

Education and Intercultural Democracy

**Report on Current Efforts to Facilitate
Democratic and Pluralist Values Through Primary
and Secondary Education in Sri Lanka**

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mr. A.S. Balasooriya, Ms. S. Masilamani, and Dr. A. Prakrama for their professionalism and for the good spirit and open atmosphere in which we could carry out our tasks. In a way the teamwork have function in accordance with what we suggests in this report, a development towards an intercultural democracy in Sri Lanka through education. We have learned from each other because of a respectful acknowledgement of our differences. In the writing of the report this have been most helpful.

I also want to thank Ms. Annika Nordin-Jayawardena and Ms. Stina Karlun (Sida) for their contribution by giving necessary conditions to carry out our tasks in the best way possible. A special thank to Sharon Todd with whom I had the delight of having a continuous dialogue on issues central for the report and who also commented on the text. Thanks also to Gert Biesta whose depth in theoretical knowledge productively influenced my own thinking on issues in the field of education and democracy.

And on the behalf of the team, a respectful thank to those who gave their time and sincere responses on all our questions and inquiries.

Uppsala May 2001

Carl Anders Säfström

Summary

This report offers both a conceptual framework suitable for the types of problems it addresses and for its interpretations of the situation at hand in Sri Lanka in addition to providing a model for projects consistent with both. The primary frame of reference for the work of the team was the “General Education Reforms” (1997) document in order to make the analysis consistent with national education policy and goals. The study here reported on, has especially taking as a frame of reference the stress expressed in the education reform document to take on *a total approach*, that is, the role of education in fostering citizenship, to involve all communities in a non-discriminatory manner, its emphasis on critical thinking and on teachers as facilitators of change.

The analysis was carried out multi-methodologically, incorporating interviews, text-analysis, and questionnaires. A draft report was completed and discussed at three workshops held with stakeholders, including representatives of the ministry of Education, the National institute of education, other relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations, school principals, academics and officers of Sida in addition to representatives of other international agencies working in Sri Lanka.

The conceptual framework, which is based on theories on the relation between education and democracy functions as the point of departure for the analysis. This do not exclude the need for subsequent projects following on our suggestions to deal explicitly with issues related to the war, in their attempt to foster democratic culture in such a context. Such projects are most likely to follow if they are to focus on what we call real problems. In this context the term “real” points to the need to give people at the grassroots level a voice in defining what is at stake: real problems are defined by people affected by them.

A fruitful way of approaching the issue of democratic culture is to perceive any society as more or less democratic in this sense, that is, as both containing democratic as well as non-democratic manifestations. A project with the ambition to focus on the culture of democracy has to extract and clarify those democratic manifestations in order to enlarge their scope. Most important is that any project with the intention to have a substantial impact on the day-to-day realities of teachers, parents and children in Sri Lanka itself has to function as an example of what is to be achieved.

The task of education in any society is not only to provide skills training to the potential workforce but also to nurture its citizens in accordance with the ideals of that society, i.e. to promote citizenship. It is though only through a socio-political space of openness that the subject can become a true citizen and whose actions can be judged on an individual basis, rather than by whatever ethnic group she/he belongs.

A moral subject can only come into presence in an open society in which he/she is free and able to act responsibly. This means that education participates in this openness in order to foster responsibility. If, for example, education is defined in ethnic terms and is ordered in a strictly hierarchical manner, there would be no room for responsible actions by the individual. A democratic culture is based on responsible actions.

The concept of difference, central for an intercultural democracy, suggests that we cannot take a unitary and self-evident point of sameness as departure for relationships with the other since

that would reduce the other to this very sameness. This means that the socio-political in an intercultural democracy is to be seen as a space in which unique individuals negotiate their differences. Whatever differences there are, in language, ethnicity, class, gender and so on. To stress this point, the recognition of those differences as not possible to be reduced to one original point of departure is the very condition for a pluralist democracy to work as well as for moral responsibility.

The youth Commission Report of 1990, the starting point of most analyses of contemporary youth unrest and related problems, provides a precise articulation of the complex connections between education and violence, which implicate the education system in maintaining and even exacerbating discrimination against rural students and teachers vis-à-vis their more privileged urban counterparts, legitimising political patronage in employment by resolutely avoiding coming to terms with this key issue which affects both the vision/aims of education and its tangible outcomes, the unequal access to the English language, compounded by an acute lack of qualified and trained English teachers in underprivileged areas, which leads to the skewing of benefits accruable to those who are fluent in the language. General corruption and bureaucratic apathy which pervades the educational system – in relation to teacher appointments and transfers, student enrolment in prestigious schools, conferment of privileges on selected schools such as their designation as national schools – in equal measure to the other sectors of the country, pathologises any attempts at serious and far-reaching reform.

The Commission has not, however, highlighted another aspect of the system itself, which engenders a winner take-all competitiveness among students beginning from the most tender age. The system of examinations and promotions, the rigid even archaic disciplinary frame, and the pressure to move to “better” (more privileged and prestigious) schools, all contribute to a “violence” that distorts and retards childhood development as well as the promotion of egalitarian social values. It needs to be reiterated, however, that no community is exempt from the brutalisation engendered by the war, and in this sense, an education system that does not explicitly address this violence (as brutalisation) is complicitous to the extent that it does not seek to prepare the youth to face it effectively. Nor does it attempt to reduce or ameliorate their effects.

In general, the subjects and programs considered in this report as for example, Life competencies, English, Social studies, peace education teaching materials, and media while conceived as instrument for fostering ethnic harmony and cohesion, remain problematic in practice due to aggregate of interconnected reasons which include administrative/bureaucratic and ideological ones as well as due to the inadequacy of resources and specialist personnel. What seems to be problematic is the lack of an integrative approach in which the different subjects are related to the issue of democratic culture and citizenship.

It is most important that any attempt to address the most urgent issues confronting Sri Lankan society from an educational perspective takes on an integrative approach that seeks to bring together all the stakeholders and participants in the process. Hence, in order to deal effectively with the key democratic issues in the education curriculum it is imperative that an integrated mechanism should be in place to involve classroom texts and practices with textbook design and teacher training, with action research and dissemination, with the structured recognition of individual and collective innovation, with parent and wider community input.

