Towards a New Model of Schooling in Seychelles
Towards a New Model of Schooling in Seychelles
The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to promote the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

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The Honourable Dr Justin Valentin, Minister of Education, Government of Seychelles contributed his time, thoughts, concerns and mission to reform the education system. Our sincere thanks to him for a proactive approach to strengthening the education and livelihoods of people in Seychelles.

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### Abbreviations and Acronyms

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCATS</td>
<td>Centre for Curriculum, Assessment and Teacher Support</td>
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<td>COL</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dip</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECCD</td>
<td>early childhood care and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECCE</td>
<td>early childhood care and education</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
<td>educational management information system</td>
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<td>ERAP</td>
<td>Education Reform Action Plan</td>
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<td>FNAE</td>
<td>Finnish National Agency of Education</td>
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<td>GCE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Education</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
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<td>GER</td>
<td>gross enrolment ratio</td>
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<td>GOP</td>
<td>Gainful Occupation Permit</td>
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<td>GP</td>
<td>general physician</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>HDR</td>
<td>Human Development Report</td>
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<td>HRD</td>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBO</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>information and communication technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGCSE</td>
<td>International General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>International Maritime Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>JNV</td>
<td>Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>kindergarten to Grade 12</td>
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<td>LMS</td>
<td>learning management system</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MTA</td>
<td>Maritime Training Academy</td>
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<td>MTS</td>
<td>medium-term strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>National Achievement Survey</td>
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<td>NCF</td>
<td>National Curriculum Framework</td>
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<td>NER</td>
<td>net enrolment ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organisation</td>
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<td>NIHSS</td>
<td>National Institute of Health and Social Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSDC</td>
<td>National School Development Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OER</td>
<td>open educational resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Professional Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIRLS</td>
<td>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>SASO</td>
<td>Seychelles Alternative Schooling Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCR</td>
<td>Seychellois rupee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEC</td>
<td>School for the Exceptional Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIAD</td>
<td>Seychelles Institute of Art and Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIAH</td>
<td>Seychelles Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIDOL</td>
<td>Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIT</td>
<td>Seychelles Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SITE</td>
<td>Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>STA</td>
<td>Seychelles Tourism Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>science, technology, engineering and mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEA</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>TGMI</td>
<td>The Guy Morel Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIMSS</td>
<td>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study</td>
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<td>TLM</td>
<td>teaching learning materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>TMD</td>
<td>teacher management and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>technical and vocational education and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>UIS</td>
<td>UNESCO Institute of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UKOU</td>
<td>The Open University UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEVOC</td>
<td>UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UniSey</td>
<td>University of Seychelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAIM</td>
<td>University of Seychelles' American Institute of Medicine</td>
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The honourable Dr. Justin Valentin, Minister of Education, Republic of Seychelles requested that the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) review and propose a new model of schooling for Seychelles as part of its commitment to increasing access to quality education in the Commonwealth. Accordingly, a joint taskforce of COL and the ministry was established to develop a series of activities for improving school education and teacher training in Seychelles. While the Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme was immediately deployed to train teachers in Seychelles, a detailed study of the status of school education was carried out in collaboration with stakeholders and with data collected from the field to help COL prepare this report.

The Ministry of Education’s strategic plan (2021–2023) aspires to “create a system of education that motivates learners to perform and successfully achieve their best, enthuses the professionals’ eagerness to teach and supports the learners, and stimulates partners to collaborate.” As such, the strategic goals focus on education that is relevant and high quality and encourages different models of schooling to ensure all Seychellois have the skills and knowledge for work and life. Using these as the framework, the present report has three main sections: the first introduces the project and provides the context, the second reviews the status of education in Seychelles to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, and the final section presents a new model of school education with recommendations.

The report entitled *Towards a New Model of Schooling in Seychelles* recommends a rethink of the entire schooling system and processes and makes a case to strengthen the Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning. This will involve leveraging the power of distance learning by initiating a hybrid model of open schooling that uses online learning and open educational resources. This new model will combine the best features of open schooling, e-learning, hybrid learning, and community tutoring.

Other recommendations include: an overarching national school development council to nurture the new model of schooling; the provision of 12 years of free education; a holistic academic framework; and autonomous schools with a network of cluster schools for improving school effectiveness. It is important to note that the school reforms recommended here do not require significant financial investments. The suggested reforms could be implemented through appropriate management reorganisation.

COL wishes the Ministry of Education every success as it adopts the recommendations of this report and will continue to provide support as it achieves its strategic objectives of providing quality education for all.

Professor Asha Kanwar
President and CEO
Commonwealth of Learning
Executive Summary

Seychelles is a small country of 115 islands totalling 455 km² and spread over 1,400,000 km² of the Exclusive Economic Zone in the Western Indian Ocean region, with a population of about 99,000 multi-ethnic people. It is now considered a developed economy. In 2020, its Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.796, ranking 67th globally.

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS


EDUCATION SYSTEM

In 2019, school education comprised 29 state and five private crèches with 3,066 children; 24 state and five private primary schools with 9,383 students; 11 state and four private secondary schools with 7,033 students; and 322 students at the upper secondary level.

There were 30 teachers for 85 students with special needs in 2019, indicating the government’s focus on inclusive education.

In 2019, the teaching workforce comprised 67 teachers in crèches, 603 teachers in primary schools, 638 teachers in secondary schools and 25 teachers in upper secondary grades. The national teacher attrition rate is 7.5 per cent.

Guided by the 2014 ICT in Education Policy, the Government of Seychelles provided computing facilities and Internet connections to schools. However, technology-integrated learning is still weak.

The government spends 4.4 per cent of the GDP on education, constituting 11.72 per cent of the government’s annual budget (as of 2016). This placed Seychelles 26th in the world in terms of spending on education. Almost 80 per cent of the educational expenditure is for salaries.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

The system’s strengths are political will, good funding, institutional support networks, well-structured school management, girls’ participation, and examination performance.

Seychelles achieved the Millennium Development Goals before the stipulated year, 2015; the country’s progress toward SDG4 indicates Seychelles is likely to attain the SDG4 goals before 2030.
Some of the significant challenges are: poor student performance with respect to the government’s stipulated targets; school dropouts at the secondary level; teacher management; school management and leadership effectiveness; adverse public perception of TVET as meant for second-rate students; poor involvement of parents in education; and the gap between policy intent and impact.

**VISION AND GOALS OF THE NEW MODEL OF SCHOOLING**

According to Vision 2033, the education sector’s vision is: “Educated, empowered and responsible citizens engaged in building a sustainable, inclusive and equitable society.” The vision for schooling is to develop every Seychellois as a lifelong self-learner.

**NEW SCHOOL EDUCATION STRUCTURE**

**Recommendation 1:** Adopt a new school education structure, with free and compulsory education up to 18 years of schooling.

**Recommendation 2:** Adopt K-12 comprehensive schooling, comprising foundational, elementary, secondary and upper secondary schools within one campus.

**Recommendation 3:** The focus of foundational schooling will be on acquiring basic literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and cultural literacy; elementary education will focus on acquiring knowledge; secondary education will be for deepening this knowledge and upper secondary education for creating knowledge and skills development in specific business, trade and professional areas.

**AUTONOMOUS SCHOOLS AND NETWORKS**

**Recommendation 4:** Reorganise the schools into clusters in terms of geographical proximity and designate a catchment area for each school.

**Recommendation 5:** Establish a co-ordination mechanism for the schools within a cluster for better support and services to learners. As a transitional strategy for moving to single-campus K-12 schools, every upgraded upper secondary school will be networked with feeder foundational and elementary schools in its geographical proximity, creating a school complex.

**Recommendation 6:** Upgrade one of the schools to be a residential model school for nurturing students with high potential.

**Recommendation 7:** Ensure smart schools through the intensive use of technology. Every student may be provided a laptop with access to the Internet. All classes in the school will be equipped with smart technology.

**Recommendation 8:** All K-12 schools may be given autonomy to adopt school-based management in academic, administrative and financial domains in a phased manner, based on the results of academic audits.

**Recommendation 9:** The school leadership team, school council members, and teachers should be oriented and trained in the management of autonomous schools.
**Recommendation 10:** Council should focus its attention on effective teaching–learning and learning assessment processes and support leaders to develop the skills relevant for managing a cluster-based network of schools.

**ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK**

**Recommendation 11:** Develop an academic framework that aligns with national values, covering the five domains — academic, physical and health, social and moral, hands-on and skills, and hobbies and life enrichment education — to provide a holistic school experience.

**Recommendation 12:** Set up an expert group to allocate weights for the different components of the academic framework within the curricula at each level of schooling.

**Recommendation 13:** Ensure through the Inspectorate that schools are able to allocate appropriate time for all the planned activities within the curricula.

**Recommendation 14:** Provide training and facilitation for teachers integrating ICT in teaching and learning, and do so in ways that promote self-directed learning.

**Recommendation 15:** Set up a national testing agency as a certifying body for conducting achievement tests in Grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. The International Cambridge Examination may be an alternative examination to the national tests, with students given the freedom to choose.

**Recommendation 16:** The assessment practices in schools should be focused on learning rather than the elimination of students, giving them options to appear for tests as and when they are ready.

**ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING**

**Recommendation 17:** Strengthen the Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning (SIDOL) to leverage the power of online distance learning by initiating a hybrid model of open schooling that uses online learning and open educational resources (OER). This new model will combine the best features of open schooling, e-learning, hybrid learning, and community tutoring.

**Recommendation 18:** Reorganise academic, technical and administrative human resources at SIDOL to implement the new open schooling model of teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 19:** Develop an alternative pathway for receiving equivalent O- and A-level certificates by taking courses from SIDOL. Students will be eligible to take the Grade 10 and Grade 12 national examinations.

**Recommendation 20:** Engage course developers who are trained to curate OER and develop online courses.

**Recommendation 21:** Identify tutors who are available online, via telephone and at identified study centres during weekends to support learners and address their doubts.
SIDOL will network with autonomous schools and private/community tutors for counselling and tutorials, including to facilitate laboratory-based science, technology and skill education, and ICT skills.

**Recommendation 22:** Integrate SIDOL courses in regular teaching and learning to improve their quality.

**Recommendation 23:** Set up a digital learning resource centre within SIDOL to create and curate quality educational resources for open schooling and to manage the technologies to deliver teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 24:** Facilitate study visits for core staff of the Ministry of Education and SIDOL to countries with successful open schooling practices, such as to the National Institute of Open Schooling in India.

**TEACHER MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Recommendation 25:** As there is a teacher management and development (TMD) policy in place, the Ministry of Education may develop a plan for implementing the same, with timelines and measurable targets. Such an action plan should also consider the need to skill and reskill teachers to leverage the power of ICT for open schooling and to integrate ICT in regular classrooms. In implementing the TMD policy, the government should appoint an empowered Teachers’ Commission to look at all issues in the teaching profession.

**Recommendation 26:** Revise the teacher qualification and training requirements at the different levels of teaching.

**Recommendation 27:** Conduct a National Teacher Eligibility Test using a battery of tests covering academic achievement, teaching aptitude, critical and creative thinking, and teacher employability.

**NATIONAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

**Recommendation 28:** By an act of Parliament, set up a National School Development Council (NSDC) as an apex autonomous national institution for anchoring and nurturing the new model of schooling, and empower the Council as a think tank of the government for policy development, analysis, review, and impact assessment.

**Recommendation 29:** Considering its critical role in the sustainable development of quality school education and its professional support to the government on educational policy and planning, the Ministry of Education should engage an expert agency to develop a detailed proposal for the NSDC, to be approved by Parliament.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations can be implemented by reducing the mismatch between an abundance of facilities and their poor utilisation, to save on costs and optimise the available resources. The innovations and reforms recommended here can be
implemented by reappropriating existing human, financial and material resources. There are no significant financial implications.

**CONCLUSION**

By recommending upgrading schools to K-12 comprehensive schools, raising the bar for free and compulsory education to 18 years of age, and adopting a new academic framework to enhance school effectiveness, autonomous school management, alternative schooling, and teacher management, the report provides an all-encompassing structure for Seychelles to consider a new model of schooling to achieve the goals in the existing policy framework and the Constitution. Setting up a National School Development Council to anchor all the reforms would have the most profound impact on the development of school education in Seychelles.
TOWARDS A NEW MODEL OF SCHOOLING IN SEYCHELLES

Chapter 1. New Model of Schooling: Introducing the Project

Seychelles has a small population of 99,068, spread over a few of its 115 islands. Most of the population — about 88 per cent — lives on Mahé. Another 10 per cent lives on Praslin (~6,500) and La Digue (~2,800). The remaining approximately 2,000 people live on the other five inhabited islands.

