

**SKILLS TO DEVELOP A
COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM
(PRIMARY EDUCATION)**

**MAURITIUS
13-24 February 2006**

WORKSHOP REPORT (B)

**(Detailed Report documenting the
participants' contribution)**

by

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Working methodology

90 Participants:

Curriculum developers (primary education – members of different subject panels)

Teachers

Head-teachers

Inspectors (including for secondary cycle)

Objectives:

Help curriculum developers acquire hands-on experiences in competencies-based curriculum development

Help curriculum developers develop skills to integrate transversal competencies into the Primary curriculum

Develop awareness of curriculum evaluation

Basic working principles:

- The sessions were all interactive in both plenary presentations and group work
- Concrete examples from other countries have been considered
- In order to enhance coordination between different subject groups and consistency of approaches throughout the curriculum, the curriculum developers for different subjects worked together forming mixed subject groups
- The work was carried out hands-on as much as possible, with a view to develop with the trainees draft models of subject curricula reflecting a competencies-based approach
- A comprehensive Handbook will be developed as follow-up of the workshop, combining theoretical aspects, conceptual clarifications, examples from other countries of competencies-based curricula and hands-on activities/exercises reflecting participants' views and contributions.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Day 1 – Monday, 13 February 2006

The discussions covered following topics:

- Official introduction to the workshop and inaugural speeches of his Excellency, Mr. Gokhool, the Minister of Education and Human Resources of Mauritius, of Mr. Santosh Kumar Mahadeo, Curriculum Directorate, and of Mrs. Dakmara Georgescu, IBE-UNESCO programme coordinator and resource person for the workshop;
- The issue of quality education and the role curriculum plays in the process of overall quality assurance (see the presentation in **Annex 1: *Quality Assurance and Curriculum Development***);
- Trends in modern curriculum development and possibilities to balance ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ approaches meaningfully;
- Curriculum evaluation and its role in promoting quality education in primary and secondary education.

Based on *group work*, the participants have contributed with their views and opinions, as follows:

Activity 1: Participants’ expectations for this workshop

- **To reach an agreement on the concept of ‘competencies’**
- **To understand the connections between ‘learning content’ and competencies**
- **To explore how to develop a competencies-based curriculum in primary education as a means to reduce curriculum overload and address students’ needs better**
- **To analyze links between the local Mauritian context and the development of competencies through the curriculum; to define competencies in correlation with real-life situations**

- **To learn about possibilities to evaluate the present curriculum in order to identify needs for change pertinently; to explore ways of evaluating the new curriculum all along the actual process of its design and implementation**
- **To learn how to transfer learning aims and objectives into meaningful activities that can foster competencies in children**
- **To learn how to write curriculum documents as to reflect a competencies-based approach**
- **To explore good experiences of transferring education vision into daily school- and classroom practices**
- **To define the knowledge, skills and attitudes that teachers would need to develop in order to apply a competencies-based approach**
- **To discuss possibilities of integrating competencies-based approaches into the pre-vocational system in Mauritius**
- **To delve into implications of competencies-based approaches for assessing learning outcomes meaningfully**
- **To look into consequences of competencies-based approaches for the development and improvement of learning resources, including textbooks and for teacher training**
- **To explore possibilities for sustainable curriculum change and improvement: what kind of changes are possible in Mauritius: to improve the existing curriculum (as far as it can be improved) or to provide a deeper change of the curriculum model for primary education (actually to promote a *new* curriculum model, which is the competencies-based one)?**

Activity 2: Definitions of education quality

- Quality education means transformative education: it is the one developing in people knowledge, skills and attitudes and supporting them in their personal development
- Quality education is linked with adding educational value, such as the capacity to think critically, to master good communication skills, to develop a good character, to be able to be flexible and adaptable, to be able to solve problems, to be tolerant and respect and cherish diversity
- Quality education takes into account the overall/holistic development of a person: mental, social, emotional, spiritual and physical aspects and dimensions

- The issue of quality should be associated with both education processes and products/outcomes; education inputs should be also considered
- Quality education also means a child-friendly education and learning environment, based on a lower teacher-student ratio and good working facilities
- It also means to promote moral and civic values in order to develop responsible, happy and carrying citizens
- Quality education is also related to the world of work: whether education and learning outcomes meet the needs of the economy and meet future challenges and opportunities in the context of rapidly-changing environments
- Quality education leads to professional and social accountability

Questions:

- What does this mean ‘international quality standards in education’?
- Who sets these standards?

Activity 3: Context and quality

What are the main quality challenges to Mauritius?

- Lack of continuity between primary and secondary education
- The issue of the language of instruction (English and French) in a context where students have a different mother tongue, such as Créole
- Too much focus on examinations and students’ streaming at an early stage
- Lack of remedial work for students experiencing learning difficulties
- There is a need to use learning resources more meaningfully
- Early childhood education should prepare better children for primary schooling
- Teaching methods are focused rather on transmission of information and encourage rote learning
- There is a need to reinforce nation-building through education
- Students have no chance to experience interactive pedagogies
- The assessment of students’ achievements needs to be improved as to take more into consideration the results of current, classroom-based assessment procedures and to emphasize the formative and progressive aspects of assessment in primary education.

Activity 4: What is considered traditional and what is considered modern in the context of the Mauritian education system?

Sometimes ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ aspects coexist quite well, but in most cases the participants feel that they may be sources of contradictions and confusions.

More traditional aspects	Modern aspects
Focus on narrative aspects of learning and declarative knowledge	There are some possibilities now to adapt more flexibly to students’ needs
The learning content is reduced to a lot of pre-fabricated knowledge	Some activities are encouraging the exploration of reality/the environment
Focus on lower-level intellectual skills	Group work is sometimes performed, but not on a regular basis
No emphasis on communication skills	The present curriculum offers more possibilities to address different learning styles
Focus on teacher-centred approaches and textbooks	Textbooks tend to be used rather as references
Rigid curriculum provisions	Practical activities are encouraged
Too much emphasis on textbook and deficient usage of textbooks	The curriculum is promoting a wider range of teaching strategies and teachers’ guides have been developed for different subjects
The education system is strongly examination-oriented and summative evaluation dominates	Integrated learning is encouraged, as is the articulation between concepts, implications for action and application
Students take private lessons and a private tutoring system is flourishing in Mauritius	The pre-vocational curriculum puts more emphasis on stimulating learning and overcoming learning difficulties
Creativity is not sufficiently encouraged	There is more emphasis on participatory approaches, such as group work and project work
There is no confidence in interactive methods	Alternative assessment means are being increasingly used, such as portfolios and progressive evaluation highlighting the student strengths and weaknesses

Day 2 – Tuesday, 14.02.06

The discussions covered following topics:

- Criteria for curriculum evaluation
- What changed so far in the Mauritian primary education curriculum?
- The issue of learning outcomes as students' competencies: recent debates and implications for quality curriculum development (see presentation in **Annex 1: *The issue of competencies***)
- Linking competencies with real life situations

Based on **group work**, the participants have contributed with their views and opinions, as follows:

Activity 1: Criteria for developing a quality curriculum

- *Curriculum integration*: the new curriculum should foster integrated and holistic learning
- *Sustainability*: the curriculum should be able to impact positively on students' learning in a sustainable way
- *Connections with life*: the curriculum should be relevant to students' life experiences and to future prospects
- *Participation of stakeholders*: parents and other stakeholders should be cooperating with schools in order to enhance the quality of learning outcomes and reinforce the school-community links
- *Learner-friendliness*: the curriculum should take into consideration students' needs
- *Competencies-based approach*: the new curriculum should permit the integral development of students' potential and to enhance their motivation to learn
- *Progressive assessment*: the curriculum should promote progressive and formative assessment through the means of both internal and external evaluation
- *Quality documents*: curriculum documents should incorporate and reflect a coherent relationships between education vision, education policies and implementation strategies

Questions:

- How to assess students' needs?
- How to assess competencies?