The need, therefore, is for a new mechanism that

- a) Avoids the bureaucratisation and isolationism of current programmes whose individual goals may be salutary but which can have no sustained impact on the system as a whole.
- b) Integrates the key stakeholders and participants in its process of learning and dissemination, including teachers, trainees and trainers, academics and researchers, ministry officials and policy-makers, and involves representatives from among parents, community leaders and students
- c) Cuts across the different elements involved in the teaching learning process, by bringing into structural dialogue those responsible for these components, which include syllabus and textbook preparation and continuous revision, teaching methodology and classroom practice, action research and more theoretical academic research that is of a trans-national nature, teacher training and certification, programme evaluation and monitoring, community participation and dissemination of information to create wide awareness, policy and administrative reform initiatives, and the facilitation of innovation through recognition at all levels.
- d) Is flexible enough to generate timely results, is sensitive to and yet not constrained by current legislative and administrative bottlenecks, and is sufficiently representative and recognised/ acceptable to all so that it can determine the terms of the national education discourse and debate.
- e) Structurally involves influential civil society groups, concerned NGOs, regional organisations and other non-partisan actors in its ongoing dialogue in order to enrich outcomes of its programmes.

A Sida-financed project aimed at strengthening the development of a democratic culture in Sri Lanka is most likely to succeed if it ensures the establishment of a mechanism by which stakeholder participation can be maximised. The model developed as a result of our intervention in the current situation in Sri Lanka is intended to meet such a requirement. Important to stress is what this report suggests are a concept and a model which are coherent with an understanding of an intercultural democracy and citizenship through education. The concept and model are entirely within the frame of Education Reform (1997) and can be implemented within existing formal structures as well as using infrastructure already in place.

The model needs to be materialised in such a way as to make its different activities co-ordinated, which is in line with the integrative approach suggested in this report. This is worth stressing since it points directly to one of the major results of the inquiry done by the team, i.e. the lack of integration between different structures of educational authorities, both horizontal and vertical:

- A. Horizontal:* This model meets the need to integrate and better co-ordinate activities between/ among the NIE, Ministry of Education, National Commission of Education, Provincial Councils, and Local Governments, not only in their day-to-day work but also especially in relation to the knowledge producing sectors of Sri Lanka: Universities, Colleges of education, the media, semi-governmental organisations such as NIPU (National Integration Program Unit), NCPA (National Child Protection Authority) and representative organisations of civil society as well as relevant international research communities and donors.

B. Vertical: This model meets the need to better integrate and co-ordinate activities of provincial directors of education, Zonal offices, Division offices and the schools in such a way as to avoid the strong tendencies of top-down rule of schools. The model also allows for a better integration of schools with the surrounding community

The vertical and horizontal components connect through the focus on what in this report is defined as real problems, which demands a ‘bottom-up’ approach. This approach is made more precise by introducing action research within the model, which would guarantee, in addition to the relevance of the knowledge produced, an involvement of local communities and can as such be seen as the driving force for change towards an intercultural democratic citizenship in Sri Lanka.

The model is constructed on the macro level as a unit involving three components; a) Administration and planning (through a Steering Committee initially, and subsequently the Board of Management), b) Research, and c) Training.

The steering Committee directs and takes responsibility for the activities and consist preferably of representatives from the NEC, the Ministry of Education, the NIE, NIPU, the University system, the Colleges of education and the NCPA. Once the model MIDCE (Model for Intercultural Democratic Citizenship through Education) is fully operational and the requisite legislation is in place, the duly constituted Board of Management will take over the functions of the Steering Committee.

Research is conducted using action research methodologies and on issues relevant to intercultural democratic citizenship and peaceful living competence. In practice this research should be sensitive to “real problems” identified at the micro level, i.e. in schools, local communities etc.

Two time-bounded research positions will be created in accordance with the ‘professor two’ system, i.e. open to national as well as international applicants and selected by the Committee to meet identified competencies to develop research on relevant issues. The research component is crucial and can be supported by the establishment of bilateral connections to universities in Sweden with substantial knowledge/research related to education and democracy.

The unit will be responsible for training of graduates from different disciplines (social sciences, law and philosophy/ethics) who in their turn train teachers to obtain a diploma in intercultural democratic education, constructed to meet international standards (meso level). The three-month training will consist of substantive knowledge of issues relevant for intercultural democratic citizenship and a democratic culture as well as relevant methodologies for teaching and research. The diploma should function as a prerequisite for being able to apply for small-scale action-research projects at the micro level.

On micro level the suggested structure involve programs and action-oriented projects run by individual teachers, group of teachers or schools as a unit, involving the surrounding community. Small scale action research projects can for example be about introducing new methodologies, construction of school materials and so on. A needed competence though for running projects such as these is the diploma on intercultural democratic education and citizenship.

Most important to stress are the connections of the levels in this suggested model/structure. Those connections will guarantee bottom-up flows of relevant information/knowledge in order for research on macro level to address relevant problems.

A steering committee is needed in order to oversee and support a pilot-project and to take responsibility for formally establishing the Unit for intercultural Democratic Citizenship through education (IDCE) with a time frame of two years. The establishment of ICDE is based on the outcomes of the pilot-project. The steering committee should resign after the task is fulfilled and be replaced by the duly constituted Board of Management of the unit. Main tasks for the project for which the steering committee is responsible:

- a) Setting up the structure for the Unit for Intercultural Democratic Citizenship through Education (ICDE), including creating the necessary legislation
- b) Establishing curricula and develop courses and materials to meet international standards.
- c) Setting up a Research Programme for the Unit with input on different levels.
- d) Addressing the issues brought up at the micro level as outlined in this report.
- e) Involving all levels and stakeholders in a participatory and non-hierarchical manner.
- f) Testing out all short-term programmes.
- g) Testing out all short-term courses.
- h) Ensuring that the final outcomes should be concrete and self-sustaining.
- i) Steering the Pilot Program during its initial phases.
- j) Work out guidelines and principles in the form of a manual and checklist(s), which, will be instrumental in preventing faux pas and omissions relating to issues of equity and non-discrimination across gender, language, religion, ethnicity and culture.

This report suggests a pilot-project which will carry forward the philosophy and understanding of the MIDCE through its preliminary phase, and which will provide a concrete and tangible means of measuring its success on the ground, while also addressing urgent national needs in the educational sector that cannot afford the luxury of a long delay in implementation. The pilot-project runs four micro-projects:

1. *Child Protection Committees*. To support initiatives to establish Child Protection Committees within schools, suggested by the NCPA, which should be enhanced to develop activities in line with both educational and nurturing objectives.
2. *Dissemination and Dialogue on Textbook Analysis* (including those already conducted by NIPU). Dissemination and production of textbooks done on the following subjects: English, Mother tongue, History, Social studies, with others to be added in time. To conduct seminars and workshops for parents groups, student groups and teachers.
3. *Innovative Programs*. Community-based competition for innovative programs in schools concerning issues central for democratic values and conducted as small-scale action research projects.
4. *Mass Media Support*. Mass media support will cut across all micro programmes and involve the establishment of a Journal or as supplements in all newspapers as well as radio and television coverage in three languages. This Journal/Supplement targets all stakeholders/interest groups and can in addition be published on the web.

