportunities for all learners to achieve their full potential and for teachers and administrators to implement the curriculum effectively. This infrastructure requires on-going student services, human resources, professional development, mentoring and support for teachers and strong educational leadership. The DQSE, in liaison with colleges, schools and the Faculty of Education has a key role in the further development and implementation of the NCF.

Development of Policy

The NCF envisages the development of policies that bear directly on the successful implementation of the recommendations. For this reason, it is important that following consultation and within the first eighteen months of the adoption of the NCF, the following working groups are set up:

- A group to draw up **an assessment policy** - The group should include both classroom practitioners and experts in educational assessment from the Directorates of Education, the non-state sector and the Faculty of Education. Its brief would be to look into all aspects of assessment including the practice of formative assessment, the development and use of achievement level descriptors, examinations, the end-of-primary benchmark, how to report the outcomes, how to develop the monitoring system, training needs and professional development. The group would be coordinated by the Educational Assessment Unit.
- A group to draw up **a policy on multilingualism in education** - The group should include relevant language teachers as well as experts in the teaching of languages, representatives of the *Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ilsien Malti*, and other language experts. Their brief would be to suggest ways of strengthening the teaching of Maltese and English at all levels of compulsory education, to decide on a language policy for learning, teaching and assessment in non-language subjects and other related issues.
- A group to **review and update the policy on diversity and inclusion** – The group should include classroom practitioners as well as experts in the field of diversity and inclusion in education from the Educational Directorates and the non-state sector, the Faculty of Education, the *Kunsill Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diċċabilità* and other experts from the relevant NGOs. The working group is to be coordinated by the staff of the Department of Student Services.
- A group to draw up a **policy of parental involvement in education** – The group should consist of parents' and college representatives as well as experts in the management of education. Their brief would be to look into the various ways by which parents could be involved in education, delineate the different roles of parents, practitioners and educational administrators, and related issues. The working group is to be coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family.

Curriculum Development

The NCF's recommendations regarding the organization of traditional subjects into learning areas, the innovative approaches to learning and teaching, the requirements of assessment and the redesign of management structures and timetable models all require a re-thinking of the curricula of all of the eight learning areas. It is therefore important to set up **expert groups for each learning area** as early as possible, whose tasks would be:

- a review of the subject content with the aim of tailoring the content to the actual available time and to the needs of all learners;

- the organization of modules, where necessary, to incorporate knowledge from various learning areas and the recommended cross-curricular themes;
- to ensure the smooth progression of knowledge, skills and competences throughout primary and secondary education;
- to refine the learning outcomes framework (LOF) at all primary and secondary levels; and
- to draw up effective descriptors of levels of achievement in collaboration with the expert group on assessment ².

Vocational Education

The introduction of initial vocational education programmes is an important innovation which requires careful attention, especially in the piloting stage and in the extension stage when schools with different educational contexts will be involved. It is therefore important to set up **a steering committee for VET**. The group should include classroom practitioners as well as educators from the Directorates of Education and other institutions including the non-state sector. The steering committee would be required to monitor and evaluate the piloting of VET and its eventual extension into all schools, and to take any necessary action to ensure successful implementation of this innovation.

Implementation of eLearning

The implementation of eLearning in all learning areas is essential for developing lifelong learners. It is therefore important for curriculum developers and practitioners to recognise the potential of this innovative learning technology and feel confident in using it. **A steering committee for eLearning** is needed to explain the technology, show how it can be applied, support curriculum developers, and monitor the use of technology in various educational contexts. This committee should include classroom practitioners, experts from the Ministry of Education, Employment & the Family and the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport & Communications, the non-state educational sector and the Faculty of Education.

Development of an Ethics Education programme

The development of an Ethics Education programme for students who opt not to follow the Catholic Religious Education programme recommended by the NCF requires special attention. Although the proposed programme falls within the Religious Education learning area, it is important that the development of this programme is entrusted to a separate working group from the one developing the Catholic Religious Education curriculum. Therefore an **ethics education working group** should be set up with practitioners, experts in this area and young people, whose task would be to develop an appropriate curriculum with clear aims and objectives, a suitable content knowledge base, pedagogical guidelines, a learning outcomes framework and an assessment procedure that fits the purpose of this curriculum.