Activity 2: What changed so far in the Mauritian primary education curriculum?

- Teacher's guides were produced for different subjects and grades

- A pre-vocational system was introduced for students who failed twice the CPE (end of Standards 6)
- There is more emphasis in the curriculum on thematic approaches as a means to foster integrated learning and on the overall development of competencies in students
- Teaching strategies allow for more interaction in the classroom
- More emphasis is put on poverty alleviation and on catering for students from deprived areas (ZEP: Zones d'éducation prioritaire)
- But there is no ground for sustainable implementation of positive initiatives (teacher training and learning materials need to be improved)
- For some reasons, the progressive ideas in the new curriculum are not reaching the classroom level

Activity 3: Linking competencies with life situations: what competencies would students need in order to face challenges and opportunities successfully?

(Groups display post-its mentioning the different life situations students may face and the competencies they would need in order to cope with them successfully)

Life situations	Students' needs (some examples)
<u>Generic life situations</u> The challenge of learning	Reading, writing and speaking Capacity to ask for the right information To be an independent learner Think independently
The challenge of communication	To listen carefully To use appropriate means of communication in compliance with a certain context/situation/public Respect the opinion of the others To express him/herself clearly
Participation in social life	Interpersonal skills Capacity to work in teams Sharing responsibilities Manifesting solidarity Manifesting a sense of patriotism and belonging
Healthy life style	To be aware of healthy eating habits To practice physical exercise regularly To maintain a healthy and clean school and home environment To use sanitation facilities properly To balance rest and activity meaningfully
<u>Concrete life situations:</u> A child gets lost	To know/be aware of who could help To ask for help To address the right people/authorities

	To ask for direction To use a phone and call somebody who can help
Minor incident at home	To know how to use the phone directory To use a phone
Conflicts in the school yard/at school	To have the capacity to engage in constructive problem solving To cooperate with others in solving the problem
One parent is ill and students have to cater for themselves	To manage resources To help others To solve problems creatively To manifest initiative To take decisions
A child falls ill at school	To be aware of his/her health situations To answer to questions To express him/herself in front of others To be cooperative and share
A fire destroyed the home of a fellow-colleague	To identify the need for action To prove solidarity To take initiatives To organize a solidarity campaign
A child gets injured at school	To care To observe To assess the situation To poses first-aid knowledge and skills To ask for help To be able to link actions and consequences meaningfully
A child has to baby-sit his/her brothers/sisters	To be patient To be loving To know how to change dippers To know how to coordinate movements with babies To assess a situation To take decisions To take the right action To assess consequences

Day 3 – Wednesday, 15.02.06

The discussions covered following topics:

- A comparative analysis of how the competencies approach impacts on curriculum development internationally (see **Annex 1**: presentation on *Competencies-based curriculum development*)

- Selecting and organizing general (basic, key competencies) and specific competencies/subject-bounded competencies for primary education
- Hands-on activities related to the usage of competencies in problem-solving situations

Based on group work, the participants have contributed with their views and opinions, as follows:

Activity 1: Summary of the previous day by the participants

Activity 2: Abstract general competencies from a list of sub-competencies (based on the Irish Science Education curriculum (Junior certificate))

Participants were handed out copies of the Irish Science Curriculum (Junior Certificate). They were asked to read through first, and then work in groups and classify sub-competencies under more general competencies that can be abstracted from the list of abilities and capacities the respective curriculum defines for science education.

Some examples:

General competencies	Sub-competencies
To master scientific methods of work/ To practice scientific methods of work	To be able to observe To manifest inquisitiveness To set experiments To conduct a scientific experiment To recall the appropriate information To make inferences To confirm/validate inferences To draw conclusions To present results of scientific work
To communicate using scientific codes	To use symbols pertaining to scientific work To translate natural language into symbolic language and vice versa To make/write statements of scientific nature (like observation protocols; demonstrations; using diagrams and formulas in combination with natural language) To present well-founded arguments To defend opinions civilly To process information of scientific nature meaningfully To use scientific dictionaries/thesaurus

Activity 3: Provide a comparison between the letter and spirit of Mauritian curriculum documents and curriculum documents (syllabuses) from Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, etc.

The curriculum of Mauritius is pretty dense, challenging and solid, yet curriculum specialists and stakeholders think that it ought to be improved and adapted to the new circumstances of today's life.

The participants in the workshop were asked to read several curriculum documents from other countries and compare them with the letter and spirit of Mauritian curriculum documents by trying to identify what is similar and what seems to be different.

<u>What is similar</u>	<u>What is different</u>
Learning objectives are comprehensively addressed	For some reasons, class-room approaches fail
Problem-solving approach	Too much pressure on content and memorization
Different ways to tackle information	
Students are involved in planning their activities	Rather prescriptive, knowledge-based approach
Hands-on experiences	Attempts to be more flexible are under several constraints (time, facilities, examinations)
Relations theory-practice	
Balanced curriculum	Too much emphasis on languages
Cooperative approach	Emphasis on competition/Assessment schemes may hinder learning
Emphasis on critical thinking and other higher-level skills	Emphasis on lower-level intellectual skills

Day 4 – Thursday, 16 February 2006

The discussions covered following topics:

- Transversal competencies: what do we understand by transversal competencies; identifying transversal competencies that fit learning needs of students in primary education;
- Cross-curricular issues and dimensions: how can different learning areas/subjects cater for some common learning objectives and synergetic outcomes;
- Links between cross-curricular approaches and transversal competencies: how can cross curricular approaches foster the

acquisition and development of transversal competencies; (see **Annex 1: Presentation *Cross-curricular issues and approaches***)

- Fostering transversal competencies through civic education and language arts courses (see **Annex 1: input presentation for activity ‘I’ and ‘We’**)

Based on **group work**, the participants have contributed with their views and opinions, as follows:

Activity 1: Defining competencies in relationship with daily-life situations and problem-solving

The participants worked in groups and imagined different daily life situations that require problem solving skills and strategies, as follows:

Some examples (the participants detailed some of the elements that could be part of a lesson plan):

Problems defined by groups	Strategy & competencies	Comments by participants
Fighting against obesity in schools	<p><i>Aims and objectives:</i></p> <p>Developing healthy life styles</p> <p>Questioning students about eating habits</p> <p>Define biomass index and calculate it with students</p> <p>Defining a balanced diet</p> <p>Imagine healthy daily menus</p> <p>Poster/Essay competition</p> <p>Draw conclusions</p> <p><i>Competencies involved:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyzing eating habits - relating causes and effects - reading a bathroom scale - collecting media news on health issues - calculating indexes 	<p>The activity could be detrimental to obese students who could be prejudiced by their fellow colleagues.</p> <p>The hypothesis linking causes and effects in the case of obesity are one sided for obesity is influenced by many factor, not just overeating.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recording data in tables - working in groups - fighting against prejudices 	
Fighting against smoking	<p><i>Goal:</i> Sensitize people on the effects of smoking</p> <p><i>Learning outcomes:</i></p> <p>Awareness of healthy life style Environment awareness Campaigning skills Creativity Capacity to work in groups</p> <p><i>Activities and competencies involved:</i></p> <p>Posters display followed by campaigning in the community Students are encouraged to identify different arguments against smoking that can be used in campaigning (such as costs, medical risks and costs, polluted environment)</p> <p><i>Student role:</i></p> <p>Research for providing the posters Debating: advantages and disadvantages of smoking Identifying the good arguments and the appropriate means of expression that could help persuade people that smoking is dangerous Development of posters through group activity Defining a campaign strategy Participating in walking campaign</p> <p><i>Evaluation:</i></p> <p>Setting indicators that could</p>	<p>Students should be encouraged to express their views and engage in a civil dialogue.</p> <p>Problems should be tackled from different perspectives, as to allow for a complex and nuanced approach.</p>