It is important to note that the micro-projects within the suggested pilot-project are designed to simultaneously start the overall project at both the macro-and micro-levels. The third phase (year) of the overall project begins when the whole model is materialised and in place, and when full scale activity would be possible on the basis of the established procedures tried and tested by the pilot-project. Activities will already be in place in some areas, and can be expanded from there on a wider scale during a fourth phase. The fifth phase is to consolidate the model and to establish procedures for continuing monitoring and evaluation at all levels.

1 Introduction

This preliminary section of the report will include a brief description of the assignment itself, an account of the background and over-arching context, and a succinct rationale for the course charted by the consultants in this study. The views explicated in this report represent the perspectives of the consultancy team.

1.1 The Nature and Scope of the Assessment

This report is based on an inquiry conducted in order to identify central issues that would be addressed through establishing a project seen as complementary to current/ongoing educational and other initiatives for enlarging the scope of democratic culture and “peaceful living competencies” within the Sri Lankan society, through education (see further TOR, Appendix F). The inquiry is conducted on the request of the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka in co-operation with the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida).

In order to fulfil this task the team consisting of Ms S. Masilamani, Mr A.S Balasooriya, Dr A. Parakrama and Dr C.A. Säfström (international consultant and team leader), have conducted 48 interviews including with officials representing a vast number of governmental and non-governmental organisations and visited 14 schools (including interviews with principals, teachers, parents and children) in 5 provinces (Western, North Western, Central, North Central and North East), and have analysed relevant books, reports and documents and conducted a survey based on questionnaires and individual interviews (See below and appendix).

The team has been working independently and has followed its understanding of the assignment, based on an analysis of the task given, whose outcome is indicated by the subtitle of this report: Report on Current Efforts to Facilitate Democratic and Pluralist Values Through Primary and Secondary Education in Sri Lanka. In relation to the initial suggestion made by the team to the representative of the Swedish embassy in Sri Lanka, it was agreed that the TOR could be interpreted in such a way as to include both primary and secondary education as well as to broaden the scope beyond the life competencies rubric.

The inadvisability, even impossibility, of dealing substantively and adequately with the complex and vexed issues of democracy and diversity in an exercise that is confined to the primary education sector was noted by the overwhelming majority of those interviewed, including the Chair and Secretary of the National Education Commission. Thus, in the extended Terms of Reference we have chosen to concentrate on democracy and citizenship, addressing other issues through these themes. Extended arguments for this choice are given in the report.

It is worth noticing that we have chosen not simply to do an evaluative study since that would have, if properly done, been all too time-consuming. We had in all only six weeks for our initial empirical work. But more importantly, we strongly believe that in order to move forward on issues addressed by the TOR, an in-depth analysis is most urgently needed. We have outlined, in our suggestions, a structure in which such in-depth analysis is to be continuously conducted, rather than to provide pre-formulated solutions to all issues the TOR has raised, while remaining within the scope of the TOR. What we especially have emphasised and what can be said to be an underlying theme for all the issues put forward by the TOR is the crucial concern about what can be done in Sri Lanka to strengthen initiatives for peace and democracy, given what is already at hand.

The model and concept suggested as a result of our inquiry should therefore be seen as a frame of reference for several interrelated initiatives, which seek to address what we call real problems in line with criteria for an intercultural democracy and a democratic culture. In this context the term “real” points to the need to give people at the grassroots level a voice in defining what is at stake: real problems are defined by the people affected by them.

The primary frame of reference for the work was, aside from the expert knowledge of the team and the conceptual framework developed, the “General Education Reforms” (1997) document. The merit of such a strategy is that the analysis conducted and reported on here is consistent with the expected changes formulated in the political sector of Sri Lanka. The reform document strongly informed the interviews conducted. In addition, certain themes emerged as more important than others in relation to the overall task. One such theme is violence, which appeared early in and repeatedly through the interviews in multiple ways, from addressing the war to corporal punishment in the schools. We have used this as an organising theme for the argument in the report since it tends to cut across all levels of analysis and intervention in the current Sri Lankan context.

1.2 Methodology

The analysis was carried out multi-methodologically, incorporating interviews, text-analysis, and questionnaires. It was designed as an exploratory study, i.e., all the time building on what we found from one interview to the next. Also, the decision as to which interviews to conduct, which schools, organisations and areas to visit flowed from the interviews. This is both the strength and weakness of this report. That is, we could have been unwittingly misled at times; yet on the other hand we could always countercheck statements made in each subsequent interview. From these we built up an on-going and continually changing narrative structure, from which we identified further interviews that would speak to specific issues which led in turn to the identification of other interviews and so on.

When it was felt no more issues could be addressed, the narrative was saturated and we ended this part of the study. In relation to the original plan this strategy led us, for example, to visit Batticaloa, deeply affected by the war. This visit was considered important in order to highlight the issues identified in earlier interviews. We also chose to concentrate our school visits on ‘ordinary’ schools and to talk to students, teachers as well as parent groups in addition to officials of different kinds. The text-analysis was conducted in relation to our conceptual framework and was related by comparison to themes which emerged from the interviews.

A draft report was completed and presented at three workshops held with stakeholders, including representatives of the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Education, other relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations, school principals, academics and officers of Sida in addition to representatives of other international agencies working in Sri Lanka (See appendix C). This qualitatively informed study was reinforced through a questionnaire-based analysis and supplementary interviews. The questionnaires were administered to all participants in the workshops, as well as other leading actors who were unable to attend the meetings, comprising a cross-section of stakeholders, practitioners and experts in the field.

1.3 Sustainability

It is worth stressing that our intention in this report is *not* to take stance on matters that are central to the conflict tormenting Sri Lanka, hence no particular community is favoured. From this also follows that we do not intend to start our study with an analysis of the war itself since such an analysis by necessity is fraught and may even be counter-productive. Instead, the conceptual framework which is based on theories on the relation between education and democracy functions as the point of departure for our analysis. This does not exclude the need for subsequent projects following on our suggestions to deal explicitly with issues related to the war, in their attempt to foster democratic culture in such a context. Such projects are most likely to follow if they are to focus on what we call real problems.

We do not intend to come up with final solutions on all the issues brought up in the report, since they are all too complex to be dealt with by any single project. Rather, our intention is to give suggestions for what we believe, based on our inquiry, is a workable direction for a project whose ambition is to address questions related to peaceful living in a democratic state through the medium of education. It means that the suggestions in this report are intended to give a specific framework for those issues to be continuously dealt with by governmental as well as non-governmental organisations in cooperation with the knowledge-producing sectors of Sri Lanka. Moreover, the suggestions are intended to involve relevant input from international research communities dealing with education and democracy. This is in order to strengthen local intellectual communities cut off because of the war in Sri Lanka. Sustainability then, is basically understood in this report as being a consequence of involving the best (local) intellectual resources available in cooperation with structures already in place, both locally and internationally. Most important is that any project with the intention to have a sustainable impact on the day-to-day realities of teachers, parents and children in Sri Lanka itself has to function as an example of what is to be achieved. This principle is all the more true for a project, which seeks to foster the principles of democratic culture.