² Refer to Appendix I

Consultation for the Implementation of the NCF

It is envisaged that the implementation of recommendations agreed upon after the public consultation process would require a period of time for proper dissemination. During this time, the implications of the various recommendations of the NCF need to be discussed with educational leaders, practitioners and other stakeholders, including young people themselves. At the same time, various expert groups need to start to develop the necessary policies and curricular resources, using feedback from consultation to inform their work. The following actions are required to start the process of successful implementation of the NCF.

Key ideas for managing change

The publication of the NCF is the start of a journey and not an end point. This journey will bring about many important changes to our educational system. Managing this change in a manner which brings about real, sustainable change which is actually implemented in our schools and colleges is thus of crucial importance. This document highlights and builds upon the key ideas identified by Learning and Teaching Scotland Advisory Council's evidence based review of change³. The consultation process leading to the implementation phase of the NCF needs to take heed of these ideas:

1. Successful, sustainable change starts from where people are

The NCF process should recognise and acknowledge the present realities of our schools, colleges and educational system, and build on this reality.

2. Real change happens when all individuals and communities are engaged with the change and are learning

The consultation and implementation process of the NCF should aim to involve as many stakeholders as possible, including young people themselves, to ensure that this process is in itself a learning experience for as many people as possible.

3. People change when they believe that what they are being asked to do has integrity

The NCF should have a strong core of moral integrity where it is clear that the changes being proposed are aimed at making a positive difference in the life chances of all students.

4. Effective professional learning takes place when teachers and others engage in collaborative enquiry

The consultation and implementation process should encourage the professional learning of teachers by supporting teaching staff members to learn for themselves, together with colleagues, in their own contexts and in an environment of reflective practice. Working with colleagues through dialogue and reflection to analyse and develop professional practice is the model which should be encouraged as the method for implementing the NCF in schools and colleges.

5. For change to be sustained it has to be supported by partnership and networking

In the implementation phase, networking and partnership can support schools in implementing the NCF. Attention to the structural aspect of implementation is also

3 LTScotland (2010) Change Matters: reference paper, Advisory Council, LTScotland, Glasgow. Available at http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/ChangeMattersReference_tcm4-631618.pdf

LTScotland (2010) Change Matters: From ideas to action, Advisory Council, LTScotland, Glasgow. Available at http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/ChangeMattersIdeasToAction_tcm4-631617.pdf

important. There is a need to identify the structures that schools and colleges need to support the implementation of the NCF.

6. *Leaders manage the process and create opportunities for reflection, dialogue, collaboration, feedback and distributed leadership to inform planning for improvement.*

The role of educational leaders in creating space for the implementation of NCF changes is crucial. A genuinely distributed leadership model which gives the opportunity to as many people as possible to lead the changes they would like to implement in their school or college may be an important tool for the effective implementation of the NCF.

7. *Both centralisation and decentralisation are important*

Both top-down and bottom-up changes are important. A strength of the NCF is that it attempts to strike the right balance between a centralised framework which nevertheless gives ample space for decentralised initiatives from schools and colleges. Achieving this balance will be a crucial aspect of the implementation of the NCF.

The consultation strategy

The process of consultation is crucial for the success of the NCF. The consultation strategy outlined below is proposed with the aim of enabling wide-ranging and authentic discussion and debate which enables all stakeholders to engage with the draft document in a positive way and participate actively in the formulation of the final version.

The consultation process is divided into three phases:

Phase 1: Reflection for action May 2011 to August 2011

This phase will serve to present the NCF and prepare the various stakeholders for the consultation process. The meetings with the stakeholders will serve to highlight:

- a) the main recommendations of the NCF;
- b) the implications arising for the various stakeholders as envisaged by the NCF; and
- c) the role of the stakeholders in the consultation process, in terms of both their personal contribution to the process and their role in bringing together the feedback and responses of the learning communities for which they are responsible.

In addition, this phase allows all participants sufficient time to read through the documents and consider in some detail their content and implications.

Phase 2: Reflection in action from September 2011 to November 2011

This phase will provide stakeholders opportunities to share and consolidate their ideas within and across different institutions. The aim of this phase is to invite and encourage stakeholders towards actively participating in generating a national, reflective professional discussion and debate about the NCF proposals, thus initiating a process of sharing critical and constructive feedback in preparation for the final version of the NCF.