Seychelles is a multi-ethnic and multilingual country. Almost every Seychellois speaks Creole, English and French. These are the official languages of Seychelles, and students learn all three in school.

Seychelles is now considered a developed economy. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) HDI rating (0.796), Seychelles ranked 67th globally in 2020.

Vision and educational developments

The societal vision of Seychelles is to be “[a] resilient, responsible and prosperous nation of healthy, educated, and empowered Seychellois living together in harmony with nature and engaged with the wider world” (Ministry of Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Planning, 2019, p. 7). The education sector’s vision reinforces this further: “Educated, empowered and responsible citizens engaged in building a sustainable, inclusive and equitable society.” This vision, and education itself, are the enablers of the societal vision.

The Seychelles Constitution commits to ten years of free and compulsory education for all children (up to age 16). Remarkably, Seychelles achieved the Millennium Development Goals before 2015 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010).

The Government of Seychelles has been very responsive to the country’s educational challenges. The government has enacted rich educational documents, including policies, acts, frameworks and strategic plans, since 2000. Yet according to the Minister of Education, “The results on the ground do not correspond to the number of efforts and documents produced” (discussion with the author).

Global engagement: Challenges

Seychelles has vibrant technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes. However, the programmes develop technicians and skilled human resources but not the scientific workforce necessary to engage with the global community at a high level. For example, with its tremendous maritime potential, Seychelles offers several high-quality skill courses related to maritime engineering, but

1 As of Friday, 3 September 2021, based on the Worldometer extrapolation from the latest United Nations data; see https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/seychelles-population/.

not marine or maritime engineering courses that could produce leadership in maritime engineering for the blue economy. The limited scope of engineering education is the focus of a collaboration with Imperial College of London.

Seychelles, as noted earlier, is a developed economy. As one of its constitutional commitments, it provides high-quality health services. With respect to health education, the University of Seychelles’ American Institute of Medicine (USAIM) offers short (usually one-year) certificate courses for practising ophthalmologists and orthopaedic physicians, sometimes collaborating with a few private medical institutions in India. Yet Seychelles does not provide medical education or produce general practitioners, who are in great demand worldwide.

Brilliant Seychellois students receive scholarships (on merit) to pursue higher education in various OECD countries. The vast majority of them settle down in those countries without benefiting Seychelles, and thus, the country is not building its own high-level scientific workforce.

**School education in Seychelles**

School education goes from birth to age 16. UNESCO recognises Seychelles’ Early Childhood Care and Education programme as a Category II institution. In addition to Seychelles achieving the Millennium Development Goals well ahead of time, the gross and net enrolment rates for primary education indicate the universalisation of primary education. There is a robust network of 78 educational institutions at the school level, comprising 34 early childhood education centres, 29 primary schools and 15 secondary schools. There is good provision for children with special needs — as many as 30 teachers for 85 special needs children, besides special provisions at Baie Sainte Anne Primary School on Praslin and Au Cap Primary School in Mont Buxton (on Mahé). Total enrolment in school education is 19,804 — approximately 20 per cent of the country’s population.

However, there are certain areas of concern. For example, about eight per cent of school-age children are still out of school, and 158 students dropped out or were disenfranchised in 2019. Most of them were from the secondary grades. Performance in secondary education does not yet match the level stipulated by the government. There are stray cases of student indiscipline as well. There is much to be desired about parental involvement in schools and their children’s education.

**The project: A new model of schooling**

The Government of Seychelles recognised the need to strengthen the quality of school education and sought the collaboration of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to conduct a review of the education system in Seychelles to identify opportunities for a new model of schooling for the holistic development of the country’s learners. See Annex 1 for the detailed terms of reference.
The scope of this report is therefore restricted to school education. However, school education does not stand in isolation, and wherever required, the report references other relevant sectors as well.

In preparation for the report, the author used desktop research, discussion with relevant stakeholders, and data collected from schools and teachers to analyse and make recommendations. The detailed methodology is given in Annex 2.

This report covers two main themes: the baseline status of education and training, and a proposal for reforms.
Chapter 2. Status of Education and Training in Seychelles

The Constitution (1993)\textsuperscript{3} and the Education Policy of 2000 guarantee free and compulsory education up to age 16. Seychelles also guarantees equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens beyond the mandatory period of education, based on merit — i.e., the intellectual capability of the learner. Public education provision is inclusive without prejudice arising from socioeconomic status, religious background, or disabilities. The 2000 Education Policy declares “coverage of all age groups and all education sectors.” Accordingly, the system comprises non-formal early childhood education, early childhood care and education (crèche), primary education, secondary education, upper secondary education, and further education — the last comprising post-secondary non-university TVET as well as university education, including teacher education.\textsuperscript{4} The Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning (SIDOL) provides continuing and adult education for all age groups.

This chapter presents the status of education and training in Seychelles and provides the broader context for school education, beginning with the legal and policy frameworks. The Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles lays the foundation of the right to education in

The Constitution (1993): Article 33

Article 33 of the Constitution deals with the right to education. The cardinal statements are:

“The State recognises the right of every citizen to education and with a view to ensuring the effective realisation of this right undertakes –

(a) to provide compulsory education, which shall be free in State schools, for such minimum period, which shall not be less than ten years, as may be prescribed by law;

(b) to ensure that the educational programs in all schools are aimed at the complete development of the person;

(c) to afford, on the basis of intellectual capability, every citizen equal access to educational opportunities and facilities beyond the period of compulsory education;

(d) to allow, subject to such reasonable restrictions, supervision and conditions as are necessary for a democratic society, any person, organisation or institution to establish and maintain a private school;

(e) to respect the right of parents to choose whether to send their children to a State or private school.” (pp. 35–36)

\textsuperscript{3} The Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles was approved by referendum on 18 June 1993 and amended in 1994, 1995, 1996 (creation of the office of Vice-President), 2000 and 2011 (strengthening the constitutional democracy and promoting a democratic electoral process); the complete text is available at https://www.eisa.org/pdf/sey1993constitution.pdf.

Under Article 35(C), the Constitution further adds: “to promote vocational guidance and training” (p. 36). For a better understanding and appreciation of the government’s commitment, Article 33 must be read in conjunction with Article 34 on the right to shelter, Article 35 on the right to work, Article 37 on social security and Article 38 on the right to a safe environment. Shelter, earnings, social security and safe environments facilitate children’s and young people’s meaningful participation in education.

**Education Act of 2004 and amendment (2017)**

The Education Act 2004\(^5\) comprises 88 clauses with many sub-clauses, classified under seven parts: preliminary; general administration; private educational institutions; rights and responsibilities of students and parents; rights and responsibilities of teachers, etc.; curriculum and assessments; and miscellaneous.

This act reiterates the Constitutional directive for ten years of free and compulsory education. It also articulates the role of private educational institutions, providing a robust framework within which private education providers are expected to operate.

In compliance with Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,\(^6\) Seychelles makes periodic reviews and reconstructions of the guiding principles and acts, to keep the educational bureaucracy resilient to the demands of changing times. The Education Act of 2004 was amended in 2017. The clauses covering teachers (71–74) and headteachers (76[1] and 76[2]) were not amended. Hence, Amendment 13 remains valid as of now. However, under a different clause, Amendment 28 banned corporal punishment in educational institutions.

**Policy frameworks**

Seychelles has a sound educational policy framework. Here, we refer selectively to a few policies.

**EDUCATION FOR A LEARNING SOCIETY: POLICY STATEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SEYCHELLES (2000)**\(^7\)

Seychelles’ educational policy in 1984 proposed providing educational opportunities for all children through the development of a comprehensive education system (Singh, 2014). The 2000 policy vision is Education for a Learning Society (a shift from the “New Society” in the 1984 policy). The policy mission is to create “a coherent and comprehensive system of quality education and training that reflects shared universal

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5 The Education Act of 2004 is Act 13 for that year, indicating that several other acts were passed for the governance of Seychelles in 2004.


and national values and empowers individuals to participate in social and economic development fully.” As stated, the policy goals are expected to be “brought to life by teachers and educators who allow its philosophy and values to permeate every aspect of their professional practice” (emphasis added). This policy visualises the creation of a learning society that would “shape its destiny without losing contact with the values that constitute its identity.”

One crucial policy goal is transforming education to prepare Seychellois youths to emerge as change agents in response to the challenges of globalisation, especially market forces and advances in information and communication technologies (ICT).

The education policy of 2000 targets all age groups and all education sectors,\(^8\) from non-formal early childhood education to ECCE,\(^9\) primary education, secondary education, further education (i.e., non-university tertiary education), teacher education and professional development, and adult learning and distance education. The policy’s uniqueness lies in covering non-formal early childhood education from birth to 3.5 years as well as adult learning and distance education.

**ICT IN EDUCATION POLICY 2014**

The Ministry of Education enacted an ICT in Education Policy in 2014. The long-term vision it articulates for ICT in education is to provide leadership in the institutionalisation of ICT within all educational processes; encourage students through safe and affordable access to ICT for learner-centred education in all learning areas and at all stages of education and training; promote lifelong learning and digital education and a training culture within the education community and with national and international partners; and utilise ICT to optimise human, physical and financial resources while still enhancing the quality and improving the efficiency of education and training processes. The ICT in Education Policy spells out nine strategic policy goals, including improving infrastructure and connectivity.

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY 2015**

The Ministry of Education (MOE) enacted the Inclusive Education Policy in 2015.\(^{10}\) The document defines the scope of inclusive education as:

> increasing the participation of all children in learning and play [and] helping every child to develop his or her full potential, regardless of race, gender or any disability that he or she might have. It is also about supporting settings to become responsive to children and young people’s backgrounds, interests, experience, knowledge and skills. (MOE, 2015, p. 2)

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\(^8\) It did not cover tertiary education; the Tertiary Education Act was not enacted until 2011.


The policy addresses learners with special education needs and disabilities who may require extra or different assistance from other learners of the same age group.

**NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY (2018–2022)**

The Government of Seychelles launched a National Human Resource Development Policy (2018–2022) that articulates a set of principles, guidelines, protocols and arrangements enabling the Government of Seychelles, together with partners, to achieve the agreed vision for HRD. The five-year policy and strategy were enacted to support the government’s sustainable development strategy.

**TEACHER MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (TMD) POLICY 2020**

As an essential constituency for educational reforms, teachers have figured in almost all policy documents and education acts. The Teacher Retention Committee (2014) and Teacher Education Task Force (2017) deal exclusively with issues related to teachers.

The TMD Policy of 2020 intends to raise the teacher recruitments standards to improve the quality of education. This noble intention needs to be contextualised. Raising the standards of recruitment will be possible only when the demand for teaching positions increases. The situational analysis in the TMD Policy indicates an insufficient demand for teaching positions. This is further adversely affected by teacher attrition. The teaching workforce is foundering for three reasons: insufficient candidates at the entry point; experienced teachers leaving the job for alternative careers and professions; and retirements. While emphasising teachers’ knowledge and skills, the TMD Policy stipulates a reference point for teacher effectiveness: teachers are to “achieve the goals set for them by the government,” rather than follow global norms and parameters of teacher effectiveness.

**The institutional network**

Seychelles has set up many institutions and authorities at different levels of governance. Some of the important institutions and authorities are the Centre for Curriculum Assessment and Teacher Support, the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education, and the Inspectorate Unit in the Ministry of Education. There are many institutions supporting TVET.

**School education**

School education is compulsory up to the age of 16. Education starts immediately after birth through a non-formal early childhood care programme fully supported by the government. This non-formal programme for children up to 3.5 years old is followed by ECCE in crèche (3.5 to 5.5 years), thus providing six years of childcare and eventually...

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creating a robust school readiness in children. The first two years of primary grades (P1 and P2) are coupled with formal ECCE. This combination provides for a five-year foundational education. Crèche schools are usually near primary schools and form an integral part of the district primary schools. The composition of the school system in Seychelles is presented in Table 1.

Primary education is for six years (P1 to P6). Primary education is compulsory, and each child must attend the school in the family’s district of residence. As noted earlier, there are 24 state and five private primary schools, varying in size. “The medium of education is Creole through to grade 3, when some English is introduced to the curriculum. French is added in grade 6 in the final year of the primary school stage.”

Secondary education is for five years and is compulsory up to Grade S5. Middle school education comprises grades S1 to S3. Upon completing this core secondary curriculum, about 50 per cent of students are channelled into general and skills education combinations. Grades S4 and S5 enable students to take the National Certificate or International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) O-level certification examination.

The general (academic) education covers P1 to P6 and is further extended to S1 to S3. In S4 and S5, the curriculum accommodates an option to include core, academic and technical subjects. The academic curriculum leads to a National Examination and single-subject international Cambridge O-level examinations for the General Certificate of Education (GCE).