1.4 Outline of the report

This report consists of three parts, Part A, outlines the conceptual framework, Part B reports on our findings. It is, of course, clear that this distinction is not water-tight and only serves to facilitate the systematic presentation of this report. Part B is divided into four sections, the first of which reports on the general context and conditions that obtain in the educational sector in Sri Lanka, and is based on the results of our qualitative study. The second outlines the more specific situation of curricula and programs directly related to the issues of democracy and citizenship within the national school system, and uses both our qualitative and quantitative study results. The third and fourth sections report on other initiatives in Sri Lanka in line with the TOR. In Part C some strategies recommended for future work in this area are outlined, and Part D contains the suggestions of the report.

The report aims to be explicit and precise in outlining the conceptual framework through which its findings are to be understood. The main reason for this is that empirical findings are always interpreted from one vantage point or another. Thus, this report offers both a conceptual framework suitable for the types of problems it addresses and for its interpretations of the situation at hand in Sri Lanka in addition to providing a model for projects consistent with both.

2 Part A – Conceptual Framework

2.1 Education and Democracy

The task of education within any society is not only to provide skills training to the potential workforce but also to nurture its citizens in accordance with the ideals of that society, i.e. to promote citizenship. That is, if democracy is to be an aim of education, citizenship has to be understood in those terms, i.e. as embracing democratic values and norms of conduct. Education, then, is not only to be perceived in relation to its instrumental tasks, but also in relation to broader social issues in which the fostering of a democratic culture is central. The concept “fostering” is used here to signify that micro-processes such as “teaching” or “learning” have to be understood in relation to broader values and norms, that is, as related to the macro-spheres of morals, politics and law.

This also indicates that any expected changes at the micro-level, i.e. the classroom, can only come about if the conditions within the over-arching context are addressed. That is, any project with the aim of having an impact on the praxis taking place in the day-to-day realities of teachers, students, parents and so on *cannot* only focus on the classroom since the conditions for this praxis are to be found in society at large. This praxis is made visible not only through the content of specific subjects, teaching methods and so on but also by the curricula, syllabuses and organisations of schools. The latter includes legal regulations, timetables and structures for funding.

Education then, is to be understood as a reflection of a given society and its values and norms, rather than as a means of producing values and norms very different from that society. From this follows that it is not possible, for example, to see education as a force of change if this change doesn’t reflect a commensurable change taking place within the society at large. If this statement is to be held as true, the opposite is equally true, that is if changes are taking place in a society, education is most certainly to be seen as part of that change.

To be still more specific and to be absolutely clear on this point: if a given society fails in peaceful living, for whatever reason, this can *not* be expected to be changed *merely* by introducing certain peaceful procedures in schools. Peaceful living can therefore be understood as an outcome of a democratic society in balance with itself. It remains to be seen if this also can be said about the Sri Lankan society. It should be reiterated here that there appear to be serious attempts underway to enlarge the scope of democratic culture in Sri Lanka, particularly given the discussions surrounding a proposed new constitution and the current educational reforms.

2.2 Peace, Democracy and Citizenship

In this report peace is not addressed in isolation, but as related to citizenship, and since peace is never unconditional, as related to the spheres of morality, politics and law. Every member of a democratic society is by definition a citizen. But not everyone has an individual and practical relation to the norms and rules of the political sphere and to any action or decision related to that sphere. Citizenship then, refers to the norms, values and rules, which attach to citizens who actively participate in the political sphere and not to nominal citizens. Citizenship includes the capacity and the practice of political action.¹ Education is therefore by necessity internal to a

¹ See further Heller & Fehér (1988): *The Postmodern Political Condition*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

democracy, since it is through education that these practices can be learnt and implemented. Education can be seen as a space in which citizenship takes shape.

Instead of peace, this report focuses on democracy, which in its most general sense can be understood as a structural concept dealing with the conditions for balancing diverging forces in a society.

Democracy thus defined has both formal (procedural) and non-formal (cultural) implications. For the former it requires institutionalised procedures, which would allow for the rule [*kratos*] by the people [*demos*]. Such procedures need to be upheld by governmental as well as non-governmental institutions and would guarantee certain citizenship rights and duties declared by its constitution (for example the legal right to express one's opinions, to receive education, to organize collectively and to participate in the government). It is required of a democratic state to develop democratic institutions, to enforce the rule of law and to create an active civil society, with free and independent mass media institutions.

In terms of its subsequent non-formal implications, democracy is also to be seen *as a moral and political ideal* of popular rule. In other words, it has to be understood in relation to what can be called a democratic culture. That is, for example, that people regard each other as equals and treat each other with respect, that they handle conflicts in dialogue, in order to achieve peaceful solutions. This indicates that participatory democracy at the grassroots level is a crucial factor in creating and sustaining a strong democratic culture.

A fruitful way of approaching the issue of democratic culture is to perceive any society as more or less democratic in this sense, that is, as both containing democratic as well as non-democratic manifestations. Metaphorically speaking, democratic culture is like the spots on a leopard. That is to say, a project with the ambition to focus on the culture of democracy has to extract and clarify those spots in order to enlarge their scope. This can also be said to be the main task for what is often called within democratic societies, the third force, i.e. the free press, the role of intellectuals, critical research and the universities, the role of NGOs and semi-governmental organisations etc. within civil society.

The extraordinary situation within the democratic state of Sri Lanka (i.e. the war) naturally sets limits to such undertakings. Although in full recognition of this, this report does not take it as the only frame of reference, but rather tries to identify certain aspects of Sri Lankan society that can be used as entry points for enlarging the scope of democracy and democratic culture.

2.3 Democracy and Ethnicity

To address the whole complexity of the prevailing conflict in Sri Lanka exceeds the scope of this report, but it is necessary to say something about its many different layers. It can be characterized as a conflict of ethnicity (Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim), as a religious conflict (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity), as a conflict about language (Sinhala, Tamil, English), as a caste conflict, as a conflict of culture (i.e. new and old forms of life), as a class conflict and so on.

What is important to note is that any descriptions of the conflict are in themselves value-based statements, that is, there are no completely neutral descriptions of the conflict. The same is true for descriptions of democracy. For example, if there is a tendency, which seems to be the case in Sri Lanka, to address questions of democracy following ethnic categorizations, there is a real danger of promoting discrimination in the name of democracy. By elevating ethnicity as the

privileged meaning for democracy, a seemingly neutral and non-political categorization is implanted. Ethnicity, to be at all dealt with as a relevant category within the scope of the political concept of democracy, has to be understood as a cultural/political categorization rather than as a natural/biological one.

