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## *The trilemma of different worlds. Bridging the gap in between curriculum research, policy and practice. (a european perspective and an albanian case study.)*

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### Abstract

For decades all over Europe curriculum research, policy and practice have had loose connections. Educational policy makers have the tendency to stimulate quick generic curriculum reforms, whereas schools are initiating and struggling with (oftentimes incoherent) local changes. Researchers seem to study issues disconnected from practice, studying policy effects or by performing merely theoretical studies. On the other hand, data are often seen as creating both a connection and a tension between the ‘realms’ of educational research and policy-making, and research and development as the interface of a triangular relationship with policy and practice.

- This paper addresses questions such as:
- What are roots of and current trends in curriculum research, policy and practice?
- What are feasible strategies to promote and realize the connections between curriculum research, policy and practice?
- What are guidelines/recommendations for increasing the relevance of curriculum research?

Bringing together statistics and input from the curriculum research perspective, the curriculum policy perspective, and the curriculum practice perspective provides an engaging analysis of the changing relationship between educational research, policy and practice. We note that national research institutions have to acquire particular identities, which mixes the identities of academics, politicians and professional practitioners.

In the European context, this is day by day being referred to as ‘the triple helix model’ whereby we find institutions doing educational research in a complex and dynamic system of actors producing and applying knowledge and we can see the emergence of a variety of possible configurations. New opportunities, and an increased potential for influence can be traced through the evidence-based movement, enhanced European cooperation, and national and sectoral innovation strategies.

A new research-based strategy for curriculum development adopted European-

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wise, conceived and developed with a view to “creating balance and consistency between the various components”, is viewed as applicable to the Albanian context of curriculum developing institutions, with its key requirement being the effective collaboration between researchers, developers and teachers. Working together through the different stages of: preliminary investigation; theoretical embedding; empirical testing; and documentation, analysis and reflection on process and outcomes.

## **Introduction**

Curriculum development is almost notorious for its weak relationship with research. Socio-political arguments usually dominate curriculum decision making (in most, including European, countries, with all their variety). Priorities for curriculum projects seldom arise from systematic monitoring and analysis of practices and outcomes. Available research-based knowledge is often insufficiently used during the development process. And empirical information about actual uptake and implementation of curriculum innovations is often lacking. Altogether, one may conclude that curriculum development is hardly an evidence-based enterprise, in contrast to much policy rhetoric nowadays. This paper will examine how a better cross-fertilisation between educational research and curriculum development could strengthen the information base for curriculum policies and classroom practices.

Curriculum reform often has a dubious reputation. Cuban (1992, p.34), Fullan (2007, p.21) and Leyendecker (2008, p.16) in their writings even speculate that as a universal experience, large- scale curriculum reform has a tendency to fail. Hargreaves and Fink (2006, p. 6 qtd.in Akker 2003) put this succinctly: “Change in education is easy to propose, hard to implement, and extraordinarily difficult to sustain.”(Akker 2003, p.9) Notwithstanding big investments in research and development, and in-service education, the target group of teachers often appears poorly informed about an intended innovation, while its practical application remains limited, and its impact on student learning is unclear. This may be due to:

- weak connections between the various system levels (national, local, school and classroom);
- lack of internal consistency within the curriculum design;
- insufficient cooperation between various actors in educational development.

The general pattern is that the worlds of policy, practice and research are widely separated. A crucial challenge for more successful innovations in education is to build bridges between many levels, factors and actors.

It is generally acknowledged that curriculum innovations cannot succeed when teachers are merely viewed as practitioners who put someone else’s plans into practice. As Remillard puts it “Teachers mediate curriculum innovations and resources so that they are never quite realized in the form envisioned” (Remillard, 2005, p.230). Curriculum renewal is a complex endeavor, the success of which depends on the quality of two related processes: curriculum development and teacher professional development (Fullan, 2007, p. 56). Recent insights in curriculum reform point to the necessity of increasing the active involvement of teachers to promote ownership, commitment, and successful implementation (Borko, 2004, p. 13).