The secondary schools are on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. Silhouette also has some schooling facilities. Mahé has almost 88 per cent of the students. Private schools are in Mahé; the International School has a branch in Praslin. “In addition to the three full-time private schools, there are several privately owned and operated schools covering certain stages of education” (Singh, 2014).

In 2018, there were 16,708 students in the primary, secondary and upper secondary stages, and 19,774 students, including those enrolled in crèche. In 2019, the total number of students enrolled in Seychelles, including private schools, was 23,197 — almost 24 per cent of the country’s total population.

Seychelles has a school dropout rate of six per cent — eight per cent boys and five per cent girls. In 2019, 158 students discontinued their studies and two students died (Table 2).

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Table 1. School educational institutions, students, teachers, and teacher attrition as of 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of education</th>
<th># Schools</th>
<th># Students</th>
<th>Average class size</th>
<th># Teachers</th>
<th># Trained teachers</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crèche</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3,066</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>majority Seychellois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29 state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>138 public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29 private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teacher attrition rate in state schools: 3.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87% public</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13% private</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75% minority</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84% public</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16% private</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9,383</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>majority Seychellois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>505 (428 females &amp; 77 males) public</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>98 (14 males &amp; 84 females) private</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>88% public</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12% private</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70% minority</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30% public</td>
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<td></td>
<td>70% private</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30% minority</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50% public</td>
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<td>50% private</td>
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<td></td>
<td>50% minority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7003</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>59% Seychellois 41% expatriates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>584 (326 females &amp; 258 males) state</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>54 (22 males and 32 females) private</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>88% state</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12% private</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45% minority</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55% public</td>
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<td>45% private</td>
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<td>45% minority</td>
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<td></td>
<td>50% public</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50% private</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50% minority</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary A-level</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100% hold a bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>52% Seychellois 48% expatriates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% state (219 females &amp; 103 males)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41% private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary non-university education and training (professional centres)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,391</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>195 full-time staff</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>78% Seychellois 22% expatriates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,587 females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>804 males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Seychelles</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>94% hold bachelor's degree and above</td>
<td>59% part-time students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>767 females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>265 males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. n/a = not available
2. 60% of the total number of students enrolled at the tertiary non-university level are aged 17–20.
3. 307 scholarships (94 to males and 213 to females) were approved for 2019.

Source: Data extracted from Government of Seychelles educational statistics, 2020. 15

Table 2. Learner dropout and discontinuance at the secondary level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons/Level</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>S3</td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>S5</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>S3</td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>S5</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>S3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout (official)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout (unofficial)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long absence</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Education quality and student success rates have been concerns. However, the students’ performance is steadily improving. “The S5 student population in 2020 was 1,132 compared to 1,088 in 2019 — a rise of 4% in that population. The percentage of students scoring grade C or higher in IGCSE subjects in 2020 was 55% compared to 38.9% in 2019” (National Information Services Agency, 2021), against the target of 50% set by the MOE.

**Inclusive education**

In 2019, there were 30 Seychellois teachers or teacher assistants (28 females, two males) for 85 students with special needs (35 females, 40 males). In 2015, Baie Sainte Anne Primary School on Praslin had a centre catering for three (male) children with special education needs, while Au Cap Primary School had a centre with special classes for eight children (three females, five males) with hearing impairment. Thus, there were 43 male and 36 female students with special needs.

In collaboration with Australia, Seychelles developed a training module for training teachers in inclusive education. Main, Chambers and Sarah (2016) found that teachers developed more positive attitudes and beliefs about including children with disabilities in regular classrooms after receiving this training.

The Special Needs Education Unit in the Ministry of Education manages and coordinates special needs education in schools. It also promotes equity and inclusion to enable all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, to benefit fully from quality education.

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TVET in schools

TVET is a major pillar in Seychelles’ education and economy. Beginning with integrating general and skills education at the S4 and S5 levels in schools, the system provides education opportunities in TVET at non-university tertiary institutions. In 2009, the Ministry of Education decided to introduce the TVET programme for S4 and S5 students to meet the needs of the “slow-learning and more vulnerable” students who run the risk of dropping out of school before S5, and at the same time to offer a fairer education system to the population.\(^\text{19}\) This designation of TVET for “slow-learning and more vulnerable students” needs reconsideration.

There are several tertiary non-university institutions that provide further education in TVET streams. Seven professional centres offer level 3 to diploma/Higher National Diploma courses. Seychelles Tourism Academy enrols international students, and the Seychelles Maritime Academy offers International Maritime Organization and other international qualifications. The Seychelles Institute of Technology (SIT) is the apex TVET institution in Seychelles. Founded in 2005, SIT was established as a Professional Centre for TVET in 2015, under the Tertiary Education Act 2011. SIT offers training through full-time campus-based, work-based and apprenticeship programmes. It works in partnership with key stakeholders, such as businesses and other trade organisations. SIT forms part of the ten i-hubs selected by UNESCO-UNEVOC in 2019.\(^\text{20}\) The institute offers full-time training for certificates, advanced certificates and diplomas, represented as levels 3, 4 and 5 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Seychelles. The Advanced Diploma, i.e., level 6 on the NQF, is taught on a part-time basis. Apprenticeship training is at the certificate level (level 3 on the NQF). Construction, telecommunications, information technology, vehicle engineering and mechanical engineering are taught at L3, L4, L5 and L6 levels. Painting, carpentry and joinery, and plumbing are taught at the L3 level. It is important to note that the majority of the courses are derived from conventional engineering disciplines.

The government has introduced a TVET School project on a public–private partnership model. The TVET School has been designed to produce semi-skilled (L2) and skilled (L3) workers, admitting about 20 per cent of each cohort, or half of the current general and skills-track students. It also will lead S3 students to productive employment. This new school model was intended to develop a positive attitude towards work and employment, make up for inadequate foundational preparation, offer quality skills acquisition and certification, and provide an opportunity to change social perceptions about TVET.

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According to World Bank compiled data, as reported by Trading Economics,21 2,132 Seychellois enrolled in non-tertiary education in 2018; this was an improvement over 1,652 in 2014, as reported by Singh (2014), the UNESCO Special Rapporteur at that time. SIT had 310 students with 38 instructors in 2019. It was reported that 67 S5 students had completed the TVET programme in 2017–18.22

**Tertiary non-university education**

The Tertiary Education Commission lists23 several institutions providing TVET programmes, in addition to SIT, such as the Seychelles Tourism Academy, the Maritime Training Academy, the National Institute of Health and Social Studies, the Seychelles Institute of Art and Design, the Seychelles Institute of Agriculture and Horticulture, the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education, SIDOL, The Guy Morel Institute, and the University of Seychelles.

**University of Seychelles**

The University of Seychelles (UniSey), established in 2009, offers higher education. Till the establishment of UniSey, about 100 students each year used to be sent on scholarship for higher studies to universities in Europe and the USA. UniSey offers degree-level programmes in science, arts, humanities and social sciences, in collaboration with London University. The Department of Education at UniSey offers courses in education and teacher training. UniSey provides the following:

- Advanced Diploma in Accounting and Business
- Bachelor of Arts in English
- Bachelor of Arts in French
- Bachelor of Arts in Social Work
- Bachelor of Laws
- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science
- Bachelor of Science in Information Systems
- Bachelor of Youth Development Work
- Master of Science in Marine Science and Sustainability
- Master of Science in Tourism Management24

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22 See [https://www.nation.sc/articles/1670/tvet-students-graduate](https://www.nation.sc/articles/1670/tvet-students-graduate).

23 See [https://www.tec.sc/tertiary-education-institutions](https://www.tec.sc/tertiary-education-institutions).

24 See [https://www.courseseye.com/courses/seychelles/](https://www.courseseye.com/courses/seychelles/).
Lifelong learning

SIDOL facilitates education and lifelong learning for out-of-school young people and adults seeking upgrading, training, life skills and enhancement of their employment opportunities. One of SIDOL’s most successful courses has been the literacy programme, offered to all citizens to help eradicate illiteracy.

Gender equity

The education system guarantees gender equity in education. There is no gender gap among students in primary and secondary levels. There is a marginal gap of two per cent at crèches, with girls lagging behind boys. At the upper secondary level, the gender gap significantly favours girls (Table 3). There is a gender gap in the Seychellois population — there are 950 women for every 1,000 males. Nevertheless, gender equity in education has been achieved.

Among educational personnel, women outnumber men as teachers, school leaders, and officials in the Ministry of Education (Table 3).

Table 3. Gender composition of students and teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student enrolment</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crèche</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Teachers and teacher education

Teachers are the pillars of an educational system. As noted earlier, the policy goals are to be “brought to life by teachers and educators who allow its philosophy and values to permeate every aspect of their professional practice.” Seychelles celebrates International Teachers’ Day on 5 October every year. This event is used to respect and acknowledge teachers’ contribution to nation building.

Teacher qualification, recruitment, salary and working conditions, awards and recognition are important issues in teacher management and development.

Teaching profession

QUALIFICATION OF TEACHERS

According to the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education (SITE), teachers in Seychelles require the following qualifications:

(a) **Early childhood care and education and P2 level:** Five IGCSE, with English, Mathematics and two other subjects with a minimum grade of C, except in French, which requires a B1 (60 per cent).

(b) **P3 to P6 in primary schools:** The qualification requirements are the same as in (a).

(c) **S1 to S5 in secondary schools:** A level grade C or diploma from a post-secondary institution. S5 is the 11th year of secondary schooling and K-11.

It is important to note that the gap between the exit qualification for students from secondary schools (S5) and the teacher A-level achievement requirement is too narrow and can affect teacher quality.

TEACHER EDUCATION (QUALIFICATION)

Seychelles has a good record of trained teachers. Almost 90 per cent of secondary education teachers are trained and possess teacher education qualifications. The number and proportion of untrained teachers are greater in the primary and ECCE stages (see Table 1). According to SITE, Seychelles specifies the following teacher training norms for the different levels of education:

(a) Early childhood care and education and up to the P2 stage of primary education: Diploma in Early Childhood Education of three years plus one preparatory year (a total of four years).

(b) **P3 to P6 in primary schools:** Diploma in Primary Education of three years plus one preparatory year (a total of four years).

(c) **S1 to S5 in secondary schools:** Diploma in Secondary Education of 27 months plus one year of subject upgrading.

Besides teachers’ initial pre-service education, there is provision for in-service education for their continuous professional development.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The situational analysis in the TMD policy indicates insufficient demand for teaching positions. There is also the problem of teachers leaving their teaching jobs. In 2019,

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27 See [http://www.education.gov.sc/teachinglearning/Pages/SeychellesInstituteofTeacherEducation.aspx](http://www.education.gov.sc/teachinglearning/Pages/SeychellesInstituteofTeacherEducation.aspx).

28 In the survey conducted for this project, 73 per cent of the 237 respondent teachers were untrained.

29 See [http://www.education.gov.sc/teachinglearning/Pages/SeychellesInstituteofTeacherEducation.aspx](http://www.education.gov.sc/teachinglearning/Pages/SeychellesInstituteofTeacherEducation.aspx).
92 teaching staff left their jobs — six from crèche, 46 from primary schools and 40 from secondary school, totalling about 6.4 per cent of Seychelles’ 1,433 teachers. A level-wise breakdown of teacher attrition is given in Table 1. The reasons for job departures are resignation, termination, non-extension of contract, and retirement, with resignation and termination being the two most common. The overall teacher attrition rate is comparable to rates in many other developed countries. The attrition rate of non-university tertiary education teachers is 4.6 per cent.

**TEACHER SALARIES**

Teacher salaries are a significant issue in Seychelles school education. Teachers are “relatively poorly paid compared to other positions requiring the same level of post-secondary education.” 30 The average monthly salary of a teacher in Seychelles is SCR 15,000 31 (the equivalent of $1,063), when the average cost of living in Seychelles is estimated at $1,384 per month. 32 The cost of living in Seychelles is 3.1 per cent higher than in the USA. 33 Seychelles ranks 33rd in the list of the most expensive countries in the world, 34 making it difficult for the government to attract and retain talented young persons to the teaching profession.

**TEACHER APPRAISAL**

The TMD policy mentions the teacher appraisal process in Seychelles, citing Dos Santos’s (2016) document. Appraisers are to identify “teachers who are achieving the expected levels of performance and [reward them] accordingly.” There are doubts as to whether this approach is serving its purpose. The TMD Policy (p. 8) notes: “According to Schools Divisions, the revised Teacher Appraisal Policy and Strategy and accompanying documents are being finalised for implementation in 2020 (Task Force Report 2017).”

**ICT in education**

Seychelles has an impressive record of ICT penetration: 35

- As of January 2021, there were 174.4 thousand mobile connections in Seychelles, equivalent to 176.9 per cent of the total population.