A concrete expression of this state of affairs, to take just one example, is the tendency in Sri Lanka to divide schools in line with ethnic categorisations, i.e. Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim schools. The children are not treated as individuals in their own right but entirely as representatives of groups with certain characteristics.

A drastic consequence of this state of affairs is that if funding is unequally distributed to the schools, regardless of reason, it will be perceived as giving advantages or disadvantages to one ethnic group rather than another. For instance, this was reflected in an overpopulated Muslim school in Batticaloa, visited by the team which hadn't rooms enough to set one aside for conducting prayers. While in the same district a small Sinhala school with a comparably smaller number of students was supported with new buildings. This state of affairs was seen as a clear case of discrimination from the point of view of the Muslim school. And the reverse was also true for a small Sinhala school in the hill country.

2.4 Ethnicity and Perspectives on Teaching

Understanding both ethnicity as unitary and given, and education as an introduction to the cultural diversity within society has an impact on teaching perspectives.

Often teaching tends to be based on an idea of education as a form of transmission whereby education leads to very specific outcomes. In many cases the end product of such transmissions is thought to be a socialised subject, i.e. a subject who embodies that which was supposed to be learnt, who completely and fully acts in accordance with whatever he/she is taught. These preconceived notions of the student provide an alibi for and a validation of the expected outcome of learning.

An alternative view would be to perceive education as a form of interaction and communication aiming at the exploration of difference. That is, to explore how through communication we learn to be singular and responsible beings in society. For teaching, then, to be communicative it has to be understood as open and not based on preconceived notions of the student.

Such an understanding of human interaction brings to the fore the idea that education can never be understood as a one-way process whereby the teacher simply moulds the student. Any understanding of education has to take into account that what is presented by the teacher is not passively taken in but actively "used" by the student².

The condition that students use what is presented by the teacher introduces an element of unpredictability and transformation in the acquisition of knowledge. There is no way of totally controlling or anticipating this use, since that would mean that the relationships involved in processes of teaching would be reduced to technical, mechanical acts.

From this follows the understanding that processes such as teaching or learning are subjected to difference rather than categorical sameness. In other words, the pluralism indicated by democ-

² See further Biesta (1997): "Education, Not Initiation" In Margonis ed., *Philosophy of Education 1996*. Urbana-Campaign, IL: Philosophy of Education Society. P.90–98.

racy and democratic culture is internal to education and is the quality which distinguishes education from indoctrination.

2.5 Democratic Culture and the Concept of Learning

Learning is not only about inculcating certain facts but includes the capacity to take a stance in relation to those facts. As such it is about actively experiencing the realities of the day-to-day life of learners. Learning, then, is not only about experiencing the world of the past, but opens up opportunities for living life in a changing world. Learning is oriented towards the future, a future we create through our actions as opposed to waiting for it to happen³. This means that teaching methods within a democratic culture have to promote active learning, that is, they have to develop strategies for dealing with real problems in the actual life of the students.

Real problems are obviously complex since they affect the lives of diverse individuals within diverse communities. For example, policy-makers may be concerned about constructing systems to foster democratic citizens, yet for children and parents, participating in those systems of schooling can be about something so basic as staying alive, i.e. to stay in school as long as possible so one will not be enrolled by paramilitary groups operating in one's area, which is a very real risk in the Sri Lankan context of war. Thus, an issue facing democratic schooling is how to deal with real problems.

Yet another example of real problems is identified by a schoolgirl we interviewed "There is too much death here. I can die by a bomb any minute walking to our home from school." Such experiences are self-evidently all too frequent and traumatic to be ignored by any project, but particularly one with the desire to have a substantial impact on the day-to-day realities of children, parents and people in general. Schools can function as a relatively safe place where children are allowed to speak their minds and be helped to deal with their traumatic experiences. Learning in such situations has inevitably to deal not only with subject content but also the physical presence of the war itself and its historical, social and political circumstances. But this is also the case for schools in less extreme situations. For if learning is for the development of well informed citizens capable of participating in decisions dealing with their own future, then all schools have to deal with the conflict in some measure.

2.6 The Individual and Her/His Society

The individual is here to be understood in terms of his/her social interactions through which the individual comes into being. Such an understanding suggests that individuals are neither predefined nor over-determined by social categories such as ethnicity and class. Instead, by focussing on the importance of social interaction, society consists of a social space, which is always open and unpredictable. With regard to citizenship, the individual learns to act openly and to take responsibility for his/her actions.

2.7 The Individual as a Moral Subject within a Democratic Culture

It is only through a socio-political space of openness that the subject can become a true citizen and whose actions can be judged on an individual basis, rather than by whatever ethnic group she/he belongs. Moreover, it is only by being an acting person that responsibility can be at-

³ See further Dewey (1963): *Experience and Education*. New York: Collier Books.

tached to the subject. And responsibility is a central characteristic, a virtue, if you will, of a moral subject within a democratic culture.

A moral subject, then, can only come into presence in an open society in which he/she is free and able to act responsibly. This means that education participates in this openness in order to foster responsibility. If, for example, education is defined in ethnic terms and is ordered in a strictly hierarchical manner, there would be no room for responsible actions by the individual. This is particularly the case since the defining characteristic for strict hierarchies are control and predictability based on mechanical ideals. A democratic culture, on the other hand, is based on responsible actions.

2.8 A Shift from Ethnicity to Difference as Base for an Intercultural Democracy

Difference is a concept used to signify the other as absolutely other, and to signal that every perception of the other is limited. By elevating difference as the crucial element in an intercultural democracy the focus shifts from privileged positions based on definitions of individuals according to ethnicity to the very relationship between individuals.

The nature of this relationship is such that it both divides and unifies without letting one individual merge into another. Like a table between people, it keeps individuals separate while uniting them in their very difference.

To take another example, the relationship of man to woman is one of difference in that negotiations over differences are not aimed at converting the one to the other. This unbridgeable difference cannot, though, be used as an excuse for not being respectful of voices that differ from our own but points at the necessity to handle differences justly. In other words, the negotiations of differences have no end, but have to be seen as ongoing processes within the spheres of law, politics and ethics.⁴

The concept of difference, then, suggests that we cannot take a unitary and self-evident point of sameness as departure for relationships with the other since that would reduce the other to this very sameness. In concrete terms it would mean a negation of the uniqueness of the other and the relationship with the other would have to be understood as a violent act of reduction of the other, to make her or him the same as me. Accepting the otherness of the other also indicates that one realises that what individuals have in common is that they are the others for each other.