	<p>show if the campaign was successful</p> <p>Questioning people in the community on whether the campaign was efficient</p> <p>Student self evaluation</p>	
Campaigning against Chikungunya	<p><i>Aims and objectives:</i></p> <p>Develop capacity to engage in campaign for matters of public interest Cooperate with fellow students, students in upper secondary education and community representatives Organize and carry out a meaningful campaign Cooperate with local authorities</p> <p><i>Activities and competencies involved:</i></p> <p>Meeting to organize work Definition of strategy Distribution of responsibilities in the context of the campaign week the school is organizing (such as to pump out stagnant water; to write to local authorities and the media, to ask colleagues from secondary education for help; to inform students in pre-primary education, etc.) Setting timelines Report about the week Evaluate outcomes (define indicators that would show links between a clean environment and a reduced risk to be infected)</p>	The activity should focus on the importance of preventive action ('it is easier to prevent than cure')
Upgrading the school yard	<p><i>Aims and objectives:</i></p> <p>To develop positive attitudes towards community and school</p>	This is an example of a long-term project in response to the need to solve a concrete problem (the state of

	<p>To develop and strengthen a sense of belonging</p> <p>To develop communication and team work skills</p> <p>To develop decision making skills</p> <p>To develop motor skills, such as coordination and usage of tools</p> <p><i>Activities and competencies involved:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observation/Diagnosis of the school yard based on evaluation criteria 2. Students express their views, share solutions and take a decision to act 3. Students inform the headmaster, their parents and the community about the project to upgrade the school yard 4. Students ask for help and support and develop a fund-raising strategy (they work collaboratively in structured situations with peer members) 5. With the help obtained students upgrade the school yard (which implies cleaning; planting; buying more dustbins, painting) – this develops skills to manage resources, use technology/equipment as directed; work in teams based on task distribution and cooperation 6. Based on the campaign outcomes students engage in a 	the school yard)
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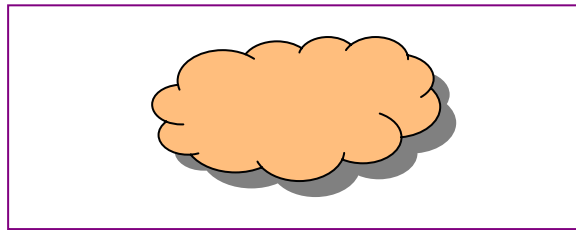
	<p>dissemination campaign to sensitize other schools and the broader community</p> <p>7. Self-evaluation and evaluation (focus-groups, questionnaires; media impact, etc.)</p>	
Pre-vocational class where the students lack socialization skills	<p><i>Aims and objectives:</i></p> <p>Development of self-esteem and trust Development of communication and self-expression skills Development of team spirit and team work skills</p> <p><i>Activities and competencies involved:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation of a social gathering/class party 2. Social gathering is actually taking place 3. Evaluation and self-evaluation (strengths and weaknesses; gains; expectations that were fulfilled and that were not met) <p><i>Procedure:</i></p> <p>Step 1: Introduction of the activity Step 2: Brainstorming on the organization of the activity Step 3: Identifying the various tasks Step 4: Distribution of roles and responsibilities Step 5: Discussion on the contribution of each student in terms of materials Step 6: Setting the time frame Step 7: Working in groups Step 8: Evaluation of the</p>	This is a good example of cross-curriculum approaches in the form of a collective project.

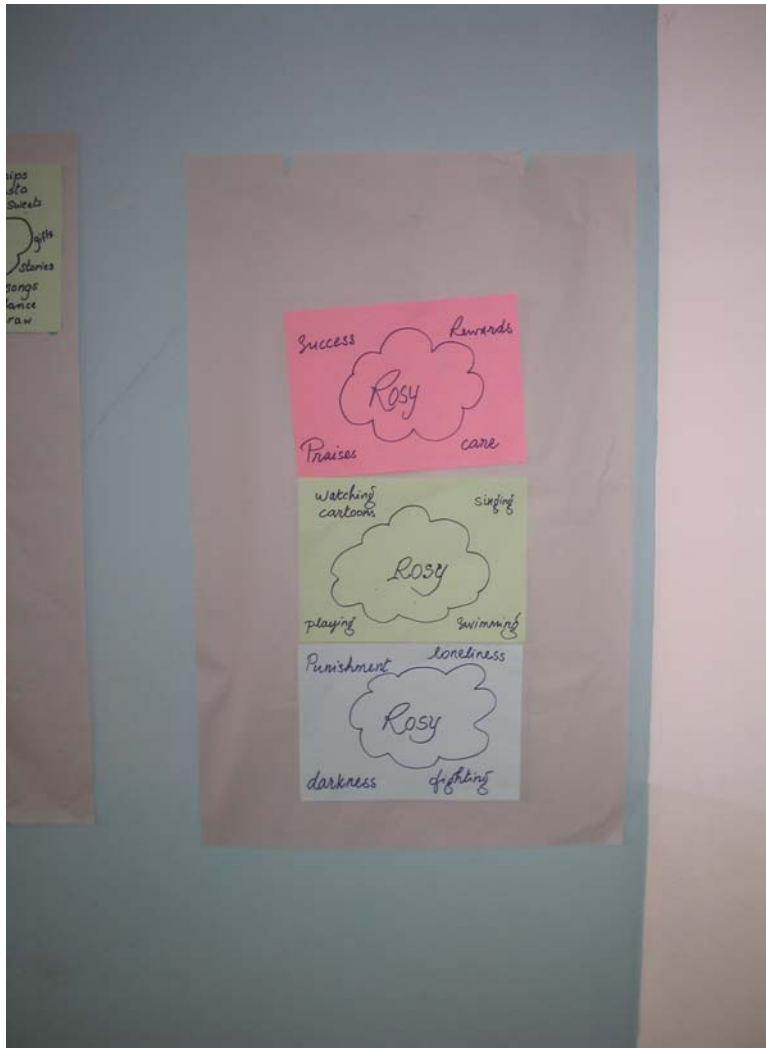
	<p>activity</p> <p><i>Competencies involved.</i></p> <p><u>Self development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposition to respect the opinions of others • Capacity to take decisions • Disposition to collaborate with each other, accept peer coaching and live in harmony with others • Learn to take responsibilities <p><u>Specific competencies (mobilizing knowledge and skills from different other learning areas), such as:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skills of setting a table (home economics) • The preparation of a recipe (language development and home economics) • The skills to enhance the class-room environment (home economics and aesthetic education) • Preparation and serving of a fruit salad (environment education and home economics) • Do costing exercise (functional Mathematics) 	
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Activity 2: 'I' and 'We'

Participants divide into small groups. In each group they will share about either (a) what they like and what they do not like/likes and dislikes; or (b) hopes and fears. After sharing of individual views, the participants try to build a group identity. They decide what from what were said so far could be expressed as the group's views. Each group will give itself a name and use different means of expression to reflect the group's likes & dislikes and/or hopes & fears.