- There were 58,000 Internet users in Seychelles in January 2021 (58.8 per cent of the population).

- There were 75,000 social media users in Seychelles in January 2021 (76 per cent of the population).

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32 From [https://livingcost.org/cost/india/seychelles](https://livingcost.org/cost/india/seychelles).


34 From [https://livingcost.org/cost/india/seychelles](https://livingcost.org/cost/india/seychelles).

The data gathered from six primary schools and one high school indicate that schools have been well provided with computing devices in computer labs for ICT skills development (Table 4).

**Table 4. ICT facilities in some schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type and number of computing devices in computer labs</th>
<th>Total devices</th>
<th>Internet connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Anse Praslin Primary</td>
<td>laptops – 19, desktops – 3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>available: weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pointe Larue Primary</td>
<td>laptops – 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>available: good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel Ombre Primary School</td>
<td>laptops – 2, desktops – 5, tablets – 55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>available: weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacis Primary</td>
<td>laptops – 4, desktops – 5, classmate’s PC – 46</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>available: good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takamaka Primary School</td>
<td>laptops – 1, desktops – 1, classmate’s PC – 50</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>available: good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anse Royale Secondary School reported 55 desktops and 46 laptops in the computer lab. The utilisation of ICT facilities is “excellent” in computer labs and administration offices and “quite good” in the library and staff room; whether there is ICT utilisation in classrooms is not clear.

In primary schools, the number of computing devices for ICT skills training ranged between 20 and 72. Their utilisation in five primary schools also varied greatly, and schools indicated ICT use in the classrooms to be unsatisfactory.

Internet connectivity is not uniform. Three schools reported Internet connectivity to be strong, whereas two schools reported weak connectivity. Internet connectivity becomes weak when many students use the Internet simultaneously, especially in the computer labs.
The scores were below average in the survey on teachers’ self-assessment on technology integration in teaching–learning (Table 5). On a scale of one to nine, head teachers gave low ratings for teacher competence and skills to use and integrate ICT (Table 6). Teachers do not seem to encourage students to use technology for learning. Technology integration in learning is the weakest domain in instructional practices.

Considering the government’s 2014 ICT in Education Policy, with its nine policy goals, ICT use in schools needs to be strengthened.

Table 5. Integration of ICT in teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Total respondents</th>
<th>Weighted means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use slides while presenting class content.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use educational videos in the class for presentation.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use computer and video games in class.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use flipped learning; students watch digital content on the subject before coming to the class.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage online conversations between paired students and members of groups on smartphones, tablets and laptops.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage students to take class notes on tablets/laptops/smartphones.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I assign and use online assessment tools.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use and encourage students to use e-books and online textual materials.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use and encourage students to use the Internet in class to explore information.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I carry my tablet/laptop to the class and use it to enrich the teaching–learning process.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Supervisors’ responses about technology integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers effectively integrate technology into the teaching–learning process.</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers explore, identify and curate online learning resources.</td>
<td>5.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are competent in integrating technology into the teaching–learning process.</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers prefer to use technology-integrated learning.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers encourage students to use technology, e.g., taking class notes on digital devices.</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strengths and achievements

POLITICAL WILL

The major strength of educational development in Seychelles is strong political will. Successive governments have indicated their commitment to the development and well-being of the people through a well-constructed and responsive education system. Political will is also evident in education funding policy. The political will of the present government is indicated by their seeking collaboration with COL in this initiative to develop a new model of school education to fulfil the vision enunciated in Vision 2033.

EDUCATIONAL FINANCING

According to 2016 figures, the government spends about 11.72 per cent of its budget on education,\(^36\) which is about 4.4 per cent of the national GDP.\(^37\) This does not include pastoral care for addressing behavioural problems. The government’s dedicated funding has helped make education compulsory and free for all children, with almost every item of a student’s expenditure covered except for school uniforms. However, the government has provided dedicated funds for uniforms, day school meals, bus passes, etc. for students with limited means. Government funding is very focused and purpose oriented to ensure that no child is left behind because of financial constraints. As Singh (2014) rightly observes, such targeted support prevents students of limited means from dropping out and provides them with the confidence of state support.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

An important pillar of strength in Seychelles’ education comes from institutional networks. One such network that includes the Seychelles Institute of Technology provides TVET. School education is supported by the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education, the Department of Education Services, the Inspectorate of Education under the Seychelles Qualifications Authority, and the Department of Education in the University of Seychelles.

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37 As per UIS data in September 2020: [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS)
SCHOOL ORGANISATION

School organisation comprises the School Council, Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, Curriculum Coordinator, and a second Deputy Head Teacher, responsible for looking after the students’ mental health. There are school counsellors to provide psychological assistance whenever needed. Pastoral care is provided by youth volunteers to address student behavioural problems. The school health programme provides immunisation and medical services, and youth workers support children in sports and games. The involvement of youth volunteers and workers indicates community networking with schools.

LIFELONG LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Besides formal education in schools as well as university and non-university tertiary institutions, Seychelles provides lifelong education opportunities to adults through SIDOL.

The missing component is the provision of higher professional education, such as engineering and medicine. Seychelles offers many skills courses related to maritime trades but no degree courses in marine engineering.

SCHOOL READINESS

Seychelles’ ECCE has received global recognition. The Institute of Early Childhood Development was recognised as a UNESCO Global Category II Institute for Early Childhood Care and Development on 15 November 2019, at the 40th session of the UNESCO general conference.38

The three years of non-formal early childhood care and development and subsequent three years of formal ECCE in crèche significantly contribute to school readiness. Seychelles has achieved universal primary education with a GER above 100 and an NER at 100. However, there are cases of dropout and disenfranchisement, mostly at the secondary education level.

GIRLS’ PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE

Analysis of Seychellois students’ performance in examinations indicates girls perform better than boys.39 South African studies corroborate this experience (Spaull & Makaluza, 2019). Conventionally, girls outperform boys in language and literature. Although girls’ performance across the school subjects and even in co-curricular activities is a major achievement in gender equity, it is a serious problem that boys lag behind and underperform. This needs special attention, lest the achievement and gains of girls’ performance become compromised by boys’ underperformance.


PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO SDG4

The National Voluntary Review 2020 by the Ministry of Economic Planning assessed the nation’s progress toward achieving SDG4.40

Based on advances so far, including the government’s initiatives and its responsiveness to educational development issues, progress on SDG4 goals is summarised in Table 7.

Table 7. Progress towards achievement of SDG4 goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>4.2–4.6</td>
<td>4.5: Boys lag behind girls in educational participation and performance. However, this gender disparity is not due to any discriminatory policy or practice. The issue needs special attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely to achieve</td>
<td>4.1, 4.4, 4.7</td>
<td>SDG goal 4.7 is not readily amenable to assessment and quantification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>4a &amp; 4b</td>
<td>4b: Seychelles offers scholarships for studies on merit, within the country and abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>The supply of qualified teachers needs to be increased.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerns and challenges

ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK

An academic framework comprises curriculum, instruction, assessment and qualification components. Seychelles has all of these except the instructional component. The 2013 National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of Seychelles focuses on indigenous resources, genius and potentials deemed important in education. The NCF helps schools determine what is important and desirable in curriculum planning and delivery.

Since children and young people progress at different rates, the curriculum allows for such progression in their achievements. Thus, the NCF specifies five key stages to indicate the different levels and rates of progress students can achieve in learning.

The curriculum needs to be situated in connection with the lives of people as well as policy goals. During discussion, the Minister of Education pointed out, as an example, that though many people work in tourism, it is not a subject in the Seychelles curriculum at the S4 and S5 levels. The curricular framework needs to be re-examined and reconstructed to build capacities for global engagement.

The national curriculum acknowledges the importance of essential competencies, which embody certain core life skills that are necessary for effective learning. Children and young people develop these competencies through various classroom and social contexts to become successful lifelong learners.

Assessments provide feedback to students to reflect on their learning, review their experiences, and reconstruct their learning strategies. They also guide teachers in evaluating how effectively they teach and assist their students with achieving the expected outcomes. Hence, the National Assessment Framework has proposed stages of assessment: Stage 1 for the early childhood years, Stages 2 and 3 for the primary years, and Stages 4 and 5 for the secondary years. At the end of Stage 5, assessments are also closely linked to qualifications and awards that enable students to pursue further studies or work.

Although Seychelles has a complete academic framework, students’ achievements do not reach the expected standards specified by the government. Student underachievement is a major concern and needs to be addressed.

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Despite the constitutional obligation of free and compulsory education to all Seychellois, up to 16.8 per cent of boys and 5 per cent of girls — a total of 6 per cent of school-age children — are not in primary school. The 2019 Seychelles Educational Statistics revealed that 158 students discontinued studies at the secondary school stage. Out-of-school children and dropouts, howsoever small the number, are a concern.

Students’ performance is another concern, though the studies and data indicate a steady performance improvement. Boys’ poor performance is a point of concern. Cases have been reported of student indiscipline and misbehaviour; such instances were also mentioned in the UNESCO Rapporteur’s report (Singh, 2014), although no specifics about the indiscipline and behaviour were included. Unless these are documented and quantified, it is difficult to develop a strategy for resolving the problem. Unsatisfactory student performance, school dropouts, and weak teacher satisfaction are important challenges for school effectiveness.

EDUCATING A SMALL POPULATION

Educating a small population poses a distinctive set of problems. La Digue has a total population of 2,800; the likely school-age population should be about 550, spread over 16 years of school age, giving an average of 35 children in each age cohort. There are also five other islands, inhabited by about 2,000 people, with approximately 400 school-age children spread over these islands. The problems are administrative and financial, calling for innovative schooling to provide an inclusive and equitable learning opportunity for all Seychellois.

TEACHER MANAGEMENT

Research in school effectiveness indicates collective teacher efficacy to be the single most powerful factor influencing students’ performance (Hattie, 2017). In Seychelles, teacher recruitment, retention, quality and effectiveness are major problems.

41 See https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.UNER.ZS?locations=SC.
The teacher problem comprises insufficient demand for teaching jobs. The attrition rate is normal compared with other countries. Teachers’ salaries and working conditions have been cited as the most likely reasons for the teaching profession being unattractive. The government’s efforts to fill the teacher gap with contract teachers and expatriate teachers has not been very effective. The expatriate teachers are not conversant in Creole, the medium of instruction in ECCE and the first few levels of primary education (Singh, 2014). In addition, the higher salaries of expatriate teachers are not received very well by Seychellois teachers. Contract teachers naturally stay on the lookout for a regular job and a steady source of income. This problem has persisted for a long time, as it was flagged in several policy documents and legal frameworks. The TMD Policy of 2020 is a major initiative to resolve the problem. As its implementation would have started in January 2021, it is too early to assess the impact.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Though Seychelles has several strategy documents, there are not many instances of policy research — plans of action for implementing the policies and evaluating the impact of their implementation. Strong government initiatives for inclusive quality education need the backing of adequate monitoring and evaluation, especially policy assessment and evaluation.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

To meet the demands of the future workforce, the country’s education system needs to be prepared so that today’s learners are equipped with the lifelong learning skills to innovate and adapt to new requirements. While the legal framework is robust, schools and educational institutions need to be strengthened locally to take decisions. The government has been considering decentralisation and the devolution of rights and responsibilities to school management. Some key concerns to prepare for future unknowns are given below.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Despite its development, Seychelles has a youth unemployment rate of about 11 per cent. There is an adverse public perception that skills training is meant for second-rate students. Industries are not satisfied with TVET graduates’ quality, preferring expatriates with Gainful Occupation Permits, despite the higher costs. Weak stakeholder participation, especially by parents, and insufficient teacher qualifications have been identified as the system’s major weaknesses (Alcindor, 2018).

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT: THE REFERENCE POINT

The government has articulated its intention that Seychelles be globally engaged. Educational reforms are necessary to nurture young people for effective global engagement with values cherished by the nation. Global engagement warrants globally comparable standards in knowledge, thinking, skills and attitudes. The Washington
Accord\textsuperscript{42} and the Dublin Accord\textsuperscript{43} are some of the reference points for global standards in specific fields. Internationally recognised school qualifications such as the IGCSE and the International Baccalaureate Organisation’s (IBO’s) programmes are reference points for school education. Seychelles need to build its educational quality and qualification framework to match globally acceptable reference points. The appropriate response to the challenges of Vision 2033 and the development of the blue economy will warrant a new set of cognitive and working skills and attitudes.

**CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING ASSESSMENT**

Curricular reforms must be guided by the need to respond to the challenges of global engagement while remaining situated within local demands and Seychellois values. As such, curriculum reforms can be guided by the four pillars of learning: (i) learning to learn and think (including metacognition); (ii) learning to do — translating ideas into action, combining head, heart and hands, creating artefacts; (iii) learning to live joyfully in a multicultural society with the skills necessary for effective global citizenship; and (iv) developing a passion for learning and excelling in one’s chosen field using the potential for self-actualisation (UNESCO, 1996).

The challenge is to integrate working with hands (i.e., vocational skills) meaningfully with academic courses to enhance psychomotor and constructionist skills and encourage a positive attitude towards skill learning.

Key to the implementation of a reformed curriculum are instructional design and teaching–learning processes. Conventional lecture-based direct instruction has to be reformed to develop self-regulated learning skills (Zimmerman, 2002), through a well-crafted learning system that blends technology with various learning tactics to support differentiated learning needs. Technology-integrated learning will be necessary to improve the quality of learning outcomes but will be difficult in the face of teachers’ reluctance to use technology-integrated instructional practices.

The teaching–learning process will have to be reconstructed to create measurable evidence of learning. A challenge will be to develop provisions for every student to make their own learning pathway, with learners actively deciding what to learn, how to learn, when and where to learn, as well as when and how to assess their learning outcomes.

The impact of curricular and instructional reforms can be measured with the appropriate mechanisms and tools of learning assessment. Examination reforms are needed to make learning assessment valid and reliable, with provisions for differentiated assessment of learning outcomes for the gifted, the average and the less good.

\textsuperscript{42} The Washington Accord: [https://www.ieagreements.org/accords/washington/signatories/](https://www.ieagreements.org/accords/washington/signatories/).

\textsuperscript{43} The Dublin Accord: [https://www.ieagreements.org/accords/dublin/](https://www.ieagreements.org/accords/dublin/).
INvolVEMENT OF PARENTS

The home-schooling that became necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic was far from satisfactory. A child’s holistic development, especially at a young age, is best served by parent–teacher partnerships. The Education Sector Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2013–2017 recommended the engagement of parents, the community and other stakeholders to progressively develop an action plan for improving education delivery. There have been efforts to engage parents through school councils, though with little success, as Singh (2014) observed. The Social Renaissance Programme of 2011 was another innovative attempt to engage with parents and civil society. Parental involvement has often been seen as a means for addressing the behavioural problems of a few students. An important challenge will be to rewrite the script of parents’ involvement in education, especially in school management, for quality improvement.

Blue economy skills

The concept of the “blue economy” started taking shape in the early 2000s. Australia’s Blue Well-Being Initiative was founded on ocean-based industrial development and growth, or “blue GDP.” Many countries in the world use the blue economy to create jobs and economic growth, through marine industrial activities like construction, transportation, mineral resources development, shipbuilding, communication cable laying, pharmaceutical enterprises, equipment deployment, sustainable energy from waves and currents, seaside leisure tourism, and fisheries and aquaculture. Marine-oriented information and science sectors also provide new opportunities. Improving ocean literacy is at the basis of developing the blue economy. Seychelles is strategically placed for developing the blue economy for national economic growth. Seychelles has a Knowledge Centre for the Blue Economy. In addition, UniSey has the James Michel Blue Economy Research Institute. The challenge is to develop skills for the blue economy. A foundation for developing blue economy skills must be laid in Seychelles’ schools.

Conclusion

Seychelles’ performance in education is indicated by achieving the Millennium Development Goals before 2015 and making progress toward the SDG4 goals. There are indications of improvement in students’ performance as well. However, there are still miles to go in fulfilling the policy goals of “no child left behind,” where every student succeeds to the stipulated level of performance and develops as an educated and empowered Seychellois to successfully participate in global engagement.

In the next chapter, we take a holistic approach to recommend an alternative system of schooling that will rejuvenate and reconstruct the existing system for greater effectiveness.

46 See http://blueeconomyseychelles.org/about.
47 See https://beri.unisey.ac.sc/.
Chapter 3. New Model of Schooling: A Proposal

Based on the review of the current education and training scenario in Seychelles and discussions with the Minister of Education, the Principal Secretary for the Education Sector Development Department, officials and teachers, and COL’s Education Specialist: eLearning, a set of reform recommendations are being proposed. The recommendations take into consideration the following basic premises:

1. That no child is left behind, and every student completes compulsory years of schooling and performs to at least the state-defined level of performance.

2. Opportunities are available for every child to excel in their potential areas of talent.

3. An alternative flexible schooling pathway is available for learners who want to learn differently from structured, conventional schooling.

4. There is a constructive alignment of curricular, instructional, assessment and certification components in the academic framework.

5. Schools are attractive, with joyful learning environments both for students and teachers.

6. Teaching as a profession draws young talents and retains them with attractive career structures and working conditions for better teacher effectiveness.

7. Schools are autonomous learning organisations with effective academic leadership.

8. School education is futuristic and prepares learners for lifelong learning, focusing on developing hands-on skills and respecting the dignity of labour and skills development.

9. There is an apex academic institution to nurture the new model of schooling.

10. The course of reform will enhance the prospect of global engagement.

Proposed structure of school education

Seychelles sets global engagement as one of its critical policy goals. Global parity in educational standards is the precondition for global engagement. The concept and practice of global parity can be seen through multiple models. In one model, an examination qualification is recognised globally or in most countries (e.g., IBO and IGCSE school certifications). Another model standardises the knowledge, skills and qualifications recognised and accredited by other countries. Other indicators of global comparability are academic framework and years of schooling. Global standardisation has become necessary due to the globalisation of the human community, including
large-scale migration by students and job seekers. One of the reforms for Seychelles will be to adopt global norms with respect to the years and structure of schooling. Table 8 presents the years of school education in some other countries.

Table 8. School education in years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Years of schooling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Australia | Kindergarten for 3- to 5-year-olds  
Primary education, including prep/kindergarten/pre-primary/foundation, up to Grade 6 (12 years old)  
Secondary education from Grades 7 to 12 (up to age 18) |
| Finland   | Pre-school education: 1 year (for 6-year-olds)  
Primary education: 9 years compulsory (7–16 years old)  
Secondary education (vocational/general): 3 years (up to age 19) |
| Germany   | Kindergarten: 1–5 years  
Primary education: 4 years  
Gesamtschule (comprehensive school) or Gymnasium (academic secondary school): 9 years, or  
Realschule (secondary school) or Hauptschule (general secondary school): 6 years; these students can then move to a 3-year vocational school or technical college |
| Norway    | Elementary school (barneskole, ages 6–13)  
Lower secondary school (ungdomsskole, ages 13–16)  
Upper secondary school (videregående skole, ages 16–19) |
| UK        | Five stages of schooling, excluding nursery level, cover 13 years of schooling, up to age 18 |
| USA       | Primary and secondary education for 12 years, with students normally starting school at 6 |

Based on a comparative study of school education structures in Australia, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom and the USA, 12 years of schooling for the Seychellois before they move on to tertiary education or the world of work is proposed (Figure 1).
The proposed four-layer academic structure of K-12 school education will comprise:

1. foundational education: basic education for five years – crèche, P1 and P2
2. elementary education: knowledge acquisition for four years – P3, P4, P5 and P6
3. secondary education: knowledge deepening for four years – S1, S2, S3 and S4
4. upper secondary education: knowledge exploration and creation for two years – US1 and US2

48 The terms and concepts of basic education, knowledge acquisition, knowledge deepening and knowledge creation were coined by Robert Kozma (2011).
After 12 years of school, graduation will entitle students to enter higher and professional education in university and equivalent-level organisations.

Up to the age of 16, there will be a common curriculum. At the upper secondary stage, students will have the option to choose a stream: academic (science, humanities and social sciences); commerce, business and management studies; pre-engineering or pre-medical (to be introduced), leading to engineering or medical education at the tertiary level; or vocational. The upper secondary vocational course will create skilled human resources for the employment sector as well.

Each stage will have to define a set of expected learning outcomes, outlined in Table 9.

### Table 9. Stages of education and learning outcome descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Explanations (learning outcomes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-formal early childhood care and development</td>
<td>Home-based, age-appropriate physical, cognitive, language, social–emotional, and moral and value development, supported by courses on parenting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundational education (P1 and P2)</td>
<td>Achieve foundational learning: literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, social and cultural literacy; learning skills and school readiness; development of neuromuscular co-ordination with hands-on activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education (P3–P6)</td>
<td>Learn to explore and acquire knowledge through self-initiative; learn social and cultural studies, environmental science, mathematics, hands-on practices creating artefacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education (S1–S4)</td>
<td>Learn to deepen knowledge through research and exploration with the Internet, co-operation, and collaboration for team learning; enhance self-regulated learning initiatives and skills. Learn subject-oriented courses, like History, Geography, Mathematics, Science, etc., and skills courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary education (US1 and US2)</td>
<td>Sharpen skills in research and exploration, collaborative and co-operative team learning, and self-regulated learning. Prepare for (i) tertiary education with more specialised subject knowledge, technical skills for polytechnic, or engineering or medical education, or (ii) moving into the world of work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The state will raise the bar of free and compulsory education to Grade 12 or age 18. This upgrading will also help to facilitate the implementation of Vision 2033. Alternatively, Seychelles may continue with mandatory ten-year schooling plus two years of compulsory education through alternative schooling and online learning.

The extension of compulsory school years to Grade 12 or age 18 is to achieve global parity and enhance the per capita GDP of the Seychellois. Lee and Lee (2016), Barro and Lee (2013, 2015) and the UNDP (2019) indicate a direct relationship between 15+ years of schooling and per capita GDP. More education leads to better human capital formation and an increase in the lifetime earnings of individuals. Extended schooling will contribute to the mission of developing productive and prosperous people.
Recommendation 1:
Adopt a new school education structure, with free and compulsory education up to 18 years of schooling.

Recommendation 2:
Adopt K-12 comprehensive schooling, comprising foundational, elementary, secondary and upper secondary schools within one campus.

Recommendation 3:
The focus of foundational schooling will be on acquiring basic literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and cultural literacy; elementary education will focus on acquiring knowledge; secondary education will be for deepening this knowledge and upper secondary education for creating knowledge and skills development in specific business, trade and professional areas.

Networking schools: School complexes

The schools in Seychelles are independent units at different levels, and as such, the number of students in each school is low. Ideally, it would be good to put schools of different levels under one management to provide a holistic environment where students move from foundational to elementary to secondary to upper secondary stages and grow in a known environment. It is proposed that feeder foundational and elementary schools be networked with the nearest secondary school, which will be upgraded to an upper secondary school. This will help integrate feeder schools with mother schools, which is necessary to bring more efficient unity of purpose and administration, as well as cost-effectiveness and enhanced school effectiveness.

Initially, feeder foundational and elementary schools should be identified for each of the 11 state schools. Near the secondary school (geographical proximity being the key factor), these foundational and elementary schools should be connected in a school network. Each such network will work, for the time being, as multi-campus schools with a distributed leadership model, guided by one school council and co-ordinated by the upper secondary school (mother school).

Recommendation 4:
Reorganise the schools into clusters in terms of geographical proximity, and designate a catchment area for each school.

Recommendation 5:
Establish a co-ordination mechanism for the schools within a cluster for better support and services to learners. As a transitional strategy for moving to single-campus K-12 schools, every upgraded upper secondary school will be networked with feeder foundational and elementary schools in its geographical proximity, creating a school complex.
Residential school for the gifted

Gifted students lead the world. They are the medium of global engagement. Seychelles may create special provisions for the education of the gifted. There are several models of education for such individuals.

Singapore’s three-stream model provides an “express” way for brilliant students. This ability grouping for the gifted is easier than differentiated instruction in a mixed class of 20–23 students. In a model practised by the Delhi government, brilliant students at municipal schools, based on their performance in the primary school end examination, are admitted to a model school (Navyug School); in another model, students are admitted at Grades 6 and 11 to Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas (State Talent Nurturing Schools), based on a competitive admission test. The Government of India has set up a chain of 661 residential schools (Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya or JNV), at least one in each of the 638 districts, for brilliant students from low-income rural families. All three Indian models have been working successfully.

Because of the small total number of Seychellois students (about 20,000), the Government of Seychelles should upgrade one of the good schools to make it a residential model school for gifted students. Residential schools provide a greater opportunity for peer group interactions and deeper engagement with peers and teachers.

The school for the gifted could include elementary, secondary and upper secondary levels. Brilliant students from foundational levels would be admitted to this school. All students may be provided with laptops and Internet connectivity; each class will be fitted with smart technology. Such a school shall be equipped with laboratories — for example, robotics, virtual labs, mathematics, language, geography, and skills training workshops.

Recommendation 6:
Upgrade one of the schools to be a residential model school for nurturing students with high potential.