This means that the socio-political in an intercultural democracy is to be seen as a space in which unique individuals negotiate their differences. Whatever differences there are, in language, ethnicity, class, gender and so on. To stress this point, the recognition of those differences as not possible to be reduced to one original point of departure is the very condition for a pluralist democracy to work.

⁴ See further Säfström (1999): "Moving from the Question of Unity to the Question of Difference in Curriculum Theory" *Studies in Philosophy and Education*., no. 18, p. 221–233.

3 Part B – Results of Inquiries

Section 1

3.1 Violence and Education

The Youth Commission Report of 1990 has been taken as the starting point of most analyses of contemporary youth unrest and related problems. However, the Report does not provide a historical treatment of youth issues, nor does it focus on education per se. Yet, the key elements of the complex connections between education and violence find a precise articulation in this influential document, whose signatories include the Minister of Constitutional Affairs and Industrial Development, Professor GL Pieris, the Chairman of the National Education Commission, Professor Lakshman Jayatilleke, and UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Dr Radhika Coomaraswamy.

By implication, the relationship between education and violence as identified in the Youth Commission Report can be sub-divided into four inter-connected areas, which implicate the education system in

- a) Maintaining and even exacerbating discrimination against rural students and teachers vis-à-vis their more privileged urban counterparts.
- b) Legitimising political patronage in employment by resolutely avoiding coming to terms with this key issue which affects both the vision/aims of education and its tangible outcomes.
- c) The unequal access to the English language, compounded by an acute lack of qualified and trained English teachers in underprivileged areas, which leads to the skewing of benefits accruable to those who are fluent in the language.
- d) General corruption and bureaucratic apathy which pervades the educational system – in relation to teacher appointments and transfers, student enrolment in prestigious schools, conferment of privileges on select schools such as their designation as national schools – in equal measure to the rest of the country, and which pathologises any attempts at serious and far-reaching reform.

The Commission has not, however, highlighted another aspect of the system itself, which engenders a winner take-all competitiveness among students beginning from the most tender age. The system of examinations and promotions, the rigid even archaic disciplinary frame, and the pressure to move to “better” (more privileged and prestigious) schools, all contribute to a “violence” that distorts and retards childhood development as well as the promotion of egalitarian social values.

The Commission observes that the answer to how “humanistic values may be revived as an important moral force in our society . . . may lie in the teaching of religion and the reading of literature” (p.95). Yet, the problem of violence in/of education cannot, of course, be separated from the over-arching context of general violence that has pervaded Sri Lankan society over the past two decades, in which an estimated 100,000 young men and women have been killed and thousands of millions of rupees worth of damage to personal and public property has been wreaked. In fact, the toll on the entire social fabric as a result of the protracted ethnic war has not been a focus of the Commission, which appears to have privileged the Southern insurrection over the Northern conflict in its submissions.

In contrast, the nexus between education and violence is most blatant to the researchers in this present study in the war-torn North-East Province and the border villages that form a ring around this province, also including southern areas such as Moneragala. In these areas, in addition to the direct impact of the carnage of war, there is clear evidence of a systemic lack of resources – both human and infrastructural – as well as a structured neglect that has resulted from the ascendancy of military logic in these regions.

For instance, even rudimentary education is disrupted in these areas as a result of the few available schools being taken over as military camps or refugee shelters. In most cases, public transportation is virtually non-existent, in some instances internal displacement affects access to education, in others the war offensives render school premises out of bounds, and in yet others survival issues gain precedence over school attendance.

It needs to be reiterated, however, that no community is exempt from the brutalisation engendered by the war, and in this sense, an education system that does not explicitly address this violence (as brutalisation) is complicitous to the extent that it does not seek to prepare the youth to face it effectively. Nor does it attempt to reduce or ameliorate the effects of protracted war.

3.2 The Violence in Schools

The right to perform corporal punishment inscribed in the duties of principals in the Sri Lankan schools is an obvious obstacle for giving the students space to act as responsible and moral subjects in accordance with a democratic culture. This has recently most vividly been addressed by the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and, as such, provides an entry point for a project aiming at enlarging the scope of democracy and democratic culture within Sri Lankan society. The right of the child inscribed in Article 19 (protection of the child from abuse of any kind), 28 (discipline in schools has to preserve the dignity of the child) and 29 (to develop respect for the child's parents, the child's cultural identity, its language and values and develop respect for the cultures which differ from the child's own) of the Human Rights Convention ratified by the state of Sri Lanka gives this point an even greater emphasis.

3.3 An Analysis of the General Education Reforms Document

The reform document “General Education Reforms” (1997) produced by the Presidential Task Force on General Education in Sri Lanka reflects a wider perspective on the role of education within Sri Lankan society and can in several ways be said to be in line with much of what has been said above.

The willingness to address what we have called “real problems” is straightforward and clear in the reform document: “[t]here are strong arguments for a major shift in Education goals and practices and a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to change” (p.3). The reform document sets as its starting point the “sharp decline in the standard and quality of education at all levels”(p.1) and interprets this not only in terms of effectiveness but in relation to a “Total personality development, characterised by creativity, initiative, discipline, team spirit, respect and tolerance for other people and other cultures”(p.1).

The objective expressed in the reform document is to enlarge the scope of education so as to more thoroughly involve “backward” areas. This is highlighted as a need to match “education to the demands of people living in those districts” and “[t]his matching would be the true

determinant of quality”(p. 2). This desire too allows for a thorough involvement not only of communities in “backward” areas, but across the country at large. Such matching would not only be a question about the quality of education but about democracy itself.

Moreover, the undertakings expected to follow from the reform “must be done in the spirit of bringing benefits to all people and not as a means of conferring privileges to selected groups and areas”(p. 1). Further, “None of the proposals for reform should be viewed or interpreted as discriminating against any person or groups of persons” and this is related to “principles of social justice and equity”(p. 1). From this it should be clear, then, that issues concerning education can not be exhaustively addressed by education alone, particularly if the point is to enlarge the scope of democratic culture. In practice it means that other areas of knowledge such as social and political sciences, ethics and law should be involved in a project with the goal of strengthening a form (or forms) of democratic culture in Sri Lanka. This also goes together with what is stated in the document as the need to not only confine the reform to formal instruction in schools but to stress that solutions suggested “must be far more concerned about a *total* approach”(emphasis in original; p. 2).

A characteristic of the educational reforms that we have seen as especially important to take into consideration is the ambition to involve other sectors “outside the ambit of formal general education” in a total reform approach. To stress just one such component of a total reform, which is in line with the arguments developed in this report, is to emphasise the importance of formally involving all the knowledge-producing sectors in Sri Lanka, in order to get input and impetus as well as a force for change implanted within the very core of a project aiming at enlarging the scope of democratic culture through education. Drawing on the expertise within already existing institutions enables the process to support sustainable solutions. This implies developing *formal* connections between the National Institute of Education (NIE) and the universities, and involving other organisations such as, for example, the National Integration Program Unit (NIPU), the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and representatives of civil society such as the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA).