## **Methodology**

This paper is based on a review of the literature regarding research in curriculum

development and the triple helix link in between research, practice and policymaking. In order to ground the paper on the Albanian reality of the curriculum development process, literature review was accompanied by analysis of policy documents and organization of semi-structured interviews with school leaders and teachers faced with the challenges of school based curriculum design in Albania.

My analysis was based on examination of core policy documents and curriculum guidelines from the latest reforms between the early 1990s and the 2000s. All guidelines were formulated as main elements in reform design involving many groups and persons who were assigned by the Ministry of Education and Science and the subsidiary agencies. Their drafts of new curriculum guidelines were finally approved by the Ministry of Education and Science after rehearsals which initiated political and public discussions. Green and white papers were produced. A content analysis strategy was used which considered history and the use of language as significant concerns. It was inspired by discourse analysis since the way policy texts are shaped through the configuration of concepts and arguments in use is studied. Such an analysis did not provide information about the consequences of policies, but about which policy problems and goals are brought to the fore and which are left aside.

While conducting a research project as theoretical as well as empirical and quantitative study interviews were conducted with school managers and teachers (an occasional sample of 30 people) of middle and secondary schools of the cities of Tirana, Durres and Shkodra in order to find out more about the principals' and the teachers' experiences and responsibilities as curriculum designers, curriculum leaders and managers in a changing educational system.

Selection of age and work experience of the respondents was a deliberately focused collection in order to retrieve as much reliable data as possible from people who have spent a long time in sphere of education and have undergone through changes in educational policies and structures. The data are derived from semi-structured questions to provide rich descriptions and explanations of how directors and teachers experience the educational changes in their particular context.

## **Curriculum trends and approaches. A european perspective**

### **Alternative Definitions of Curriculum**

The Latin word 'curriculum', related to the verb *currere* (running), refers to a 'course' or 'track' to be followed. In the context of education, where learning is the central activity, the most obvious interpretation of the word curriculum is, then, to view it as a course, trajectory, or "plan for learning" (Taba 1962 p.13).

The term curriculum has been given multiple definitions and can be seen as a product of different ways of understanding the relationship between schools, the state and society. When it is viewed as a social and a cultural text, its content is neither a fixed, stable body of knowledge, nor a logical manifestation of a discipline or a well-defined political decision. Curriculum is about meaning-making an negotiation among different actors in different positions in the field of education (educational bureaucrats, teachers, students, politicians, parents, and academic institutions). Hence the curriculum can be considered as social from the very outset, and the negotiations revolve around what counts as valid knowledge and values in particular historical and social settings. Emphasizing so the social and historical basis of knowledge however does not mean that it is merely social. We must not ignore the internal and cognitive dimensions of knowledge and school content.

Given these simple definitions, a differentiation between various levels of the curriculum has proven to be very useful when talking about curricular activities (policy-making, design and development, evaluation, and implementation).

Akker(2003, p. 45) states that the following distinctions appear to be helpful:

- international / comparative (or ‘*supra*’ level)
- system, society, nation and state (or ‘*macro*’ level) (for example, national syllabi or core objectives)
- school and institution (or ‘*meso*’ level) (for example, school-specific curriculum)
- classroom (or ‘*micro*’ level) (for example, textbooks and instructional materials)
- individual and personal (or ‘*nano*’ level).

The supra level usually refers to international debates or agreements on aims and quality of education, and it is sometimes fuelled by the outcomes of internationally comparative studies. Curriculum development at the supra and macro levels is usually of a ‘generic’ nature, while ‘site-specific’ approaches are more applicable for the levels closer to school and classroom practice. Moreover, the process of curriculum development can be seen as either narrow (developing a specific curricular product) or broad (a long-term, ongoing process of curriculum improvement, often including many related aspects of educational change, for example, teacher education, school development and examinations).

In order to understand problems of curriculum decision making and enactment, a broader description of curriculum development is often most appropriate. It is usually a long and cyclical process with many stakeholders and participants in which motives and needs for changing the curriculum are formulated; ideas are specified in programmes and materials; and efforts are made to realize the intended changes in practice.