The participants were instructed to use a large sheet of paper, write the name in the cloud in the middle of the sheet and write/draw around the cloud.





Competencies involved:

Self-analysis and sharing

Trust

Comparison skills (to identify commonalities and differences)

Capacity to work in groups

Capacity to share, negotiate, compromise and take decisions as a group

Imagination

Self-expression using different means (writing; drawing; creativity)

Communication skills (including presentation skills)

Development of a sense of belonging to a group

Capacity to assess relationships between individual identity and group identity

Activity 3: Prejudices and stereotypes

The participants are confronted with a reference-story that encompasses a series of prejudices and stereotypes.¹ They are invited to identify such prejudices and stereotypes the story encompasses and discuss in which way they could be harmful to human relationships.

In small groups they will then have to discuss and find one local story/proverb/anecdote that also encompasses prejudices and stereotypes. They will have to interpret the story and discuss with the larger group the stereotypes and prejudices involved. In addition, the groups will have to imagine strategies to discuss about stereotypes and prejudices and their impact on social and individual life with students of primary education. For instance, such strategies could be based on (logical) questioning:

- Are all beautiful people nice and honest?
- Ugly people are always bad?
- Is it always dangerous to help the others?
- Making good gets always rewarded?

Etc. (see Introductory presentation to the activity in Annex).

Some examples identified by participants:

- Stealing is happening in a classroom and the one who is always blamed for everything gets accused, although that day he is not attending school at all;
- The story about old Zoha and the crocodile: Zoha saves the crocodile from being stocked between rocks, but the crocodile wants to devour him. The crocodile asks different elements of the environment if he should eat Zoha, and they all think Zoha should be eaten, since he is washing his clothes in the river, he cuts trees for fire, he takes the milk away from the cow, etc. Only the bunny says that he cannot answer yes or no to the crocodile's question before knowing what really happened. Then, when the crocodile reentered the water and got stocked between the rocks, the bunny asked Zoha to add even more rocks, so that the crocodile cannot move anymore. This way he saved Zoha's life.
- Situations where children are teased/given names.

Competencies involved:

- Capacity to identify stereotypes and prejudices that are present in a certain context
- Capacity to gauge possible negative and positive implications of stereotypes and prejudices upon individual and social existence
- Development of nuanced and critical thinking as a means to fight against negative effects of stereotypes and prejudices
- Development of capacities to take action against discriminations based on prejudices and stereotypes

¹ The Eastern-European story of the two step sisters, where the father's daughter is beautiful, honest, trustworthy and diligent while the old woman's daughter is bad, envious, lazy and dishonest.

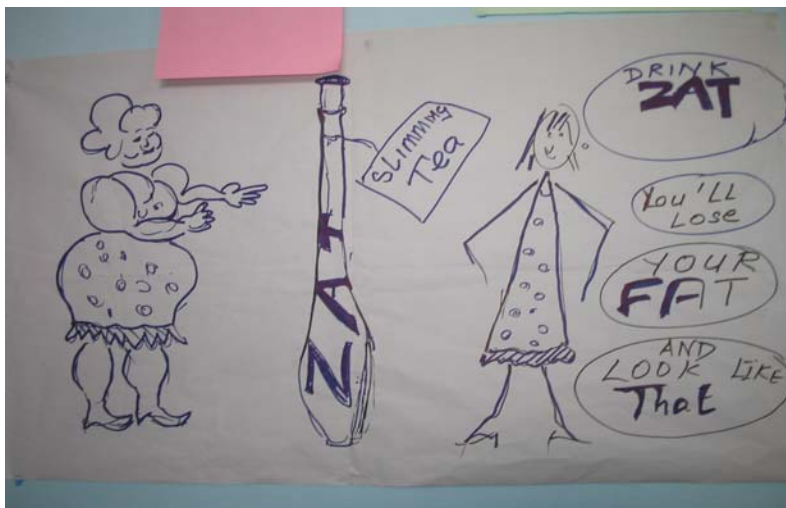
Activity 4: Advertising

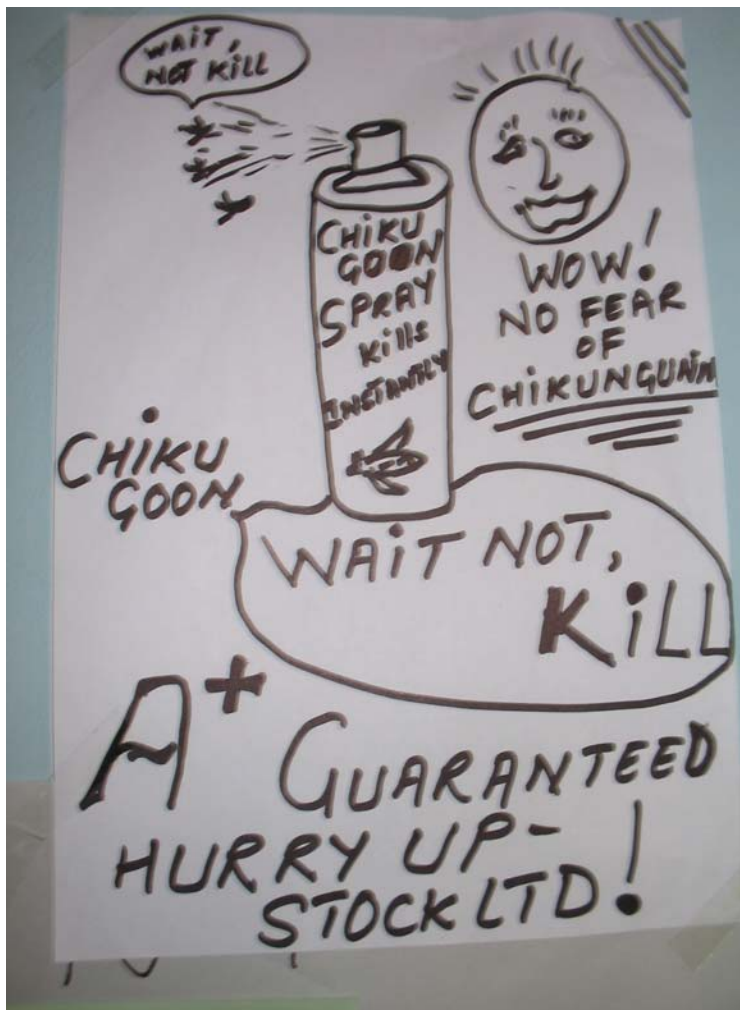
The Media is invading people's lives and advertisements are powerful means of influencing/manipulating one's decisions.

It is thus important to understand how the Media works especially in what regards advertisements. The participants build small groups and imagine an advertisement campaign in favor of a certain product/idea, etc.

The groups expose their advertisement and the campaigning strategy involved. The larger group is assessing the different presentations and the best advertisement is rewarded with applause.