Recommendation 7:
Ensure smart schools through the intensive use of technology. Every student may be provided a laptop with access to the Internet. All classes in the school will be equipped with smart technology.

School autonomy: Autonomous schools

The Minister of Education mentioned that the government is seriously considering giving autonomy to schools to free them from government control.

There is research evidence that having school-based management (i.e., autonomous schools) enhances school effectiveness. School-based management in many countries
around the world creates better teaching/learning environments and student achievement (Bandur, 2008). Studies indicate that most principals (50–70 per cent) feel school autonomy has a slight to significant positive effect on students’ learning outcomes and makes a moderate improvement in the delivery of building and grounds maintenance (Hugh Watson Consulting, 2004). The impact on local decision-making significantly increases the speed of school-based decision-making, improving the ability to set school priorities, control resources and address a range of matters on which decisions are based. There is a positive relationship between autonomy and all dimensions of self-management: decision-making, resource management and personnel management (Arar & Nasra, 2018). The research also indicates that school leadership teams need continuous development and capacity building in school-based management, as well as increased government funding to improve school effectiveness with the implementation of school-based management (Bandur, 2008).

Autonomy implies governance of an institution by itself rather than by others; thus, schools take independent decisions about their structure and operation. An autonomous school takes on the rights and responsibilities of making and implementing decisions, spearheaded by a school leadership team that involves teachers in the best interest of the students and the quality of institutional life.

There are three domains of institutional autonomy: academic, administrative and financial. These include eight management domains (Figure 2):

1. academic management
2. human resource management
3. financial management
4. infrastructure management
5. student services management
6. office or administrative management
7. network management
8. academic leadership

Schools enjoy academic autonomy in curricular planning, timetabling, teacher deployment, instructional practices and in-school student assessment. Currently, government protocols control the administration, with little room for situational management. Administrative autonomy will imply following rules and regulations in the school’s best interest using situational management options, including recruitment of teachers from a national pool of qualified teachers. Based on expenditure trends for the last five years and the addition of a certain percentage, the government will give block grants, with the freedom to further mobilise funds from the community, alumni and Seychellois diaspora. Schools should do budgetary allocation, expenditure control and management, accounting and internal auditing. However, the government should continue to do external financial auditing.
Granting autonomy should be phased in over a few years, preferably three. Based on the results of academic audits and quality assessments, schools will receive autonomy. Effective utilisation of autonomy depends significantly on the academic leadership skills of the school leadership team. The research on change management points to the attributes and roles of heads of institutions as the most influential factors for determining school quality and effectiveness (Latchem & Hanna 2001; Mukhopadhyay, 2012, 2020).
**Recommendation 8:**

All K-12 schools may be given autonomy to adopt school-based management in academic, administrative and financial domains in a phased manner, based on the results of academic audits.

**Recommendation 9:**

The school leadership team, school council members, and teachers should be oriented and trained in the management of autonomous schools.

**Recommendation 10:**

The council should focus its attention on effective teaching–learning and learning assessment processes and support leaders to develop the skills relevant for managing a cluster-based network of schools.

**Academic framework**

Seychelles’ social and education sector vision is to develop “educated and empowered citizens,” calling for the nurturing of every student as a lifelong self-learner. The academic framework must be developed accordingly and must be congruent with and facilitate the values cherished by Seychellois.

The Vision 2033 document mentions ten values for a learning society:

1. celebration of the unique Creole heritage and identity
2. democratic, accountable and transparent governance
3. prioritising increasing environmental sustainability and resilience
4. people-centred development
5. private sector-led economic growth
6. an enabling government
7. consistently high standards for public sector service delivery
8. communities supported to become more empowered, adaptive, responsible and sustainable
9. solutions underpinned by innovative technologies
10. science and technology enhanced through global partnerships
**Table 10. What every school and every student will do**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every school will</th>
<th>Every student will</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>become child-friendly; introduce activities that attract children; practise joyful learning.</td>
<td>complete the compulsory years of schooling prescribed by the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>track absentee students and dropouts; introduce a back-to-school programme and ensure every child completes compulsory years of schooling.</td>
<td>demonstrate mastery over grade-appropriate content prescribed by the state and accomplish a specified level of academic achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide differentiated learning opportunities.</td>
<td>learn to learn — develop skills for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adopt technology-integrated constructivist and constructionist instructional approaches that help students learn (instead of teaching).</td>
<td>develop a passion for learning new knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide age- and grade-appropriate opportunities for hands-on practices, tools and instruments for creating artefacts, and the development of trade skills.</td>
<td>demonstrate age- and grade-appropriate digital skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establish robust foundational learning in language literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, health and hygiene literacy, and social and cultural literacy in the early years.</td>
<td>demonstrate skills with and love for working with hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide education in and develop pride about Creole literature in addition to English and French.</td>
<td>cherish the dignity of and love for labour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide education in blue economy vocations, such as tourism and marine science.</td>
<td>create age- and grade-appropriate artefacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide an opportunity for the development of physical health and healthy habits.</td>
<td>participate in co-scholastic and co-curricular activities; develop at least two hobbies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide education in values cherished in Seychellois society.</td>
<td>demonstrate cultural literacy in and pride for Seychelles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create odes on Seychellois life and culture and compose music for children to sing.</td>
<td>demonstrate moral values cherished by Seychellois society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utilise co-scholastic and co-curricular activities for developing lasting interests and passionate hobbies.</td>
<td>demonstrate age- and grade-appropriate values of national and global citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate a caring, empathic ambience for students to feel safe and comfortable.</td>
<td>participate in community development activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use formative evaluation to offer process feedback for developing a growth mindset among students.</td>
<td>display good health and healthy habits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evolve as a learning organisation.</td>
<td>demonstrate creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create special opportunities for the gifted.</td>
<td>excel in a potential area of talent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In line with the ten values, development goals are also spelled out in the social and education sector visions of Vision 2033. Seychelles expresses the goal as “complete development,” more commonly referred to in educational literature as “all-round development.” The system must define what every school and student will (be able to)
do, following the concept of all-round development and within the values framework. An indicative sample list of “dos” for schools and students is given in Table 10.

The all-round development of students implies physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral and values development. It will be achieved through active engagement of students in scholastic, co-scholastic and co-curricular activities, and opportunities for incidental learning in corridors, canteens, playgrounds, art and music rooms, school transport with peers to and from home, and overall school ambience.

Within the context of these values, the academic framework comprises four dimensions, covered in the following subsections: curriculum, instruction, assessment and certification.

**Curriculum**

The curriculum dimension will include five education components: academic, physical and health, social and moral, hands-on and skills, and hobby and life enrichment (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Proposed curricular framework of new model of schooling.**
Figure 3. Proposed curricular framework of new model of schooling.

There are four levels in the proposed structures, each with a focused learning agenda:

- **Foundational education** will focus on developing basic language literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, and social and cultural literacy.
- **Elementary education** will focus on students taking the initiative in acquiring knowledge and complementing knowledge provided by teachers.
- **Secondary education** will focus on students deepening their knowledge through greater involvement and exploration and by applying and verifying knowledge.
- **Upper secondary education** will focus on discovering and creating knowledge, the attribute of a lifelong self-learner.

**Instruction**

To develop every Seychellois as a lifelong self-learner, it will be necessary to progressively unfold self-learning skills, moving from receiving knowledge to acquiring, deepening and creating knowledge. Hence, the instructional dimension will comprise technology-integrated learning and self-regulated learning as well as group- and project-based learning. The central core should be self-regulated group-based learning with technology, especially using the Internet for desktop research, online chats, and asynchronous communications among students and teachers. There are many instances of successful flipped and blended learning and self-regulated learning (Bernard et al. 2009, 2014; Means et al. 2010, 2013; Sitzmann et al. 2006; Zhao et al. 2005). Mukhopadhyay (2021) documented the process of developing and implementing flipped and blended learning designs.

**Assessment and certification**

Seychelles practices a five-stage assessment process: Stage 1 for assessment in the early childhood years, Stages 2 and 3 for assessment in the primary years, Stages 4 and 5 for assessment in the secondary years. At the end of Key Stage 5, assessments are also closely linked to qualifications and awards to enable students to pursue further studies or work.

Schools should adopt continuous and comprehensive assessment and provide feedback to improve learning outcomes, thereby helping every child complete the compulsory years of schooling.

Summative evaluation or external examination has the hidden agenda of elimination, besides classifying students according to performance levels. Failing in a summative assessment is one of the reasons for school dropout. This contradicts the policy goal of every student completing the compulsory years of schooling. Hence, the assessment and certification process needs to be reconstructed. The purpose of evaluation should be to ensure learning.
Aligning with the principle of schools having academic autonomy, learning assessments in foundational, elementary and secondary education will be school based. Schools will adopt formative assessment throughout the year and summative assessment at the end of the academic year. Schools will maintain a learning portfolio covering learning outcomes in all five domains of the academic framework. A portfolio conference with the student and their parents would strengthen teaching and learning.

In the pattern of Norway and India, Seychelles may conduct National Achievement Surveys (NAS) at the end of Grades 6 and 8 in selected subjects. The achievement test would be voluntary. The students should receive a certificate of performance at the NAS. Such national achievement tests would help the government measure comparative performance at the school level.

Seychelles should participate in international achievement testing, especially in the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment PISA. Since 2000, over 90 countries have participated in PISA (Kaushik, 2021). PISA aims to measure how well students can apply what they learn in school to real-life situations by assessing the abilities of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science. The NAS would help identify talented students for the proposed residential school for the gifted and prepare students to participate in PISA.

**Health and physical education**

Health and physical education should be an integral part of the curriculum and learning experience for developing disease-free, sound health and kinaesthetic skills demonstrated in sports and games. It is impressive to note that five Seychellois athletes (four males and one female) qualified and participated in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, in athletics, judo, sailing and swimming. The health and physical education programme will aim to identify individuals with natural talent for certain sports and games. There are many students with sound kinaesthetic intelligence. Seychellois students can excel in aqua sports, soccer, cricket, tennis, and track and field events in sports and athletics in the Pan African Games and the Olympics, winning medals for the country.

**Working with hands**

TVET finds a prominent place in Seychellois education. However, vocational education is looked down upon as meant for second-rate students. UNESCO (1996) considers “learning to do” one of the four pillars of learning. The academic framework will include working with hands to develop neuromuscular co-ordination and psychomotor skills and underscore the dignity of manual work.

At the foundational stage, students will learn through hands-on practices, drawing upon

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50 In Finland, students are offered skill-oriented classes in art, carpentry, music, metalwork, cooking and textiles (Abrams, 2011).
a large variety of alternatives.\textsuperscript{49} In elementary education, students should use hand tools and develop artefacts or products using suitable materials like cardboard, wood, plastic, clay, and so forth.\textsuperscript{50} Activities like gardening, boat making, creating working models and digital tools, and the like can be linked to hobby development. These activities at the foundational and elementary education stages develop manual skills and allow for creative expression. At the secondary and upper secondary stages, students will learn trade skills, such as tourism.\textsuperscript{51}

The hands-on experience from basic education until secondary education develops a love for labour and an appreciation of its dignity, which are necessary to value the joy and importance of vocational education.

\textbf{Life enrichment and hobby education}

Hobbies like sports, music, painting, crafting, dancing, dramatics, creative writing, photography, hiking, origami, cooking, video gaming, scrapbooking, woodwork, pottery, birdwatching, stargazing, and others are life-enriching passions. The co-scholastic and co-curricular activities in schools provide ample opportunity for developing hobbies and passions. Every student must participate in two co-scholastic and co-curricular activities. Schools should identify talents and provide opportunities to excel.

The other domain of life enrichment is developing life skills, such as learning to learn, communication, critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, working in teams, self-management, interpersonal relationships, initiative and enterprise, planning and management, empathy, and so forth. Many of these life skills were flagged in the 2013 NCF as essential competencies.

For achieving all-round development, it will be imperative for schools to carefully plan all activities with the requisite priority, emphasis and time. Students’ performance in all these domains must find a place in their portfolios.

Traditionally, academic education is considered necessary, and the rest of the activities are desirable. For all-round development, all five pillars of the curricular framework must be necessary and assigned a weight by an expert group at all different levels of schooling.

The curriculum needs to be carefully planned and implemented to achieve the desired results. On average, schools work 195 days a year, including examination days. Assuming 150 instructional days in a year, at a rate of seven hours per day, a school generates 1,050 instructional hours in a year. Assuming 40 per cent will be for academic activities, that equates to 420 hours for accomplishing the subject-based syllabus. With 15 per cent allocated to each of the other four components, each component gets 157.5 (158) hours in a year. Curricular planning should map out all the activities over the periods, days, weeks and months, based on the number of instructional hours available.