A common broad distinction is between the three levels of the ‘*intended*’, ‘*implemented*’, and ‘*attained*’ curriculum. A more refined typology (van den Akker, 2003, p.52) is outlined in Table 1 and Figure 4 appendix 2 of this paper).

Intended	Ideal	Vision (rationale or basic philosophy underlying a curriculum)
	Formal/written	Intentions as specified in curriculum documents and/or materials
Implemented	Perceived	Curriculum as interpreted by its users (especially teachers)
	Operational	Actual process of teaching and learning (also, curriculum-in-action)
Attained	Experiential	Learning experiences as perceived by learners
	Learned	Resulting learning outcomes of learners

*Table 1: Typology of Curriculum Representations*

Traditionally, the intended domain refers predominantly to the influence of curriculum policy-makers and curriculum developers (in various roles). The implemented curriculum relates especially to the world of schools and teachers. And the attained

curriculum relates to students.

Current Trends in Curriculum Development Yates and Young (2010, qtd. in McKenney, Akker, Nieveen 2006, p.18) have highlighted common trends in curricular design, currently emerging within many countries with differing educational traditions.

## **Knowledge**

Various writers (Young, 2008; Wheelahan, 2011; Yates and Collins, 2010; Priestley, 2011) qtd. in Priestley, Edwards 2012, p.94) have drawn attention to a worldwide trend for new curricular models to downgrade knowledge. There has been a shift, evident in earlier iterations of curricular policy moving from a detailed specification of content to be covered, towards a more generic approach.

This is largely justified by proponents as enhancing curricular flexibility to address the demands of a fast changing world, where existing knowledge forms become rapidly obsolete. Whitty (2010, p.36) has drawn attention to an overt shift from knowledge to skills as the focus of the curriculum. Such a shift also appears to “over-simplify and dichotomize the complex relationship between knowledge and skills, obscuring the relationship between different forms of knowledge, for example, knowing that and knowing how.” (Pring, 1976, p.79). A second feature of this shift has been an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to organizing the curriculum.

## **Pedagogy**

A further common trend in curriculum design concerns the positioning of the learner at the heart of schooling. Biesta (2010, p.48), in referring to this trend as the ‘learnification’ of education, suggests that it reflects an “unproblematized acceptance that learning is a good, and a failure to address educational questions such as what are we learning and why are we learning it?”.

### *The role of teachers*

Lastly there is a renewed vision of teachers as developers of curriculum at a school level, and more widely as agents of change (Fullan, 2003). Several studies have shown positive relations between the active involvement of teachers in the design process and a) curriculum implementation and b) student motivation and learning. (McKenney 2005, Smith and Silver 1999, qtd. in Nieveen 2011, p.69).

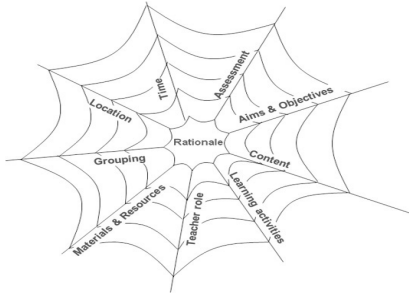
One of the major challenges for curriculum improvement is creating balance and consistency between the various components of a curriculum (‘plan for learning’). What are these components? A relatively simple curriculum definition includes three major planning elements: content, purpose and organization of learning.

Elaborating on various typologies, Goodlad (1994, p. 62) has come to adhere to a framework (see Table.2) of ten components that address ten specific questions about the planning of student learning.

*Table.2: Curriculum components*

Rationale or vision	Why are they learning?
Aims and objectives	Towards which goals are they learning?

Content	What are they learning?
Learning activities	How are they learning?
Teacher role	How is the teacher facilitating learning?
Materials and resources	With what are they learning?
Grouping	With whom are they learning?
Location	Where are they learning?
Time	When are they learning?
Assessment	How to measure how far learning has



Akker’s (2003) preferred visualization of the ten components is to arrange them as a spider’s web (Figure 1, The Curricular Spider’s Web), not only illustrating its many inter-connections, but also underlining its vulnerability.