Examples of advertisements created by the participants:





Competencies involved:

- Capacity to analyze how advertisements function (for a product; for a processes, such as curriculum development; for a resources book; for food, for a certain school, etc.);
- Imagination;
- Capacity to work in groups and use group creativity productively;
- Communication skills (e.g. persuasion; presentation skills)
- Aesthetic skills;
- Humor;
- Analysis and synthesis;
- Evaluation skills (comparison; evaluation against criteria)

Day 5: Friday, 17 February 2006

The discussions covered following topics:

- The issue of curriculum integration: how curriculum integration can support integrated learning and the acquisition and development of transversal competencies in primary education (see **Annex 1**: presentation on *Curriculum integration*)
- Fostering transversal competencies through science education and history and geography teaching (see **Annex 1**: input presentations for activities on science education/ '*Sound*' and '*Light*'; and for history and geography: '*Keeping a diary*')
- Evaluation of the first week

Based on **group work**, the participants have contributed with their views and opinions, as follows:

Activity 1: Topic: Sound (Based on Science Textbook, Standard 6)

The activity integrates the course about *Sound* in Science education (Standard 6). It is focused on communication skills (listening). It is an example of how to integrate activities that foster transversal competencies into a traditional lesson/chapter in Science education.

Participants work in pairs. Each of them has to talk to the other for three minutes and share with his/her colleague different information about him/herself (family, children, place of birth, studies, hobbies, occupation, etc.). While one person speaks, the other just listens, without interrupting the speaker. When time for discussion in pair runs out, the pairs have to report to the larger group: now presenters will share information about the other person with whom they formed a pair.

At the end of the large group presentations, participants can discuss based on questions such as:

- Was it difficult to just listen?
- What helped you retain accurate information about your colleague?
- What makes a good communication?

Competencies involved:

- Capacity to listen carefully
- Capacity to concentrate
- Capacity to memorize and process information accurately
- Capacity to empathize
- Presentation skills.

Activity 2: Light (Based on Science Textbook, Standard 6)

This is another example of how to integrate activities fostering transversal competencies (i.e. thinking competencies) into a traditional *Science course (Light)*.

The participants work in groups and have to find arguments ‘pro’ and ‘con’ for the statement ‘Light is good for human life’. The exercise envisages debate skills and critical thinking skills for it implies to critically assess a certain statement and to find reasonable arguments for one’s opinions.

Examples of ‘pros’ and ‘cons’:

‘Life is good for human life’

Pro	Con
Light makes the world colorful	Exposure to light can damage colors (in paintings, fabrics, etc.)
Without light plants could not produce oxygen	Some technological processes need to take place in the dark (i.e. some food processing; photos making)
People are more active during the day	Too much light harms the eyes
Light allows us to see and perceive things	One cannot sleep in the light
Traffic lights are important for one’s safety	

Competencies involved:

- Thinking skills (analysis, comparison, divergent thinking, nuanced thinking, multiple perspectives)
- Communication skills
- Team work skills

Activity 3: Diary writing based on History and Geography Textbook, Standard 4

The textbook talks, in its last chapter, about the Dutch colonization of Mauritius at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The participants work in groups and develop a diary as if they would be part of the respective process of colonization. The goal of this activity is to make students able to empathize with the people living in those times. It aims also to make students envisage history not just as a series of events but as encompassing daily life aspects and personal experiences.

Competencies involved:

- Thinking skills (to transfer concepts and factual information into new contexts, to organize a content, to identify relevant information; to link actions with consequences; to keep a chronological order of events)
- Empathy and imagination
- Team spirit and team work
- Writing skills (use different writing styles, impress the public/ the audience; organize content)
- Presentation skills

Examples of the participants' work:

Diary A

14 Dec. 1598

Experienced a storm at sea. We set foot on a small island in Indian Ocean. Our ship is damaged. Food and fresh water lacking. Grew sick. We feel tired and we all lie down on the sand to rest.

15 Dec. 1598

We wake up with a superb sunrise. Unfortunately some sailors die. They are buried ceremoniously. We decide to set out in small groups: for fishing; looking for fresh water; and pricking coconuts.

17 Dec. 1598 night

We cannot sleep. We hear strange noises. We are afraid and on the alert. The next day we decide to build a strong shelter in case any wild animals came close.

Dec. 20 1598

While exploring the island we came face to face with a strange bird. It had no wings, thus it was easy to caught and kill. (This bird was actually making all the noise we heard some nights before). Meat nice to eat.

Dec. 25, 1598

We are able to celebrate Christmas. Singing, dancing and drinking thank to the barrel of wine that has been saved from destruction.

January 1, 1599

Gathering on the beach. Special prayers to welcome the New Year. We declare the island a Dutch colony.

March 12, 1599

We have repaired our ship and are ready to set sail home. We bring with us a Dodo bird, a specimen of ebony wood and a giant tortoise. We shall be back soon.

Diary B

March 1598

Crossing the Indian Ocean. We are carried away by strong winds. Sad – I lost many friends. Van Bouren was literally thrown out of the deck. I prayed to god for the peace of his soul. Food destroyed during heavy rains.

Sept. 1598

Early morning – a beautiful rising sun. The weather was calm. Johann Craft signaled land. We found a deserted island with thick forests – ebony trees. We had to division labor: Johann and the others looked for food. Basven and his group repaired the ship. We ate the meat of a strange bird – so delicious. I'm now sad – cannot share this food with my wife and children.

Dec. 1598

No Christmas, no gifts. But, doesn't matter. I prepared some gifts for you: ebony trees.

Jan. 1599

New Year spent away from home. This island looks like Paradise on earth – lovely beaches, plenty of food, sunshine. I think we should name this island Mauritius after our ruler, Moritz van Nassau. I would be sad leaving this island, but I have a family. We should yet come back one day.

Jan 1604

I returned to the island, this time to settle with my family. Brought many animals and plants. Built our house.

February 1604

Violent cyclone struck the island and destroyed many homes. Old Nigen died. Poor man. Felt discouraged but then regained vigor to rebuild our village.

Aug. 1604

Invited my family to stay here.

Dec. 1604

We have strange Christmas trees with red flowers. Strange but nice.

27 Dec. 1604

Jesus blessed us with the birth of our son, Bergkamp.

April 1605

Profitable trade with ebony trees.

Aug. 1605

No Dodo bird left on the island. What are we going to eat now? Should plant more crops.

Sept. 1605

Our eldest daughter felt sick. Should be fever. Thanks god she recovered after five days.

End of 1605

What to do with sugarcane plants? Only arrack? Most of us were becoming addicted to arrack. Should build a sugar mill.

1607

Too many sugarcane plantations. Should find slaves to work on fields. Sent my elder son to Madagascar to buy slaves.

Nov. 1607

Some slaves attacked our homes. We escaped. What a loss.

Jan. 1608

Some of us were sent to another island – Rodrigues. Life there is more difficult.

End 1608

Left the island. Not a paradise anymore. Hard to live in such conditions.

Diary C

My dear Van Austen,

Today is May the 3rd of the year 1598. Have made our first steps on a strange island – this after a terrible journey on the sea of the Indian Ocean. A terrible storm compelled us to land.

June 1598

So many days have gone. My men and I have explored the island. Many trees; rivers and water falls encircled by mountains. Dense and luxurious vegetation surrounds us. The sea sweeps on white sandy beaches. Strange animals we have never seen before. Fruits with unusual shapes.

July

Today we went deeper into the lands. My men and I found a place where we can decently live. Big trees – good for homes and to repair our ships. The land looks rich enough to grow food crops and greens for our cattle. On land huge tortoises whose flesh proves to be a real delicacy – I wish I can send you some. Their shells are turned into lovely pans for us to cook in and basins to wash in.

August

The maize and tapioca we planted has reached reaping time. We feel lonely at times especially at night. Alas, my friend, no women around. Good fortune struck us when we discovered that the sugarcane we planted has bestowed on us a blessing in the form of a strong liquor (arrack – it relieves us from loneliness and weariness).