Phase 3: Reflection on Action from November 2011 to December 2011

This phase will bring together all the stakeholders and the feedback offered by the various institutions. The highlights of this phase include:

- a) a two-day national conference; and
- b) the submission of written feedback.

Phase 4: Finalisation of the NCF in January 2012

Once the working group reviews the proposed NCF in light of the feedback received, the working group will submit a final NCF document to the Minister for the approval of Cabinet/Parliament.

Phase 1: Reflection for Action (Launch of document and initial consultation phase: May – August 2011)			
Timeline	Event	Purpose of event	Audience
May	National Seminar: Launch of NCF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the NCF • Launch of the consultation strategy • Timeframe for consultation phases • Information about the organization of feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate Officials • College Principals • State & Non-State school heads • Faculty of Education • Council of the Teaching Profession • Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) • Secretariat for Catholic Education • Heads of Further & Higher Education institutions • Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) • Social Affairs Committee, House of Representatives • National Commission for Higher Education • MATSEC Examinations Board • Commissioner for Children • Representatives of Students' Councils • Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabbilita' (KNPD) • Parents' Associations (AKS/APCCS) • Private & Independent School Associations • Secretariat for Catechesis • Foundation for Educational Services • Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools • Political parties education representatives • Press

Phase 1: Reflection for Action (Launch of document and initial consultation phase: May – August 2011)			
Timeline	Event	Purpose of event	Audience
May	Launch of NCF website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of NCF Forum which allows for clarifications Gathering of feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public
May/June	Media Campaign (Slots on Radio/TV /newspaper articles & advertisements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing the NCF to the public Highlighting issues for discussion Presenting consultation strategy Inviting feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Public
May	Seminar for parents, students and the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing the NCF to the participants. Invitation to give feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents Students General public
May	Meeting Assistant Directors of Education, Education Officers & Heads of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed discussion about the implications for and role of Education Officers and Heads of Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Directors of Education, Education Officers & Heads of Department
May	Seminar for College Principals, Heads of School (state & non-state)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of documents Informed discussion about the implications for and roles of Principals and Heads of School as envisaged by the NCF Discussing the role of Principals and Heads of School in the consultation process and the collation of feedback from their College through the Council of Heads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College Principals Heads of School (state & non-state) Foundation for Educational Services

Phase 1: Reflection for Action (Launch of document and initial consultation phase: May – August 2011)			
Timeline	Timeline	Timeline	Timeline
May	Dissemination of NCF documents to schools and Centres (such as Science Centre; Home Economics Centre; Language Resource Centres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of documents Information about the NCF with particular reference to the implications of the framework for these practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Heads Incos School Counsellors Heads of Department Teachers Learning Support Assistants Kindergarten Assistants
May	Dissemination of NCF documents to Student Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of documents Information about the NCF with particular reference to the implications of the framework for these practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College Counsellors College Career Advisors Principal Social Worker College Prefect of Discipline Social Workers Educational Psychologists Trainee Psychologists Trainee Counsellors Trainee Career Advisors Socio-Emotional Behaviour Development Specialists Inclusive Education Specialists Resource Workers Youth Workers Specific Learning Difficulties staff Foundation for Educational Services

Phase 1: Reflection for Action (Launch of document and initial consultation phase: May – August 2011)			
Timeline	Timeline	Timeline	Timeline
June	Consultation meeting with Malta Union of Teachers (MUT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and discussion on implications for teaching grades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MUT Council
June	Consultation meeting with staff at the Faculty of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and discussion with regard to implications on initial teacher education & continuous professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Education staff members
June	Consultation meeting with members of the MATSEC Examinations Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and discussion with regard to implications on MATSEC examinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MATSEC Examinations Board
June	Consultation meeting with National Commission for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and discussion with regard to implications for post secondary education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Commission for Higher Education and Heads of Higher and Further Education
June	Separate consultation meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partit Nazzjonalista • Partit Laburista • Alternattiva Demokratika • Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabbilita' • Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) and social partners • Social Affairs Committee, House of Representatives • Commissioner for Children
July – August	Reflection on documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reflection, informal discussions among stakeholders and initial formulation of feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stakeholders