Thus, although the emphasis of curriculum design on specific components may vary over time, eventually some kind of alignment has to occur to maintain coherence. A striking example is the trend of integrating ICT into the curriculum, with initial attention usually on changes in materials,

resources and location. Many implementation studies have exemplified the need for a more comprehensive approach and systematic attention given to the other components before one can expect robust changes.

### **Approaches to Curriculum Changes**

How could research help in addressing educational challenges? The kind of help usually varies across different types of research. Corbin (2005, p.9175) distinguished various questions, aims and functions of research including to describe, compare, evaluate, explain, predict, design and develop. One may also discern various primary orientations of research: theory, practice and policy. Much policy-oriented research in education occurs through surveys, monitoring and assessment, and focuses on (descriptive) measures about actual practices and outcomes.

A classic approach to the eternal question of what to include in the curriculum (or even more difficult, as well as urgent, what to exclude from it is to search for a balance between three major sources or orientations for selection and priority setting.

- Knowledge: what is the academic and cultural heritage that seems essential for learning and future development?
- Society: which problems and issues seem relevant for inclusion from the perspective of societal trends and needs?
- Learner: which elements seem of vital importance for learning from the personal needs, educational needs and interests of the learners themselves?(Corbin 2005,p. 79)

Answers to these questions usually constitute the rationale for a curriculum. Inevitably choices have to be made involving compromises between the various orientations (and their respective proponents and pressure groups). From a strategic point

of view, the literature has offered us many (technical- professional) models and strategies for curriculum development. Three prominent approaches are Tyler's (1949) '*rational-linear*' approach, Walker's (1990) '*deliberative*' approach, and Eisner's (1979) '*artistic*' approach.

It is noteworthy that we are beginning to see more '*blended*' approaches that integrate various trends and characteristics of recent design and development approaches in education. As will be treated into more detail in the paper, the most advisable approach out of centralizing curriculum development and localizing it without much being invested into teacher professional development is the design research approach suggested by Akker and Kuipper (2008,p. 43) and the backward design process (Figure 3, Appendix 1)

Curricular 'design and development research' (D&DR), they suggest is a rapidly emerging research approach that combines three related goals:

- optimization of curricular interventions and products (for example, curriculum frameworks and educative materials)
- curriculum design principles (as a contribution to the knowledge base)
- professional development (of all participants).( Akker and Kuipper (2008,p.52) ).

School-based curriculum and the local capacities to develop it

Skilbeck(1984) defined curriculum as “the learning experiences of students in so far as they are expressed or anticipated in educational goals and objectives, plans and designs for learning, and the implementation of these plans and designs in school environments” (p.21). He defined school-based curriculum development (SBCD) as the “planning, design, implementation and evaluation of a program of student’s learning by the educational institution of which those students are members” (Skilbeck, 1984,p. 37). (Appendix 3.Curriculum Implementation Scheme)

At a national level, several European countries have made curriculum policy less prescriptive and have left space for schools and teachers to follow their local and individual curricular aspirations. Ideally, the continuum of teacher education (encompassing initial teacher education programs, induction of newly qualified teachers and continuing professional development for practicing teachers) follows the policy expectations that schools and teachers will have an active role in school-based curriculum design (SBCD). Within some broadly described boundaries, teachers and school leaders are expected to make their own curriculum decisions at the school level (school program), the classroom level (teaching plans, instructional materials and resources) and individual level (personal plan for learning). Although implicit in practice, schools need to take into account and stimulate coherence amongst these curriculum levels and the broader national policy directions.