September

Ebony proves to be a very precious wood – it could be a source of forthcoming wealth.

October

Misfortune struck last night. An army of rats invaded the plantations and destroyed our crops. We did build a fortress to protect us from enemies but we didn't think that our most dangerous enemy was so near to us. What a catastrophe...

December

The Dodo's flesh, my dear friend, proved to be very hard to swallow and digest. Well, we had no other solution. May I ask you about Anna, our young neighbor? How is she doing?

January

Many storms have destroyed our habitations. Food is now scarce. We have strong feelings about going back to our country. Tired of struggling against nature. We are definitely leaving Mauritius. In some months time we will put our foot on Dutchland again. May I ask you to inform Anna that my eyes long to rest on her.

Day 6 – Monday, 20 February 2006

The discussions covered following topics:

- The concept of learning and how it impacts on curriculum content and structure, as well as on classroom practices; (see **Annex 1**: presentation on *Concept of learning*)
- Defining general competencies for primary education in Mauritius: tentative lists of competencies and sub-competencies (focusing on transversal competencies);
- Addressing transversal competencies development in Mathematics (primary education)

Based on **group work**, the participants have contributed with their views and opinions, as follows:

Activity 1: Defining general competencies for primary education (outlining sub-competencies and subject-bound competencies)

The participants worked in groups and first studied an input paper on the DeSeCo process (**OECD**: *Definition and Selection of Competencies*). They then developed in each group a model of such suitable lists of competencies and sub competencies that would fit primary education needs in Mauritius.

The following is a result of assembling the different groups' presentations:

A possible list (as result of the joint exercise): some examples

General competencies	Associated sub competencies
Competencies to manage learning and intellectual tools	Management of different intellectual & learning tools (reading: writing; calculus) To understand instructions and follow them Sharing knowledge with others ICT skills Engage in scientific exploring and experimentation To be able to make useful observations Identify appropriate knowledge in compliance with needs and different

	<p>learning situations</p> <p>Logical and critical thinking (sound and productive reasoning)</p> <p>Capacity to analyze and review</p> <p>Capacity to sort out/classify/ and categorize</p> <p>To be able to learn from errors</p> <p>To manifest as an independent learner</p>
Ability to communicate efficiently	<p>Capacity to listen carefully</p> <p>Reading and writing skills</p> <p>Mastering non-verbal communication skills</p> <p>Ability to take notes</p> <p>To process information received</p> <p>To speak in the front of others/to address a certain audience</p> <p>To participate constructively in a dialogue</p> <p>To ask for and give explanations</p> <p>To respect the others</p> <p>Presentation skills</p> <p>To use graphic means of communication</p> <p>To pay attention to aesthetic aspects of communication</p> <p>To persuade</p> <p>To induce certain attitudes/behaviors</p>
Social and emotional competencies	<p>Working with others</p> <p>Positive attitude</p> <p>Readiness to cooperate</p> <p>Accept responsibility</p> <p>Capacity to divide work meaningfully</p> <p>Team spirit</p> <p>Tolerance</p> <p>Capacity to make friends</p> <p>To share with others</p> <p>To make proof of patriotic feelings and attitudes</p> <p>To be able to compromise</p> <p>To manage differences constructively (to work in heterogeneous groups)</p> <p>To make proof of citizenship skills (take initiatives, care, participate in public matters, express opinions, propose solutions, work cooperatively)</p> <p>To make proof of ability to care and love</p> <p>To make proof of a clear set of positive values</p> <p>To act autonomously</p>

	To be sympathetic to those in need and manifest active solidarity
Competencies to manage resources	<p>To be aware of his/her immediate environment</p> <p>To be able to identify appropriate resources in compliance with certain needs, goals or tasks</p> <p>To prepare timetables and adhere to them</p> <p>To report and give feedback on the usage of resources</p> <p>To use resources meaningfully and avoid vesting them</p>
Self management	<p>Make proof of self-discipline</p> <p>Take decisions</p> <p>Act responsibly</p> <p>Be able to act as a leader</p> <p>Be able to plan and organize activities</p> <p>To recognize one's qualities and flaws</p> <p>To manifest self-control and anger management</p>
Problem-solving capacities	<p>To think logically</p> <p>To link causes and effects meaningfully</p> <p>To assess diverse solutions</p> <p>To take decisions</p> <p>To anticipate consequences</p> <p>To manifest creativity and imagination</p>
Motor competencies	<p>To coordinate body movements</p> <p>To follow procedures</p> <p>To make proof of liking physical exercise</p> <p>To manipulate tools/items correctly and safely</p>
Aesthetic competencies	<p>To proof an interest in arts</p> <p>To express oneself using aesthetic means</p> <p>To apply aesthetic principles in daily life situations</p>

Activity 2: Identifying strengths and weaknesses in the presentations of different groups (general categories of competencies)

Positive aspects:

- List of competencies were quite rich and comprehensive, tackling not just cognitive & intellectual competencies, but a wide range and capacities and abilities, including social, emotional ones, etc.
- The structuring of such categories of competencies in a system was quite inspiring and the groups learned a lot from one another.
- The competencies and sub-competencies identified are quite appropriate for primary education and most of them could be seen as transversal competencies.

Aspects to be improved:

- Participants need more training in learning how to word competencies in terms of learning outcomes/student achievements;
- Competencies and sub competencies should be well defined for each primary education cycle;
- There is a need to agree on a good system to classify competencies so as to make it easy for teachers and other stakeholders to follow a technical document.

Activity 3: Improving Mathematic Textbooks (Chapter: Sets, Standard 5)

The participants had to work in groups and suggest improvements of the existing chapter *SETS* (Mathematics, Standard 5) in order to link abstract knowledge and daily life experience better. They came up with several proposals, as follows:

- To state at the beginning of the chapter the expected learning outcomes and student gains;
- To invite students ask questions about sets (all kind of questions, even strange ones, such as: Can we live without SETS? Can a set be an element and vice versa?);
- To link new knowledge with old one (to make clear what is new, and what students should master already);
- To find examples close to students' experiences where sets could play a role (such as organizing a closet);
- To explain differences between mathematic conventions, logical reasoning and real life situations (why a set is similar or different to a group or class of objects, etc.) as to avoid conceptual misunderstandings;
- To highlight/give examples of some of the most common confusions/misunderstandings;
- To use attractive and clear visual elements;
- To explain in exercises the working methodology as to inspire interactive learning;

- To highlight key concepts and main conclusions;
- To state self-evaluation tasks and help students evaluate their achievements/shortcomings individually and/or as a group.

Day 7: Tuesday, 21.02.2006

The discussions covered following topics:

- Improving textbooks: what can be done to either improve the existing textbooks or develop new textbooks/teacher guides in the light of competencies-based approaches; (see **Annex 1**: presentation on *Improving Textbooks*)
- Curriculum Frameworks: their role in promoting a certain curriculum model (like the competencies-based one); (see **Annex 1**: presentation on *Curriculum Frameworks*)
- Curriculum Framework: what should it state about in Mauritius ; what structure would fit primary education needs

The participants had a chance to study curriculum frameworks from different countries and draw some conclusions in regard what, from what they read, would fit the Mauritian context (The result of this exercise was considered and capitalized one during the next day – see Day 8).