Phase 2: Reflection in Action (National reflective process: September – November 2011)			
Timeline	Event	Purpose of event	Stakeholders involved
September	Consultation process within the Faculty of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal discussion and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Arts & Languages in Education Department of Education Studies Department of Math, Science & Technical Education Department of Primary Education Department of Psychology Department of Youth & Community Studies Faculty seminar in preparation for November conference
September	Consultation process within the MUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal discussion and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MUT Council
September	Consultation process within the Council for the Teaching Profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal discussion and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council for the Teaching Profession
September	Consultation with individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time will be set to meet individuals who would have expressed an interest to meet members of the NCF committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interested individuals and/or entities who would like a forum for a private discussion
September	Consultation process within Directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal discussion and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Leadership Council: Directors General, Directors and College Principals QAD: Director, Assistant Directors and Education Officers Curriculum & eLearning: Director, Assistant Directors and Education Officers Research & Development: Director, Assistant Directors and Education Officers

Phase 2: Reflection in Action (National reflective process: September – November 2011)			
Timeline	Event	Purpose of event	Stakeholders involved
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DQSE: staff meeting • Human Resources Management: Director, Assistant Directors, Service Managers and Education Officers • Student Services: Director, Service Managers and Education Officers • School Resources Management: Director, and Service Managers • DES: Staff meeting
October	Consultation process within Directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal discussion and reflection (cont.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Officers and Heads of Department • DES & DQSE Departments: all members of staff
October – November	Consultation process with colleges & non-state schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal discussion and reflection: • Council of Heads meeting • Staff meetings • Professional Development sessions • Subject Meetings in secondary schools • Curriculum time in primary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Heads • Senior Management Teams and Heads of Department at school • School staff (teaching grades & student support services)
October – November	Students' seminars in collaboration with Commissioner for Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion among students: Implications about changes being proposed in the NCF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student council representatives

Phase 3: Reflection on Action (Sharing of feedback: Dec 2011)			
Timeline	Event	Purpose of event	Audience
Dec	National Consultation Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a forum for all stakeholders to report on the feedback process within their institutions • Sharing of feedback with the purpose of informing the various stakeholders with a view to enabling all to reflect on the variety of perspectives • Providing insights which may influence the final feedback documents which stakeholders will want to present to the NCF committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate Officials • College Principals • State & Non-State school heads • Faculty of Education • Council of the Teaching Profession • Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) • Secretariat for Catholic Education • Heads of Further & Higher Education institutions • Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) • Social Affairs Committee, House of Representatives • National Commission for Higher Education • MATSEC Examinations Board • Commissioner for Children • Representatives of Students' Councils • Kummissjoni Nazjonalni Persuni b'Dizabbilita' (KNPD) • Parents' Associations (AKS/APCCS) • Private & Independent School Associations • Secretariat for Catechesis • Foundation for Educational Services • Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools • Political parties education representatives • Press

Phase 3: Reflection on Action (Sharing of feedback: Dec 2011)			
Timeline	Event	Purpose of event	Audience
December	Receiving feedback documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions to submit written feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stakeholders

Phase 4: Finalisation of NCF (January 2012)			
Timeline	Event	Purpose of event	Audience
January	Collation of feedback document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collation of feedback into one document for dissemination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCF working group
January	Review and finalisation of NCF document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of final document for the approval of Cabinet/Parliament 	

The proposed implementation timeline

Following the consultation phase and the approval of the final version of the NCF, the implementation process needs to be undertaken in manner which reflects the concerns and issues mentioned in this chapter. The timeline for the implementation of the NCF recommendations is therefore based on the following criteria:

- experience gained from the implementation process of the 1999 NMC, and the review process of the current national curriculum cycle;
- sensitivity to the current realities in connection with the educational reform and more specifically to the increased workloads;
- respect for the autonomy of Church and Independent schools, and the increasing autonomy of state schools through the college system; and
- the need for consolidation for the set of reforms presently in operation, primarily the transition nationally from primary to secondary and the transformation of secondary schools.

The proposed indicative timeline for this cycle is divided into four phases (See Table 4.1).