The curricular capacities of teachers form a subset of all relevant teacher capacities and contain all competences needed in order to design (parts of the) school-based curricula. As Brady (1995,52) states “Teachers need these capacities when designing additional learning resources, working on subject-integration or fine-tuning subjects longitudinally throughout the years”. Based on several overviews (Horváth, 2006; Huizinga, 2009; Richey, Fields, & Foxon, 2000 qtd.in Handelzatz 2009, p.46), we distinguish the following curricular competences:

1. Subject matter expertise. To have a state-of-the-art longitudinal and horizontal (adjacent subjects) overview of the subject matter that is central to the design, to have an understanding of possible learning routes, and to be able to point

2. Pedagogical expertise. To be able to apply a varied and adjustable pedagogical repertoire (including use of ICT).
3. Intra-personal competences. To be self-motivated to contribute to the design of the school curriculum, to be able to reflect in and on action.
4. Inter-personal competences. To be able to contribute to good relationships with colleagues and school leaders involved in the design activities, to provide and collect collegial feedback.
5. Curricular consistency competences. To be able to take care of the *internal* consistency (aligning all curricular components of the design) and *external* consistency of the design (embedding new curricular elaborations into existing school practices).
6. Curricular problem-solving competences. To be able to apply and keep track of design activities, such as analysis, formulating design requirements, materials construction, evaluation of the curriculum in action, implementation in a wider context. The level of proficiency of these competences depends on the complexities of the curriculum design task at hand. To illustrate this we use the typology of curriculum design tasks of Marsh, Day, Hannay, & McCutcheon (1990, p. 26). First of all, they characterize curriculum design tasks according to the type of activities (needed during the design process), such as: investigation of an area of activity selecting from existing materials, adaptation of existing materials and creation of raw materials. Secondly, the task complexity depends on the number and kinds of persons involved in the design process. These could be individual teachers, a small group of teachers, the whole staff, or teachers with parents and students. Finally, the time frame of the SBCD activities influences the task complexity. This can vary from a one-off activity (e.g. a single meeting) to a long-term plan of several years of action. Combining these three dimensions leads to a three-dimensional model for the characterization of SBCD, as depicted in Figure 2.

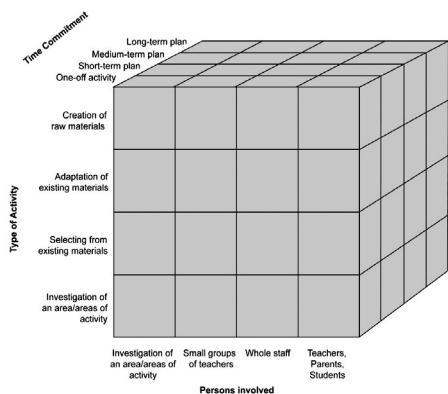


Figure 2: A three dimensional model of SBCD variations

### Challenges and Constraints towards implementing localized curricula

When analyzed more closely, teams and teachers report problems related to one or all of the following curriculum design perspectives (Van den Akker, 2003; Nieveen, Handelzalts, & van Ekelen, 2011, qtd in Nieveen, Handelzalts 2001, p.259):

Substantive perspective, related to ‘what’-questions, such as: What curricular choices do we make? From which rationale do we start from? What ambitions do we strive for as a school? What are the constituent parts of a coherent curriculum?

Socio-political perspective, including ‘with whom’-questions, such as: Whom should be involved in the decision-making process? Who decides on this? What is the role of the teachers and school leadership?



Technical professional perspective, containing ‘how’-questions, such as: How will we go about the design task? What design strategy will we follow? How and when do we plan and perform evaluation activities?

The implementation of local curricula can be problematic, in terms of implementation. The situation in practical terms is not always as easy as when it is laid out in official documents.

*Lack of competent staff*

One of the practical implications of developing a local curriculum is to presume that at the local level competent staff will be available to carry out the tasks. If 10% of the curriculum is to be developed at the school level, in practical terms this does not happen. Among the different causes, are the lack of funding; lack of capacity; resistance of teachers due to the poor situation of the teaching profession; tensions between reformists and conservatives, etc. Poor supervisory mechanism, especially weak pedagogical support, low qualifications of teachers, and inefficient management skills of school principals as well as low morale and lack of material incentives of educational personnel could make the curricular reform initiatives remain on paper.