Day 8 – Wednesday, 22 February 2006

The discussions covered following topics:

- Agreeing on a preliminary structure of a Curriculum Framework for primary education and outlining several parts of the CF
- Discussing the issue of assessing student competencies
- Promoting transversal competencies through other curriculum areas, such as Language arts (see **Annex 1**: input presentation *Communications and conflicts*)

Based on **group work**, the participants have contributed with their views and opinions, as follows:

Activity 1. Developing a Curriculum Framework for Mauritius (primary education): structure and issues to be addressed

Based on the participants' contributions in small groups, several important ideas have emerged with regard to the possible structure and outlined content of a Curriculum Framework for Mauritius (primary education):

(1) Rationale for the Curriculum Framework and some guiding principles for its development:

- The curriculum framework is a guide for teaching and learning in our primary schools. It contains the specification of the desired knowledge, skills, competencies, values and attitudes the child would need to acquire and develop in order to get the best out of life right now and prepare for the future.
- The present curriculum should change since it produces around 40% of failures at the end of primary education. There is excessive rote learning leading to memorization of facts for the purpose of succeeding in exams. This leads to a highly competitive mentality: 'Me first', leaving no room for values and attitudes. Remedial education is also absent, leaving behind students experiencing learning problems. The present curriculum is also too bulky.
- Involvement/students' participation is more than the ideal method of assuming that what is taught is also learned. One of the main goals should be to develop a generation that will be involved in the changes that are occurring in the society. Approaches to teaching should be methods and concepts that will 'stay' with the child and make him/her a part of the learning processes.
- The new curriculum should help children develop as energetic, investigative minds, with the aptitude to question and argue judiciously. It should also encourage children to dedicate themselves to tasks and physical activities. In addition, it should help them improve their physical abilities and to adopt a healthy life style.
- A new, improved curriculum should also foster in students the acquisition and development of meaningful knowledge and skills that are applicable to adult life and employment in a fast changing world.
- The new curriculum ought to facilitate the development in children of basic abilities and capacities, such as language usage, communication skills, and numeracy.
- Students should develop and cherish creativity and open mindedness. They should also develop a respect for religious and moral values, and tolerance and respect for other cultures and ways of life.
- The new curriculum should also allow for children to know about the world in which they live and the interdependencies of individual, groups and nations.
- The curriculum should also cater for the personal development of children. They should be able to appreciate human achievements and meaningful and fair ambitions, as well as hard work and good behavior based on self respect and the respect of the others.

(2) Curriculum Framework (primary education): draft proposal

Foreword	<p>(Should be provided by the minister of Education)</p> <p>Statement of some major policy directions in education, such as the issues of 'world class education' and social justice</p>
Preface	<p>(Provided by the curriculum director)</p> <p>The context of change Rationale for curriculum change Directions for change: i.e. competencies-based approaches Rationale for the interest in competencies</p>
Introduction	<p>Mauritian context Strengths and weaknesses of the present curriculum New approaches to curriculum development Quality imperative in EFA Public expectations Economic and labor market conditions Socio-cultural and religious factors Public resources available for education</p>
National education goals	<p>Holistic development of a child to meet challenges of a modern society and develop as person Enhancing learning motivation and Reducing dropout rates Focus on community and life long learning Cater for higher order intellectual skills Promotion of social, emotional, spiritual, technological, practical, motor and artistic skills</p>
General aims and objectives (primary education)	<p><i>Aims</i></p> <p>Cognitive and personal development Acquirement and development of basic competencies, such as literacy and numeracy Development of social skills and positive attitudes, including readiness to work with the others and face changes constructively</p>

	<p><i>Learning objectives</i></p> <p>Acquisition of basic tools for intellectual work</p> <p>Capacity to identify information and process it efficiently and meaningfully</p> <p>Development of correct and creative thinking (analytical capacities, reasoning)</p> <p>Exposure to scientific methods of work, such as inquiry, observation and experimentation</p> <p>Awareness of rights and responsibilities</p> <p>Media literacy</p>
Principles of developing the new curriculum	<p>Child-centred curriculum (taking into account learning needs of each Mauritian student)</p> <p>Stimulating active and participatory learning</p> <p>Advocating for holistic and integrated learning</p> <p>Linked to actual life experience and students' immediate environment</p> <p>User-friendly (to booster or further consolidate the pupil's ability and learning pace)</p> <p>Fostering autonomous learning</p> <p>Fostering personal development (self esteem; self confidence; social skills; values; adaptation to future (life-long learning), linking individual and social development</p> <p>Reflecting the multicultural nature of the Mauritian society</p> <p>Guiding the child towards nation building</p> <p>Reliable and assessable</p> <p>Achievable</p> <p>Able to inspire learners to apply competencies in real life situations</p> <p>Able to well orient teachers and stakeholders</p> <p>Fostering equity and quality for all</p>
Curriculum content and structure. Learning areas/subjects/cross-curriculum aspects	<p>Learning areas/subjects</p> <p>Time allocation</p> <p>Cross curriculum aspects: i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socialization Patriotism Value education Appropriate behavior

	Ethics
Teaching and learning methodology	Holistic learning Learning through self experience Activity-based learning Project work approach Group activities Peer learning Environmental-based learning and practical learning Differentiated and Remedial learning
How to evaluate learning outcomes/student competencies?	Continuous and formative/progress assessment Good balance between formative and summative assessment Good balance between internal and external evaluation/examination
Home work and other extra-curricular activities	Links between curriculum and extra curriculum activities Student work load Independent individual and group work

(3) Curriculum Framework (primary education): questions to be addressed:

- How detailed should it be?
- How much time would we need for its preparation?
- How many people should be involved and how should they work together?
- How to involve stakeholders and the community?
- What kind of institutional support is required for its development?
- How to integrate elements of a national education policy?

Activity 2: Communication and conflicts

This activity could be integrated into language courses with a view to also cater for social and personal skills, such as the capacity to solve conflicts constructively by making use of language skills (i.e. listening carefully, civil dialogue; negotiation; exploring win-win situations).

The participants worked in groups:

- first they shared amongst themselves impressions from a recent conflict they experienced (what caused the conflict, who was involved, how the conflict developed; solutions to face the conflict constructively; personal feelings after the conflict);
- then they had to imagine a conflict in the school or classroom, involving students;

- groups had to perform the conflict and then explain in front of the large group what role did language (or the absence of articulated language) play in constructive conflict solving.

Examples of conflicts and solutions:

Envy amongst colleagues	Engagement in joint activities/following a common goal
Stealing in the classroom	Involving an adult mediator who analyses causes and proposes a win-win solution
Physical violence	Expressing regrets, asking for excuses and compromise negotiated by a peer mediator
Conflict in families over the remote control	Sharing resources, compromise negotiated by a mediator

Activity 3: Understanding messages and creating messages for a certain audience

Media messages have a powerful impact on each of us, thus media literacy should be part of the basic education curriculum.

Students ought to understand that media messages are created by people and that they involve aspects of manipulation, be it only in the realm of advertisement.

Activity:

Participants worked individually and had to use several key words to construct a message from the point of view of different actors (media/TV; school headmaster, local authorities/mayor).

The key words selected were: cyclone, traffic; danger; TV; school, school bus; home.

Based on sharing the messages they have created, the participants could compare the different styles of these messages. For instance, they could observe a more formal tone in the case of messages launched by authorities; a more persuasive and funny tone in the case of Media messages. And even amongst messages of the same categories (i.e. media messages) participants could notice differences in approach and style which proves that any content can be actually presented in many different ways.