\textsuperscript{51} One of the Indian states introduced an interesting innovation — Earn While You Learn — to stop dropout due to poverty. It is now quite a popular programme in higher education institutions. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has introduced an Earn While You Learn scheme in the field of tourism: http://164.100.158.43/sites/default/files/060120121132098_0.pdf.
All schools will develop an annual curricular plan and share it with the students and parents.

**Recommendation 11:**
Develop an academic framework that aligns with national values, covering the five domains — academic, physical and health, social and moral, hands-on and skills, and hobbies and life enrichment education — to provide a holistic school experience.

**Recommendation 12:**
Set up an expert group to allocate weights for the different components of the academic framework within the curricula at each level of schooling.

**Recommendation 13:**
Ensure through the Inspectorate that schools are able to allocate appropriate time for all the planned activities within the curricula.

**Recommendation 14:**
Provide training and facilitation for teachers integrating ICT in teaching and learning, and do so in ways that promote self-directed learning.

**Recommendation 15:**
Set up a national testing agency as a certifying body for conducting achievement tests in Grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. The International Cambridge Examination may be an alternative examination to the national tests, with students given the freedom to choose.

**Recommendation 16:**
The assessment practices in schools should be focused on learning rather than elimination of students, giving them options to appear for tests as and when they are ready.

**Alternative schooling**

One of the objectives of this report is to explore alternative schooling, which was mandated by the Minister of Education. The issue of alternative schooling was flagged because of dropouts, especially at the secondary education level. The objective was to create a safety net to help dropouts complete secondary schooling.

As indicated in Table 2, there were 160 cases of non-attendance during 2019, two of them due to death. Out of 158, 18 students were pregnant, compelling them to leave day-to-day schooling; 28 had been absent from school for a long time, for unknown reasons; the number of unofficial dropouts (assumed) was 42, and confirmed dropouts were only 30. This gross number is likely to further decline after implementing the reforms that promise to make schools more vibrant, with scope for all types of learners (Fleming, 1992). Taking 2019 as the baseline, Seychelles needs an alternative schooling provision for a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 158.
There are several forms of alternative schooling, including home-schooling, private or community tutoring and coaching to appear for public examination as a private candidate, open schooling, online education, and hybrid learning, among others.

**Home-schooling:** Home-schooling is practised widely in many countries globally, having become more popular after the advent of deschooling (Illich, 1972). Home-schooling provides individualisation and personalisation of the child’s education, helping children excel in their respective areas of talent. However, there is no conclusive evidence of its effectiveness. The major challenges for home-schooling are parental commitment and competence to help a child learn. The parent is expected to do what a team of teachers do in a school. As students enter secondary grades with disciplinary subject-based curricula, parents often find themselves to be inadequate — for example, a parent with a postgraduate qualification cannot help their child learn mathematics. With both parents working in most households, it is difficult for them to provide quality time for their children. As the chairman of a school council mentioned, parents prefer to go to malls on weekends rather than visit the school and meet the teachers. Home-schooling therefore may not be useful in Seychelles.

**Community tutoring:** Community tutoring is practised in New Zealand. The tutors are paired with dropouts and disenfranchised students, overcoming limited resources to provide educational and tutorial support (Mozolic & Shuster 2016). Schoone (2020) commented that these tutors are not qualified teachers. Instead, they use their experiential learning to teach students. But their affective engagement with disenfranchised (rusticated) students has a transformative effect, so for a small population, this could be an alternative approach.

**Private tutoring:** Private tutoring is extensively practised in many countries, where there are provisions for attending public examinations as a private candidate (Bray, 1999, 2021). Private candidates often receive private tuition to prepare themselves for these examinations. School enrolment increased significantly, as indicated by the NER and GER. The home support did not increase, and quality was affected accordingly. Private tutoring served as a complement and/or alternative to home support. This is necessary for children, especially from socio-economically weaker homes. Unless Seychelles introduces the option of private appearance at public examinations at the end of Grades 10 and 12, private tuition cannot work as alternative schooling. Also, the cost of private tuition is high for most families.

**Open schooling:** Open schooling is practised in many countries, such as Australia, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Zambia, among others (Mukhopadhyay & Philips, 1994). All these countries have large populations, with a sizeable number of school dropouts and substantial enrolment — 4.13 million in India’s National Institute of Open Schooling. The main objective of initiating open schooling provision is to provide a second opportunity to those who cannot continue in formal schools and have to drop out for various social and economic reasons.

An open school provides a large variety of subjects for students to choose from without
any restriction in terms of combinations of subjects. Students can choose any subject according to their interest and preference. Open schools also offer a flexible schedule — for example, a five-year span to complete what would be a two-year course in the conventional system — so students can progress at their own pace instead of the pace set by peers and teachers. Open schools also provide flexible testing and assessment, and the opportunity to accumulate credits. Flexibility is the hallmark of open schooling.

Pedagogy in open schooling comprises self-instructional curricular materials, complemented with curricular audio and video resources and reinforced by face-to-face or online tutorials with counsellors. Open school learners can choose how they want to learn — for example, by reading texts in print or online, exploring learning resources on the Internet, watching videos, playing computer games, chatting online or face-to-face with peers, and consulting seniors, peers, parents and tutors. Learners can choose to devote time to different learning tasks according to their perceived needs. They also choose online and offline quizzes and tests, construct artefacts, work on capstone projects, and so forth to periodically gauge their learning progress.

Open schooling as an option requires huge investments in infrastructure and content development and works best with large numbers of learners, to leverage the power of economies of scale.

**Online education or e-learning:** With the advent of technology, online learning or “virtual high school” has become a prominent option in many countries, especially in Canada and the USA, where learners have adequate access to sufficient bandwidth. Online education or e-learning comprises access to online learning resources tailored for the specific programme, in the form of texts, videos, games, apps, quizzes, and so forth. The availability of open educational resources further supports cost reduction and provides alternative learning resources. The system uses discussion forums for online interactions among peers and with tutors, as well as online assignments, tests, feedback, and so on to provide learning opportunities anytime, in any place. Typically, these digital versions of open schooling are made possible by the digitisation of content and the availability of networks for accessing learning from anywhere.

**Hybrid learning** is another alternative that combines schooling with online learning. As classroom proceedings are streamed, students attend classes online with any Internet-enabled device. Some of the courses or part of the teaching and learning are also covered by in-person face-to-face teaching. A typical hybrid environment uses online learning and in-person teaching for different courses, as required.

SIDOL, which has considerable experience in open and distance learning, should be called upon to develop a mechanism of alternative schooling for the small number of dropouts, combining the best of open schooling and online learning as a hybrid option. Such an alternative would also be used by students from all schools for remedial learning. Several activities may be required to undertake these new activities within SIDOL. Additional human resources and expert support would be required to carry out the following:
• curriculum development
• development of instructional materials
• providing opportunities for collaboration and co-operative learning
• personalised tutorial support
• formative assessment
• summative assessment

Curriculum development: This can be done in more than one way. SIDOL should adopt the curriculum prescribed by the state. It can also develop curriculum in new subjects that are not currently offered, especially related to blue economy science and skills. What is important is to granularise the curricular contents for open schooling. For example, at the S1 level in secondary school, a student is expected to study five academic subjects. Each textbook on the prescribed syllabus may contain, say, 12 chapters. Thus, a student is expected to learn 60 chapters. In open school, the number of subjects will be more, including science and mathematics, humanities and social sciences, and vocational and technical subjects. There will be a pool of subjects, allowing students to choose any topic or theme, without the conventional stipulations of subject combinations. SIDOL may offer education in as many as 20 subjects. The courses should be developed at both O (average) and A (advanced) levels for students to choose from.

It is important to note that developing online content for school subjects to be offered by SIDOL would also generate resources for teachers and students in the current school system. As such, any student could supplement their classroom learning by enrolling in SIDOL courses for extra support. Teachers might also be encouraged to use a blended approach to their classroom teaching by using SIDOL courses.

Instructional or learning materials: Learning materials should be developed in multiple formats, including text, audio, video, computer and video games, mobile apps, virtual labs, and others. Such content shall be delivered using a suitable learning management system (LMS) for online delivery.

Programme delivery: SIDOL programmes will be delivered primarily online using an LMS. However, depending on curricular requirements, arrangements for in-person academic counselling and support in schools during weekends shall also be part of the teaching and learning experience.

Assessment: SIDOL should offer online courses with built-in provisions for formative assessment and for credit-based micro-credentials. Students may collect and accumulate micro-credentials. Tutorial support and academic counselling during weekends shall also be part of the teaching and learning process. As and when a student collects the requisite number of micro-credentials, the student will be certified. A SIDOL-certified student at the end of Grades 10 and 12 will be eligible to take the national qualifying examinations.

Online structured content for school subjects can serve as important teaching–learning
resources for teachers and students in the current school system. Seychelles also should consider streaming regular classes for alternative school students to access.

**Teacher management and development**

The new model of schooling will depend primarily upon teacher quality and morale for its success. Hence, teacher management is of vital importance for reforming Seychelles’ school education. The TMD Situational Analysis (discussed in Section 3) indicates that teacher management and professional status, educational leadership and management, teacher empowerment, teacher professionalisation, and teacher development are not

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**Recommendation 17:**

Strengthen the Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning (SIDOL) to leverage the power of online distance learning by initiating a hybrid model of open schooling that uses online learning and open educational resources (OER). This new model will combine the best features of open schooling, e-learning, hybrid learning, and community tutoring.

**Recommendation 18:**

Reorganise academic, technical and administrative human resources at SIDOL to implement the new open schooling model of teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 19:**

Develop an alternative pathway to receive equivalent O- and A-level certificates by taking courses from SIDOL. Students will be eligible to take the Grade 10 and Grade 12 national examinations.

**Recommendation 20:**

Engage course developers who are trained to curate OER and develop online courses.

**Recommendation 21:**

Identify tutors who are available online, via telephone and at identified study centres during weekends to support learners and address their doubts. SIDOL will network with autonomous schools and private/community tutors for counselling and tutorials, including to facilitate laboratory-based science, technology and skill education, and ICT skills.

**Recommendation 22:**

Integrate SIDOL courses in regular teaching and learning to improve their quality.

**Recommendation 23:**

Set up a digital learning resource centre within SIDOL to create and curate quality educational resources for open schooling and to manage the technologies to deliver teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 24:**

Facilitate study visits for core staff of the Ministry of Education and SIDOL to countries with successful open schooling practices, such as to the National Institute of Open Schooling, in India.
working satisfactorily. The challenges facing the teaching profession are: workload and attrition; qualifications and recruitment; and motivation and job satisfaction, including salaries.

**TEACHER WORKLOAD AND ATTRITION**

Teacher workload has often been referred to as a major problem. With 195 working days in a year, and an average of 26 periods a week for a teacher with an average class size of 23, the workload is easily comparable with that of teachers in other countries. Seychelles has a teacher–student ratio of 1:11 at the secondary stage (Confait, 2014), 1:16 at the primary and 1:19 at the crèche, with an average of 1:14 for the entire school education spectrum. For comparison, some other countries’ teacher–student ratios are: UK (1:20), Netherlands (1:17), South Africa (1:27) and Finland (1:14) at the secondary level; and UK (1:20), New Zealand (1:17), France (1:19), Japan (1:16) and Finland (1:14) at the primary level. Teacher attrition and desire to leave the teaching profession are also normal. At a teacher–student ratio of even 1:20 (UK), Seychelles needs 1,000 teachers for up to 20,000 students in state schools. The system probably has more teachers than required for effective delivery of teaching and learning.

**TEACHER QUALIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT**

Changes in the school structure and academic framework warrant changes in teacher qualifications. During a discussion, the Principal Secretary for the Education Sector Development Department pointed out the over-emphasis on pedagogical qualifications compared to content mastery. Instead, content and pedagogical mastery need to be correctly balanced. The qualifications for foundational, elementary, secondary and upper secondary levels need to be redefined. The government may consider adopting the following norm and reconstructing the teacher qualification framework (Table 11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic qualification</th>
<th>Teacher training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundational</td>
<td>Three-year teacher training diploma in early childhood care and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Two-year degree programme leading to Bachelor of Education (BEd) specialising in elementary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Two-year degree programme leading to BEd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary</td>
<td>Two-year degree programme leading to BEd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The qualifications and knowledge of teachers on the job should be enhanced by

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52 From OECD data at [https://data.oecd.org/teachers/students-per-teaching-staff.htm](https://data.oecd.org/teachers/students-per-teaching-staff.htm).
encouraging them to take postgraduate courses in their subjects of specialisation from UniSey or through open and distance education and e-learning offered by leading universities around the world.