Another factor in developing a total reform approach is the emphasis on critical thinking. Critical thinking then can be seen as that which fuels change in bureaucratic and administrative systems in a society as well as that which promotes changes on the levels of individuals. This was also a component of a total reform approach that was very much stressed in the interviews by, for example, Kamala Peiris, Lakshman Jayatilleke, K Arulpragasam, Mr Madegama, Sumana-siri Liyanage, Harendra de Silva, P Saravanamuttu, Chandra Gunawardena, and Chitra Maunaguru to name just a few.

Finally, there seems to be a high degree of consensus between various actors in the educational sector to view teachers as “the most crucial and valuable resource within the system”(p. 3). This means that if teachers are to be seen as the facilitators of change, much effort has to be put into preparing them for such an onerous task. However, they can certainly not take on the whole responsibility for such change. Therefore, a critical issue for a project aiming at democratic culture through education is about how to prepare and continuously involve teachers in such undertakings.

3.4 Educational Structures of Authority

For any project to be sustainable it must address formal structures since these structures largely order social reality. As such, these structures have to be understood as representing certain norms and values important to maintain a certain reality.

If we take the current Sri Lankan education system as the starting point for a description of educational structures we can identify five structures of authority that need to be involved in any far-reaching project.

First are the administrative structures centralised under the Minister of Education, the Secretary and Additional Secretaries, Provincial Directors, Zones and Zonal Directors and Divisions, and to this can be added the Master Teachers (see Appendix D). Second, the National Institute of Education whose main responsibilities are quality development of education through teacher education, curriculum development and research. Third, the provincial ministries of education, the provincial councils and local government bodies. Fourth, the universities, mainly through their research departments of education and through graduates who take on teaching. And fifth, the newly constructed body called the National Education Research Centre (NEREC) based at the University of Colombo, which will mainly produce a database of national statistics on educational progress and other related issues.

Given the diverse nature and genesis of these structures, they do not always work with the same objectives. From the perspective of the school, contradictory expectations and directives are often given. To elaborate on this point we will take the perspective of a school which succeeds in not only involving the community but also in continuously raising its standards in terms of the examination performance of its students, from 3 A level passes in 1995 to 100 A level passes at the last exam (1999). The good students stay on in the school, which benefits all students and gives pride to the community.

The school is a rural type 1C Sinhala school in the North West Province with 834 students and 37 staff members and the teachers and principal are exceptionally devoted to their work. The school has its own library, which is well maintained and continuously built up. The buildings and the classrooms are well kept (with maps and other informative charts colourfully painted on the walls) and the whole surrounding area is clean and suitable for children, including a playground (constructed with the help of parents) and an environment of trees and flowering plants. The school has, for example, English teachers who give assignments in English publicly displayed outside the library and the papers produced are collected in the library for other students to read. The school also has taken action in order to abolish what is otherwise in Sri Lanka a frequently used informal tutoring system by giving free extra classes on Sundays, which are widely attended by students. The principal also participates in matters that concern the community, such as helping to organise the construction of houses etc. The whole atmosphere, as far as the team can tell, was positive and conducive for learning and citizenship to take place. The school also supported surrounding schools through the “family of schools system” indicated in the new education reform. This school is a successful example of reform.

This school, as exemplary as it can be said to be in several respects, faces some severe problems, however, which seem to be a consequence of a top-down mentality inscribed within the structures of authority. For example, teachers from the school in question can be assigned to other districts without the consultation of the principal, and the continuous training of teachers for

the new reform is reducing the staff randomly. This makes it hard to sustain successful programs within the school. The master teachers, by being required to focus only on their respective subjects, often only see the technical aspects of teaching and not their connection to a more total approach, such as the fostering of a democratic culture.

The school addressed itself most directly to the latter through the new 'subject' "Life Competencies". The principal stressed that this 'subject' lacks substantial direction, requires the involvement of parents to be successful, and that it involves practical work by the students. To be given substance it preferably could be connected to social studies (see also the section on social studies in this report). The participation of the master teachers, introduced as part of the reform in order to exchange information and ideas throughout the school-system, seems to be problematic in this specific case. The master teachers apparently do not show interest in the progress made by the school.

The basic problem, though, is the lack of recognition felt by the school. No visits from the zonal office, no positive support by the authorities, who in our view actually could learn from the initiatives taken and the creative solutions made by this school. Thus, an important question to deal with is how to encourage a bottom-up flow of school-based initiatives and experiments, and how to provide systemic recognition to such positive cases as demonstrated by this school.

This point, the perceived lack of recognition, was a theme, which repeatedly and strongly emerged in the interviews in schools, regardless of type of school and regardless of which community it belonged to. *Some* obvious circumstances that were pointed out as proof of the unconcern or ignorance of the educational authorities was the fact that schoolbooks often didn't arrive in time (if they arrived at all), that teachers were transferred randomly between schools, that the Sinhala schools were requested to hire Tamil-speaking teachers without having funds to do so etc. (See further Part C in this report).

3.5 Consequences of a Highly Competitive School System

The formal school system of Sri Lanka is a highly competitive system, and consequently, a violent system through processes of inclusion/exclusion. An expression of this violence is the tendency to view education as primarily an instrument for the division of labour, in practice shown by the high importance given to tests.

The tests are generally considered by the authorities to be an objective means to assess student achievements through quantitative data. In one sense this can be held as true, as there are more or less objective means to assess student achievements. However, there are never completely objective means since that which is selected to be the criteria of success always is based on a choice among a vast number of possible criteria.

The fact that selection and choice of criteria are involved, points to the involvement of judgments based on certain values and norms. That is, the tests are to be understood as part of an ideological construction of reality. In this case it would imply the construction of a reality in which educational success, to underline the point made above, is the primary way to be included in Sri Lankan society, and in that sense to own the category citizenship. A consequence then is that while the highly competitive system certainly produces high standards for the few who do succeed, it also produces a vast majority of failures, that is, exclusions from citizenship. This could also be seen as one component possibly contributing to the high suicide rate for young

people in Sri Lanka (one of the highest in the world) bemoaned on in the Youth Commission Report (1990).

Another consequence of this highly competitive and hierarchical school system is the perceived need for tests as criteria for being able to 'move' good students to 'better' and more prestigious schools. This goes against the educational reform document, which speaks in favour of raising the standards of all schools, including the ones in rural areas.