Task	Phase 1 1 year	Phase 2 2 – 3 years	Phase 3 2 – 3 years
Dissemination with all stakeholders			
Strengthening of support structures			
Setting up of policy groups (Assessment; Multilingualism; Diversity and Inclusion; Parental Involvement)			
Setting up of expert groups for each learning area.			
Setting up steering committees (VET; eLearning)			
Setting up of expert group to develop the Ethics Education programme			
Development of Teaching Objectives Framework and Learning Outcomes Framework for Form 1 (Case Study)			
Development of Teaching Objectives Framework and Learning Outcomes Framework			
Piloting and reviewing Teaching Objectives Framework and Learning Outcomes Frameworks developed			
Development of strand-related achievement level descriptors			
Piloting and reviewing of strand-related achievement level descriptors			
Preparation for college/school-based assessment			
Implementing college/school-based assessment			
Implementing Secondary School Certificate& Profile (SSCP)			

Task	Phase 1 1 year	Phase 2 2 – 3 years	Phase 3 2 – 3 years
Piloting and reviewing of alternative timetable models for the primary and secondary years			
Reviewing and reorganisation of the Peripatetic Service			
Piloting and reviewing VET component in the secondary years			
Expansion of VET component to all secondary schools			
Expansion of psycho-social services for teachers			
Piloting and reviewing of teacher mentoring system in State colleges			
Implementing the mainstreaming and enhancement of State college partnerships with world of work			
Reviewing State college partnerships with world of work			
Providing ongoing support for the strengthening and transformation of educational leadership			
Ongoing training, upskilling and professional development			
Developing and implementing Ethics Education Programme			
Developing and implementing Assessment Policy			
Developing and implementing National Inclusion Policy			
Developing and implementing National Language Policy			
Developing and implementing National Parental Involvement Policy			

Conclusion

The NCF calls for a paradigm shift in the way learning, teaching and the curriculum are perceived. This document does not present a magic formula which brings about this paradigm shift but acknowledges that we need to engage together to challenge the status quo, to challenge entrenched views and positions and to create meaning with different stakeholders. The success of this process depends on the commitment of all the stakeholders over the years to come during the consultation and implementation phases.

Appendix I:

Proposed strategy for the development and implementation of a pedagogical framework for the Maltese curriculum

Aim

To develop and implement for Form One (Year 7) a strategy to create a new pedagogical framework that supports the impending reform and that will allow teachers to build on their current professional practice and raise the level of achievement of ALL pupils.

Objectives

1. To implement an effective curriculum management strategy in schools.
2. To identify the distinction between teaching objectives and student learning outcomes and how they interrelate.
3. To identify strands of learning that identify continuums of achievement that will foster new approaches to assessment
4. To develop an approach to student centred learning in all classrooms that meets the diverse needs of all students

Introduction

The new system will require the curriculum to be written in such a way as to encourage responses to diversity, student centred learning, curriculum management and structures that will foster ipsative assessment (self assessment). The new framework needs to be more cohesive both in transition from Primary to Secondary Education and across the subjects. This proposal offers one way forward within a developmental framework that will allow the Education Officers, HODs and teachers to be in collaborative control of their professional development. The formative evaluation to be carried out and the lessons learned from the implementation will act as a case study for the development of the curriculum for all years of schooling from Year One in Primary to Year 11 in Secondary. It is written up as a case study to provide a forum for discussion on the way forward.

Phase 1: Identifying the basic conceptual paradigm issues

Key Issue One - Securing agreement of the pedagogical framework

This began with a seminar/workshop in June of 2010. It was essential that there was a common agreement about how to proceed and the timing of the subsequent key issues of development. Each subject would be expected to follow parallel pedagogical structures.

Key Issue Two - Identifying achievement strands of learning for each subject

This required the identification of continuous strands of achievement in student learning from Primary to Secondary Education. These strands are both subject focused and process (teaching and learning) focused. This requirement has been very challenging to all of the participants because of the paradigm shifts involved.

Key Issue Three - Writing a Teaching Objectives Framework for each subject

This has been a challenging task for it requires the writers to develop a set of Teaching Objectives Framework for each year for their subject that indicate clear annual progression. This work will also indicate the amount of content that can be taught for each subject within the time that is available for teaching. Basically this covers all of the content to be taught within the syllabus for each subject. A balance needed to be maintained between progression in subject content as measured against progression in student achievement. This Teaching Objectives Framework will need to be evaluated and modified in the light of initial implementation experience and feedback from practitioners.