*Product Quality*

Some teaching materials developed by teachers are really good quality, but most do not meet the quality of materials developed by professional teams of curriculum developers. If one takes into account the voluminous work that it takes to curriculum specialists team to select only a matter to be introduced into the curriculum, the right question arising is: Can teachers do such work? The use of authentic materials as by curriculum professionals is often impossible by teachers. Of course, experts in various subjects can cooperate in the process of school based curriculum development, but in practice, it is difficult to obtain assistance by highly qualified experts. Can schools create such links?

*Teacher attitude and resistance*

Teacher attitude and resistance is also to be taken into consideration, as it is an important factor in the implementation process of local curricula. Teachers or school heads/administrators make their voices heard for a variety of reasons, ranging from ideological resistance to emphasis on the lacking facilities to carry out new tasks required by the curriculum changes. What triggers resistance from teachers is, the feeling that they will have to do more work, under the same conditions and without necessarily the capacity to develop or even teach such a curriculum.

*Fear of the unknown*

Another important factor that leads to resistance is fear of the unknown. Teachers who have been bombarded with changes tend to be exhausted and find it hard to keep up their energy, enthusiasm and ultimately willingness for change. Teachers, Gustavson explain are afraid of “drastic innovations, partly because they prefer the familiar, and partly because the vested interests of most people are normally bound up with the existing set up “as cited in Hargraves (1995, p.72). Very often teachers are left out of policy discussions, and have very little involvement in the decision making process so they often resist ill-designed and poorly implemented change projects.

*Lack of resources*

The lack of resources can also lead to reticence, heavy workload, different beliefs and agenda of some teachers are also impeding and aggravating factors to the success of school based curriculum.

*Poor basic assessment*

School-based curriculum syllabi tend to have poor basic assessments. Although most school-based curriculum projects have assessment components. These components can hardly provide solid basis for judging the quality of syllabi. First, schools do not contain the right expertise for evaluation. Secondly, the teachers involved in the designation activities do not pay attention to the assessment. Teachers do not have time to carry out systematic assessment plans, having spent much time and energy in planning and implementing change.

From the examples in the different sections above we understand that the decentralized implementation of local curricula is met with resistance at the level of implementation because of the lack of developed structure to accommodate such reforms.

Wiggins and Mc.Tighe (2005 qtd.in Richey, Klein 2007, p. 52) suggested a planning sequence for curriculum, called *backward design process*. There are three stages to this process as depicted in figure 3. *In the first stage* the teachers consider their teaching goals and examine the established content standards, and review curriculum expectations. *In the second stage*, teachers think like an assessor. They decide how they will know whether students have achieved the desired results, and met the standards. *In the third stage*, teachers decide what activities students will do during the unit, what resources and materials they will need for those activities.

## **School –based Curriculum Design Capacities in Albania**

The post- '90s education reform in our country prompted the inclusion in our educational terminology of many new terms, educational curricula, school-based curriculum, modular curriculum, integrated curriculum, subject, standards etc.. A number of publications shed light on these meanings and the way they are involved into our school practice. Important steps forward have also been taken towards producing the first sets of curricula for all levels of education and subjects to be taught in schools. There have constantly been given arguments that schools and teachers should play an active role in the development of their curriculum.

Interventions have been made in our educational system in terms of creating spaces and the necessary conditions for a new place with effective school-based curriculum. But, in order for the school-based curriculum to ensure its rightful place in the system, much still needs to be done. A large scale process of consultations with teachers, education specialists, school administrators, etc, needs to take place, before proceeding towards the decision-making process. It is understood that an important aspect of this process is getting a clear meaning of the concept “school-based curriculum” as well as getting to know the advantages and disadvantages of school implementation of such a process.