Day 9 –Thursday, 23 February 2006

The discussions covered following topics:

- Curriculum evaluation: why and how it can be done; what can we learn from it; (see *Annex I*: presentation on *Curriculum evaluation*)

- Relationships between curriculum evaluation and the evaluation of student results/achievements; (see **Annex 1: Assessment and evaluation of student results**)
- Promoting transversal competencies through other curriculum areas, such as The arts, civic education, environmental education, sports and health education, etc. (see Annex 1: input presentations: Miming civic concepts; and Other curriculum areas)

Based on group work, the participants have contributed with their views and opinions, as follows:

Activity 1: Miming civic concepts

Miming civic concepts can be planned as an integrated activity, where elements of civic education, communication, motor competencies, team work and inquisitive skills come together.

The different groups have to discuss and select one civic concept, and imagine how his concept will be mimed to the large group. Members of the large group have the right to ask questions, in a certain order, but not more than seven altogether. The group/individual who is miming the concept can help the others with hints, using non verbal language only.

Amongst civic concepts mimed were ‘elections’; ‘national anthem’, ‘care and solidarity’; ‘manipulation’; ‘protests’; ‘patriotism’; ‘campaigning for a cause, such as against abuse’.

Activity 2: Ideas for competencies-based strategies in other curriculum areas/subjects

Other possibilities to promote transversal competencies through different learning areas/subjects in the existing curriculum were tackled, such as:

- Communication skills through art education (discussing famous paintings; linking art with self-expression, and emotional and personal skills);
- Sharing about local traditions, such as cooking (home economics – development of communication skills; personal skills, motor skills; involving families and communities; developing intercultural awareness);
- Sport activities: development of a sense of fair competition; development of a sense of solidarity, motor development; self-expression and self-confidence.

Activity 3: Open discussion: final questions and comments from the participants

The open discussion at the end of Day 9 gave the participants a chance to highlight some of their views and concerns about the integration of a competencies-based approach in the primary curriculum, as follows:

- The integration of a competencies-based approach in primary education should be part of a broader process of curriculum revision

and improvement. Many aspects of our present curriculum are not satisfactory enough, for instance the reduced presence of Arts education and the nature of Arts courses, which is rather academic, not hands-on. The new curriculum should give more room for artistic, emotional and personal development, which the Arts can contribute to in many interesting ways. Music, for instance, is a place where reason and feelings come well together.

- The new curriculum should be also established by taking into consideration other shortcomings of the present one. For instance, one should research for what in the present curriculum contributes to a high rate of failure at the end of primary education (40% of students who do not pass the CPE).
- The quality of teaching is also an issue of concern for even degree holders need more in-service training in order to improve their teaching methodology and cater for learners' needs effectively. Teachers are the main agents of change, thus they should play an active role in the curriculum reform process. This should yet happen based on providing more quality training and prepare them to have an informed contribution.
- The new curriculum should also pay more attention to the need to provide orientation and counseling to students with regard to future studies and future professions.
- Moral and religious education should be also reconsidered for they have an important role in value education and social and personal development. Religion should nevertheless not be used to divide people, but to pass out sound moral values and inter-religious and inter-cultural understanding.
- The new curriculum should allow for differentiation and inclusive solutions. Each student should find his/her place in school regardless of their social, ethnic and religious back ground, or of their learning style/learning problems or physical and/or mental impairments.
- One of the biggest concerns in introducing a new competencies-based approach will of course be the assessment and evaluations strategies. They should change substantively in order to allow for continuous/progressive assessment and for a good balance between testing and formative assessment.
- In the process of curriculum revision and improvement stakeholders should play an important role. They should be asked about the prospects students can have in Mauritius in the labor market and public life.
- The present curriculum is quite overloaded. One should pay attention to the fact that every curriculum change, although well intended, could

end with even more load owing to additions and unnecessary repetitions. At present there is also a contradiction between the claims that curriculum is overloaded and the fact that many teachers and students are yet engaged in private tutoring. One should research what is really true about the claims about curriculum overload.

- Curriculum implementation is also important, thus one needs to plan well ahead all the steps needed to assure sustainable quality changes at class- and school level.

Day 10 –Friday, 24 February 2006

The discussions covered following topics:

- Workshop overview by Dakmara Georgescu (outcomes discussed against objectives and expectations)
- Follow-up and next steps by Mr. Santosh Kumar Mahadeo (MoEHR)
- Final comments by participants
- Workshop evaluation
- Closing ceremony

Follow-up and next steps: some final contributions from the MoEHR (Mr. Santosh Kumar Mahadeo) and the participants:

- After this activity action should be taken immediately as to well exploit the momentum the two-week workshop created. One should not loose time, since the new Framework and models of new syllabuses and textbooks should be ready by the en d of 2006.
- One needs to establish a curriculum library where curriculum specialists, teachers and researchers should have constant access to quality materials from other countries and top-level research in the field of curriculum development/education sciences.
- There is a need to improve the institutional support to curriculum development and to strengthen the functioning of the National Centre for Curriculum Development and of the different panels/working groups for different learning areas.
- The curriculum reform process requires strong leadership, clear working structures, clear decision making chains and clear timelines.
- Some important policy questions have to be tackled, such as how the new curriculum should cater for the average learner in Mauritius, and not just for gifted/elite students, and how teachers can be persuaded to deal with mix abilities more effectively. Other policy questions would concern value

orientation, assessment and evaluation policies and strategies, and improvement of quality monitoring in the Mauritian education system (to date, systematic and effective monitoring of quality education is quite weak).

- At present there is a lack of learning by doing, and a total absence of fostering transversal competencies. In addition, the culture of reading is weak, and people develop only low capacities to communicate and use logical reasoning. In preparation of the curriculum reform process, the MoEHR, in collaboration with other bodies, should provide a comprehensive diagnosis of the present situation regarding the selection and organization of learning, and the teaching and learning strategies: what is good and what has to be improved/modernized and how.
- Primary education should also be reinforced based on improving access to, and quality of early childhood education.
- The definition and selection of key and transversal competencies should be based on a large process of public consultations, where parents and community representatives should have a voice.
- In order to assure the success of curriculum planning, design and implementation, all concerned bodies should work together in a more effective way and corroborate their efforts in order to assure a coherent approach to curriculum change.
- Changes in the primary curriculum should be linked more carefully with overall improvements in the pre-vocational and secondary system. There is especially a need to bridge the gap from pre-primary to primary, and from primary to general secondary education.
- New policies to motivate teachers and to provide meaningful incentives for them should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with teacher unions and professional associations.
- The MoEHR should also plan for long-term international assistance given that during crucial moments of curriculum reform the Mauritian specialists should also benefit from expertise from abroad.
- Although there are many needs in order to improve quality of our education system (such as reduce class size; improve teacher training and motivation; improve access to quality learning resources) the present curriculum reform should focus on what is possible given the present conditions and school facilities.
- Members of subject panels need clear instructions concerning their upcoming work and concrete tasks (in what direction we are going; what documents ought to be elaborated; who will do what; how to consult with others meaningfully).

Annex 1 – List of presentations used to introduce activities

- *Quality Assurance and Curriculum Development*
- *The issue of competencies*
- *Competencies-based curriculum development*
- *Cross-curricular issues and approaches*
- *‘I’ and ‘We’*
- *Curriculum integration*
- *‘Sound’*
- *‘Light’*
- *SETS*
- *Keeping a diary*
- *The concept of learning*
- *Improving textbooks*
- *Curriculum Frameworks*
- *Communications and conflicts*
- *Curriculum evaluation*
- *Assessment and evaluation of student results*
- *Miming civic concepts*
- *Other curriculum areas*