Key Issue Four - Writing achievement level descriptors

The achievement level descriptors are strand-related and indicative of a small volume of the student learning outcomes framework. They will relate to all students. It is recommended that a scale of level one to ten is adopted, with Level Four being the expected level reached at the end of Year Two in Primary Education and Level Nine at the end of Secondary school by the majority of students. This will allow students who are working below the norm of progression as well as those above to be measured on the same continuous scale in any one year group. Given that the Level Descriptors are a national data base of achievement for all students then it is an essential requirement that all students be registered on one national scale.

Phase 2: Developing the curriculum for Form One (Year 7)

In order to meet the needs of September of 2011, when there will be structural changes to the organisation of schools, the implementation of the new curriculum will commence with Form One (Year 7) students only. The first cycle identifies a clear structure for the whole curriculum and within this structure the Form One subject units can be written. This will provide a useful case study to evaluate the process being developed and concretise the roadmap for curriculum development for all of the year groups.

Key Issue One - Writing a unitised scheme of work with mainstream objectives

This key issue will relate directly to the Teaching Outcomes Framework and each unit for each year will have an identified length of circa 7 hours. Each unit will have a clear content strand related title and clear achievable teaching objectives that can be delivered with the time frame of 7 hours which is roughly equivalent to a term of work on a one lesson a week basis. There will be no other content at this point in time. Each unit will contain the following:

- An interesting unit title
- A set of unit related objectives
- Subject based approaches to teaching and learning
- Examples of teaching activities
- Differentiated learning outcomes

Key Issue Two - Writing a unitised scheme of work that is inclusive for all

The units need to be written including a set of 'inclusive objectives' for Levels 1-3 that allow for diversity of teacher response for all students. This will ensure that the national curriculum can be applicable for all students who will be in Form 1 (Year 7) in September 2011.

Key Issue Three- Trialling and evaluation of samples of the schemes of work

Before the new units can be finalised for implementation, they will be trialled in schools. There is not the time to trial all of the written documentation so sampling techniques will be used. The three main areas where teachers will be asked for critical comment will be the Teaching Outcomes Framework, The Level Descriptors and the Units. Teachers will be given practical activities to substantiate their comments.

Key Issue Four - Implementing assessment procedures

The use of achievement levels will allow schools and teachers to see how each student is progressing against their own level of achievement, year on year. The development of teachers' ability to assess with validity and reliability in this way will require effective moderation procedures to be in place in every school. It will also allow standards of achievement to be set and for value added progression of each child to be objectively evaluated. This may require the establishment of an objective summative assessment to be carried out especially for the core subjects.

Key Issue Five - Quality assurance procedures relating to the new pedagogy

Because curriculum management is at the heart of this new framework the Quality Assurance procedures should in part review how their processes link into the new paradigms. These processes can occur at a national, a school, a subject, and a classroom level. Discussion on how best to achieve this will be a part of the implementation debate. There will be discussions of how the new curriculum relates to the EO responsibilities, the Auditing team and the Student Services for INCOs and LSAs

Key Issue Six - Teacher professional development

From May of 2011, there will be a programme of school-based staff development activities that will introduce the new ideas. In July 2011 there will be a professional development workshop for all Form One (Year 7) teachers during the INSET training period.

Key Issue Seven - Providing ongoing support

During the school year 2011 to 2012 there will be ongoing professional development workshops for all participants including College Principals, Heads of School, Education Officials and class teachers. There will also be reviews of the nature of involvement of the Quality Assurance Department and the Student Services provision.

The experiences and understandings developed from the key issues with Form One will then provide a backdrop on how to move forward with more confidence. In order to do this within an acceptable time frame, substantial financial arrangements will need to be made to remunerate the unit writers. It is important that the whole curriculum is ready for implementation within a reasonable timeframe (possibly one scholastic year). This will allow the momentum of the reforms to be harnessed by the teachers within a reasonable period of time.

Phase 3: Evaluating the Case Study

A formative evaluation of the Teaching Objectives Framework and the Learning Outcomes Framework for Year 7 will take place to inform the way forward.