Working teachers also engage in periodic short-term in-service professional development programmes. As mentioned in the academic framework, autonomous schools should adopt a self-regulated, school-based professional learning approach. Technology must be made a mandatory part of capacity building and professional learning for teachers.

The TMD policy intends to raise the standard of teacher recruitment to improve the quality of education. In view of the same, the state could stipulate revised eligibility conditions — academic qualifications, professional teacher training, and teaching experience. A national-level teacher eligibility test could also be considered.

The TMD policy mentioned the teacher appraisal process in Seychelles. Citing Dos Santos (2016), the policy expressed doubts about whether the system whereby “the appraisers identify teachers who are achieving the expected levels of performance and [reward them] accordingly” is working. Teacher and staff appraisals should be more inclusive if they are to be trustworthy and effective for enhancing teacher effectiveness. Ideally, teacher appraisals should be 360° assessments, involving students, teachers, peers and superiors. The government should introduce National Teachers’ Awards (maybe five every year) to honour outstanding teachers, indicate the profession’s prestige and incentivise professional achievement through public recognition. The President may be invited to present the awards at the World Teachers’ Day celebration. A set of appropriate criteria for the national awards should be developed.

**MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION**

According to Herzberg’s two-factor theory of motivation, there are hygiene (well-being) factors and motivating factors. Lack of hygiene factors causes employees to work less and feel demotivated. Salary and other payments are the hygiene factors. Social recognition and rewards are motivators. Hygiene factors are essential for achieving moderate satisfaction, though such factors never fully satisfy employees. Motivating factors do not work where hygiene factors are absent, but motivating factors can create a high level of job satisfaction when hygiene factors are in place. The average monthly salary of a teacher in Seychelles compared to in Mauritius and Finland is low. Further, in the current bureaucratic set-up, teachers do not enjoy appropriate social status, recognition and appreciation. This creates a case of double disadvantage, with poor hygiene and motivation. While job satisfaction is beyond the scope of the present report, it may be a worthy area for the government to explore further.


Recommendation 25:
As there is teacher management and development (TMD) policy in place, the Ministry of Education may develop a plan for implementing the same, with timelines and measurable targets. Such an action plan should also consider the need to skill and reskill teachers to leverage the power of ICT for open schooling and to integrate ICT in regular classrooms. In implementing the TMD policy, the government should appoint an empowered Teachers’ Commission to look at all issues in the teaching profession.

Recommendation 26:
Revise the teacher qualification and training requirements at the different levels of teaching.

Recommendation 27:
Conduct a National Teacher Eligibility Test using a battery of tests covering academic achievement, teaching aptitude, critical and creative thinking, and teacher employability.

National School Development Council: Anchoring the reforms

This new model of schooling is a system design project. A system is a compact organisation wherein all subsystems are causally related and linked to one another. Without an anchoring and nurturing system, the reforms and innovations recommended in this report will either dangle or remain unfulfilled dreams. Seychelles needs a system that can connect all components of the reforms and nurture and implement the recommendations. Seychelles needs a system that can create synergy among the most important four functions — academic audit and quality assurance; evaluation and learning assessment; curriculum and teaching–learning materials development; and professional learning — to support the qualitative improvement of school education.

The implementation of the educational reforms suggested in the report — autonomous schools, alternative schooling, schooling of the gifted, academic framework, teacher management, technology-integrated education, and so forth — will require rigorous nurturing and management by setting objectives. As the government intends to release schools from bureaucratic control, Seychelles will need a quality empowered national professional organisation. In the pattern of the Finnish National Agency for Education, the government should, by an act of Parliament, set up an autonomous apex national organisation: the National School Development Council (NSDC).

The NSDC should act as the engine for continuous and sustainable reforms and growth. On the one hand, the NSDC should serve as the government’s think tank; on the other, it will nurture the ambition of achieving quality schooling to develop educated and empowered Seychellois.
The NSDC will comprise five centres (Figure 4):

- **Centre for Academic Audit and Quality Assurance**: This centre will be responsible for academic audits and quality assurance. It will facilitate school-based internal quality assessment and assurance. The centre will oversee the implementation of the five-pillar model of the academic framework.

- **Centre for Evaluation and Learning Assessment**: This centre will modernise evaluation by introducing technology-integrated learning assessment and examination management. The centre will nurture schools to improve formative assessment tools and techniques and oversee the quality of assessment and feedback. The centre will conduct the public examinations at the end of Grades 10 and 12 and conduct the National Achievement Survey after Grades 6 and 8. The NSDC will certify graduates from formal and alternative schooling outfits taking the public examinations and students taking the National Achievement Surveys.
• **Centre for Curriculum and TLM Development:** This centre will develop curricula, textbooks, teaching–learning materials for schools, and training and development materials for school staff — leadership teams, teachers and non-teaching staff — and parents.

• **Centre for Professional Learning:** This centre will co-ordinate with the other three centres and provide school-based support for professional learning. The centre will design strategies and implement them to achieve collective teacher efficacy and help schools emerge as learning organisations.

• **Centre for Educational Policy and Planning:** This centre will act as the think tank of the government, assisting it with policy development, analysis, review, impact assessment and educational planning.

The NSDC should be headed by a high-ranking academician at the level of a Principal Secretary to the Government or equivalent. The centres heads of the NSDC should also be scholars in education who have made contributions to teaching and learning.

The NSDC will work as the lifeline for the Seychelles school education system. Considering its importance and far-reaching impact, the government should commission an expert agency to develop a detailed proposal, including the association’s constitution and by-laws, and place it before Parliament for approval.

**Recommendation 28:**

By an act of Parliament, set up a National School Development Council (NSDC) as an apex autonomous national institution for anchoring and nurturing the new model of schooling, and empower the Council as a think tank of the government for policy development, analysis, review, and impact assessment.

**Recommendation 29:**

Considering its critical role in the sustainable development of quality school education and its professional support to the government on educational policy and planning, the Ministry of Education should engage an expert agency to develop a detailed proposal for the NSDC, to be approved by Parliament.
Financial implications

This new model of schooling makes several recommendations. Possible financial implications for some of the major recommendations are summarised below.

*Comprehensive autonomous K-12 schools:* Autonomy is the devolution of power to the existing schools. This can be achieved by modifying the rules and practices of school management. There is no significant financial implication. Comprehensive K-12 schooling will save on expenditure in the longer term.

*Alternative schooling:* Unlike Zambia, New Zealand, India, Bangladesh and other countries, Seychelles does not need to set up a separate open school, as the number of students is likely to be very small (estimated to be about 200). It should be implemented by upgrades to SIDOL, with limited financial implications.

*Academic framework:* The academic framework is another important part of the reform agenda. However, there are no financial implications; it requires the streamlining of co-scholastic and co-curricular activities and the reform of classroom practices.

*Schools for the gifted:* The proposal is to convert one of the state schools in Mahé into a residential school for the gifted. This would require separate costing based on the infrastructure and facilities to be provided, as per the recommendations.

*National School Development Council:* This is the most important recommendation. The NSDC will be created through reorganising and subsuming existing units currently in operation in Seychelles. The NSDC can be created by reappropriating staff in the units now run by the government and using the existing physical infrastructure. There are no major financial implications.

Reducing the mismatch between plenty of facilities and their poor utilisation can lower a lot of costs. The innovations and reforms recommended here can be implemented by reappropriating existing human, financial and material resources. There are no significant financial implications.

Conclusion

This report provides a comprehensive framework for Seychelles to consider a new model of schooling to achieve the goals in its education policy framework and the constitution. Specifically, it proposes: upgrading schools to K-12 comprehensive schools, raising the bar of free and compulsory education to 18 years of age, adopting a new academic framework to enhance school effectiveness, and introducing autonomous school management, alternative schooling, and teacher management. Setting up a National School Development Council to anchor all these reforms would have the most profound impact on the development of school education in Seychelles.
Documents Consulted

1993  Constitution of Seychelles (Article 33/35)


2005  Seychelles Qualifications Act
https://seylii.org/sc/legislation/act/2005/12

2007  National ICT Policy
https://www.ict.gov.sc/resources/policy.pdf

2009  Education Reform Action Plan (ERAP)

2009  TVET project memorandum on TVET 2009
https://unevoc.unesco.org/pub/tm_innovation.pdf

2011  The Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education

2011  Tertiary Education Act


2013  Education Sector Medium-Term Strategy 2013–2017

2013  The National Assessment Framework: Supporting a New Vision for Learning
2013 The National Curriculum Framework: Supporting a New Vision for Learning

2013 Millennium Development Goals Status Report


2015 Inclusive Education Policy

2017 Education (Amendment) Act, 2017 (Act No. 28 of 2017)
https://seylii.org/sc/ACT%2028%20OF%202017_0.pdf

2018 National Human Resource Development Policy

2018 National Educational Profile

2019 Seychelles’ Vision 2033: Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Future

2019 Seychelles National Development Plan Strategy

2020 Teacher Management and Development Policy

2020 National Voluntary Review 2020 Republic of Seychelles (review of SDGs)
References


Annex 1: Terms of Reference for This Report

COL initiated this report at the request of the Ministry of Education, Government of Seychelles with the following terms of reference for the consultant:

1. Prepare a status report with recommendations on the current system of education in Seychelles by:
   i. initiating discussions among key stakeholders regarding the identified challenges of the present model of schooling;
   ii. reviewing the 2000 Education of a Learning Society Policy and the Education Act of 2004 and Amendment of 2017 to promote schools’ decentralisation and autonomy;
   iii. analysing the status of achievement of SDG4 in Seychelles;
   iv. conducting surveys amongst Head Teachers, School Council Chairpersons and other relevant stakeholders;
   v. consulting key ministry officials regarding relevant issues, including those pertaining to the decentralising framework and the concept of a comprehensive education;

2. Based on the findings and recommendations of the report, produce a draft proposal for validation by COL and the Ministry of Education, taking the following points into consideration:
   i. holistic development of all learners;
   ii. school leaders’ role becoming more like chief executive officers in the new landscape;
   iii. leaving no child behind;
   iv. technology-enabled learning becoming an essential element of the new model;
   v. reducing school dropouts in secondary schools;
   vi. home-schooling;

3. Propose a structure and teacher’s teaching load for the new model; and

4. Present a new structure, organisation and estimated financial investment required to set up the alternative recommended model for K-12 education in Seychelles.
The primary methodology was desktop research, complemented by a few other data-gathering tools. The consultant adopted two main strategies: situational analysis with elements of diagnostic study; and building the future structures and processes of a new model of schooling. To understand developments and the educational development process, the consultant analysed relevant documents using desktop research, consulted and conversed with people, and conducted surveys.

To propose a new school education model, it was necessary to adopt comparative education research to figure out the best practices in a few advanced countries and study a future vision for Seychelles. This was also discussed with the Minister of Education, Principal Secretary and other stakeholders.

Intensive study and detailed analysis of the following documents have been done.

- The legal framework was derived from studying the Constitution of 1993, the Educational Act of 2004, the Education Act (Amendment) of 2017, and the Seychelles Tertiary Education Act of 2011.

- The policy framework was derived from the study of the Educational Policy of 2000, the Inclusive Education Policy of 2013, the ICT in Education Policy of 2014, the Human Resource Development Policy of 2019, the Teacher Management and Development Policy of 2020, and the Vision 2033 document.

- Studying the curriculum, assessment and qualification framework added value. Another important document was the Voluntary National Review 2020 of the SDG in Seychelles.

- The data on students, teachers, etc. were derived from educational statistics published by the Ministry of Education in 2019, and several other documents published by international agencies, especially the UIS, UNESCO, OECD, African Development Bank and others.

- Several research studies on Seychelles school education conducted by scholars for their doctoral studies in universities in several other countries were also consulted.

**DATA COLLECTION**

- Survey of teachers: 237 teachers responded to the survey on self-assessment of their teaching and learning practices.

- Survey of head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of departments, and inspectors: 62 responses were received from supervisors.

- Interviews with the Minister of Education and Principal Secretary.

- Focus group discussions were planned, but due to low turnout, these were treated as interviews.
The people consulted in Seychelles were:

1. Dr Justin Valentin, Minister of Education and HRD, Government of Seychelles
2. Mr John Lesperance, Special Advisor to the Minister for Education and HRD
3. Mr Ian Charlette, Chairperson of the School Council, Anse Etoile Primary School
4. Ms Jacqueline Gertrude, Principal Quality Assurance Officer, School Inspection Unit
5. Donald Hugh Basil Estico, School Inspector at Seychelles
6. Mr Abel Sorry, Principal Research Officer, the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy’s Policy and Programme Management Division
7. Miss Francesca Adrienne, Director General, Maritime Boundary Management Division, Department of Blue Economy
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