The development and implementation of decentralization educational policies in Albania lay open the need for an increase in the role played by the school in curriculum planning. Subject-oriented commissions and other auxiliary structures such as school boards, parent boards, etc. are already present in our schools. Schools are able to provide the missions, goals, objectives and school policies needed as a ground for curriculum development. Official curricular documents (educational plans, standards, and curricula

are increasingly creating the conditions for school curriculum planning and designation. There have been published a number of auxiliary materials for curriculum planning in schools such as curriculum guides and other psycho-educational materials. Teachers are feeling increasingly more responsible for their work even in terms of curriculum planning.

The organization of school –based curriculum has been provided its own niche in the Preuniversity Law nr. 69/2012 where in Chapter VII school curriculum is defined as consisting of core curriculum and optional curriculum (electives). The school-based curriculum is designed in accordance with the requirements of the students and their parents, and upon decision taken by the school authorities themselves.

Among the weak points of the curricular planning situation in our schools we can mention the fact that:

- the current culture of teachers' work still relates to the individualization and not to teamwork.
- there is a lack of tradition of professional dialogue in schools,
- there is still a strong tendency to have everything ready, divided into hours and teaching classes;
- the class activities are still dominated by the requirements of the managing authorities ,rather than by the teaching and learning needs.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

The conclusions and recommendations to follow focus on the Albanian reality of the link in between curriculum research, policymaking and practice and the gaps in the Albanian system of school-based curriculum development, but also hold true for many European SBCD realities.

Conclusions curriculum research and policymaking and the School-Based curriculum design:

It is concluded that:

- Many curriculum reform efforts are characterized by overly big innovation ambitions (especially those of politicians) within unrealistically short timelines and with very limited investment in people, especially teachers;
- there is a lack of coherence between the intended curriculum changes with other system components (especially teacher education and assessment/ examination programmes).
- timely and authentic involvement of all relevant stakeholders is often neglected; excellence in teaching is not necessarily associated with excellence in curriculum development.

Recommendations curriculum research and policymaking and the school-based curriculum design.

It is widely recommended that:

- In view of the multitude of (academic) knowledge claims, it sometimes helps to reduce the large number of separate subject domains to a more limited number of broader learning areas, combined with sharper priorities in learning aims (focusing on basic concepts and skills);
- referring to the avalanche of societal claims, more interaction between learning inside and outside the school may reduce the burden;
- looking at the learners' perspective, worldwide, many interesting efforts are going into making learning more challenging and intrinsically motivating by

moving from traditional, teacher- and textbook-dominated instruction towards more meaningful and activity-based learning approaches;

- there is a trend towards more integration of curriculum change and professional learning and development of all individuals and organisations involved;
- a communicative-relational style is desirable in order to arrive at the inevitable compromises between stakeholders with various roles and interests, and to create external consistency between all parties involved;
- schools should be given more space to share responsibilities with the central authorities in making decisions over curriculum;
- schools should seek to establish consensus on the distribution of the decision-making power through these factors and the need to prepare a regulating document that specifies the relevant rules;
- schools are advised to allocate decision-making power over curricular materials in between the central institution curriculum development teams, local curriculum design teams, the subject departments and the particular teachers;
- school-level decisions about adapting a curriculum should be based on serious discussions, in which all stakeholders are given the chance to express their opinions;
- within a single department or several departments there should be incentives to create links between different groups of knowledge. Also, local issues and problems, such as environmental protection, use of local resources, increase local job opportunities, can serve as a basis for the development of school-based curriculum integrated units;
- the national curriculum should foresee endorsement for the curriculum development at the local level, by having determined its nature and intention, providing support services to develop steadily into local school level standards and syllabi;
- educational systems should develop and publish officially approved curriculum frameworks, so that all gain a common core of knowledge.
- major curriculum initiatives that require large-scale planning and coordination, can be better achieved by teams of experts, and adaptation to local needs can be best implemented through activities in the local or school level.
- experience in curriculum development should be considered an important and useful component of the initial teacher training curricula;
- involvement in curriculum development should be considered a professional indicator for the evaluation of teachers;
- lastly, but not least, while school-based curriculum means variety in the content taught in schools, examination and assessment forms must also be different. Assessment centers in the country should take care exams exam standards are modeled in accordance with the variegated syllabi.

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