3.6 School-based Assessment

There is also an aim, expressed by the new educational reform, to reduce what is considered to be the negative effects of the tests. One component of such a reduction is to introduce school-based assessment. Building on our interviews with parents, teachers and principals (See Appendix B) the researchers behind this inquiry can see several problems related to this new form of assessment. For example, when it is used, it is used in exactly the same way as the previous tests. Moreover, it is not used in all types of schools and is therefore understood as something that only concerns the common schools (and the common people), not the "prestigious schools" (national, international and others). This, of course, reduces the credibility of the new assessment. This was clearly expressed by principals, teachers and the parents we talked to.

Another problem connected to the school-based assessment, which also was clearly stated by the parents, is that this type of assessment leans heavily on the credibility of the teachers. It is considered to rely more on teachers' subjective views of students than, what is considered to be more "objective" quantitative data. Several schools also admitted that they used school-based assessments in the same spirit as tests or complemented them with tests on the request of parents. Thus, if the school-based assessment is to be successful in achieving a real change in the way students are measured, it is very much dependent on seeing teachers as professionals, (see further page 32).

Section II

3.7 A General Comment On Textbook Preparation And Dissemination

A universal complaint that the members of the team heard during their consultations with teachers and students throughout the country was that textbooks were not received in time, that the translations into Tamil were of poor quality, and training in teaching the new texts was inadequate. In some cases, such as the Year 10 English reader, the texts had not been circulated to the schools in August 2000, even though the academic year was eight months old. The discrepancies were heightened in under-privileged and remote schools, as well as those in the North-East Province, where there did not even appear to be any remedial processes at work.

Even within the city of Colombo, the post-workshop interviews highlighted delays in obtaining textbooks, the lack of proper training in the new subjects and syllabi, as well as the skewed emphasis that discriminated against Tamil medium students. The situation is worse in less privileged districts, and still worse in the North-East and border village regions. There were reportedly over one hundred errors in the Tamil Social Studies texts, including those that were ethnically demeaning, by presenting a hierarchy with Sinhala Buddhism at the apex.

For instance, the Year Six Environmental Studies textbook contains the following paragraph on page 55 [Translated into English].

“Although we come from different ethnic groups we are all Sri Lankans. Although the languages that we speak and the religions we follow are different, as people of this land we belong to one family. May all of us who come from this land which has developed according to the Buddhist principles and culture, live in peace and tolerance.”

This statement posits Buddhism at the pinnacle of all religious faiths in Sri Lanka, subordinating Hinduism, Islam and Christianity to its influence and primacy. The damage that can be caused to ethnic equality and social justice by such discriminatory formulations need not be over-emphasised. The content-based findings of the following pages are echoed in the 1999 *NIPU Survey of School Text Books* as well as in a practitioner-based analysis produced in 1998 in Anamaduwa by the Sama Sakthi Guru Sanwada Sansadaya titled *The Role of School Text Books for Multi-Social Reconciliation* [in Sinhala].

In addition, our interviews among less privileged communities in the Polonnaruwa, Batticaloa, Amparai, Nuwara Eliya districts has elicited the response that, in general, the new systems of teaching/learning initiated by the education reforms are proving to be more costly for parents than the previous methods. This is an unfortunate consequence of an otherwise important set of changes at the primary level, which has resulted, in some extreme cases, of the poorest students keeping away from school as they cannot afford the additional materials required for the new project-based assignments etc.

3.8 Life Competencies Subject

The Life Competencies subject has been introduced into the educational curriculum as an integral part of the educational reform programme initiated by the government. It is seen as pivotal to the inculcation of appropriate values in the youth of Sri Lanka, and a pre-requisite to the more specific and focused work required in relation to peace education initiatives.

The programme is to be taught in years 7, 8 and 9. The teaching of this subject in schools in Year 9 began in 1999, Year 7 teaching in 2000, and Year 8 will commence in 2001. The subject has been divided into 04 sections, amounting to a total of 72 forty-minute periods of class time each year.

We have been informed that in structuring the curriculum, participatory input from some of the stakeholders (teachers, students) was obtained in a systematic way, but that the material had not been piloted over an extended period prior to its nationwide implementation. This means that “ownership” of this innovative programme is confined to the core team (comprising three or four persons) at the National Institute of Education (NIE) who formulated and designed the curriculum. In addition, there are no prescribed texts or general readers, even reference works, to provide guidelines to students and teachers, who are, therefore, cast into the deep-end without any real preparation or training.

In all of the material presented there is no implicit or explicit reference to the ethnic crisis, nor the war in the North-East. Ethnicity itself has been referred to only in sub-unit 2.2 [Competencies and Practices that can be Fruitfully used Collectively] of Unit 2 [Development of Competencies Needed to Facilitate Working Towards Positive Relationships and <Fostering> Group Feelings], and here too as a statement that “The foundation of the development of multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural countries is its sense of collective unity and [ability to] act as one group” (p.19). In fact, in sub-unit 2.3 which deals

with valuing diversity in society makes no reference to ethnic or religious difference, but locates diversity in the “family, village and school” (p.20).

Furthermore, the syllabus of the subject Life Competencies does not address any of the issues surrounding the war or the ethnic crisis, not even the question of violence. This means that there is a denial of the present socio-political reality, and in its stead is an over-emphasis on individualized problems and solutions, even for clearly social issues. Consider the following examples:

Respect for social diversity is sub-unit 2.3 for each of the three years. In the Year 8 syllabus the first objective under this heading is “To learn to value the diverse cultures found in society” (p.28) but the Problem Encountered and Concept relevant to this objective is “people are different due to diverse reasons” while the relevant Proposed Learning Resources and Methodology is “To analyse and value the fact that human and cultural diversity has been utilized in social *pavathma*⁵” (p.28).

Similarly, 2.4 Appropriate/Timely Conflict Management has no reference, even by implication, to the ongoing war, and the emphasis is on “individual difference and diverse reasons as a result of which conflicts take place.” This entire sub-unit remains virtually unchanged for the three years.

There seems to be no progression between the 7th, 8th and 9th years in the Life Competencies syllabus, with the identical objectives, problems, concepts, learning resources, even methodologies indicated, particularly in the topic areas that cover gender/sexuality (1.4), diversity (2.3) and conflict management (2.4).

The section on gender is particularly problematic, since it appears to accept gender stereotypes and roles uncritically as in the Year 8 Common Objectives. Gender is allocated only 04 hours per year, which is the lowest time slot assigned to any sub-unit.

The entire framework of life competencies does not include any discussion of fundamental human rights, nor any reference to any of the international covenants, protocols, charters (ICCPR, UDHR etc) of which Sri Lanka is a signatory. As a result, there is no citizenship-related or collective focus and fore-grounding, which would examine issues from a larger-than-personal (or social) lens.

No texts have been recommended and the methodology section is weak, providing mainly laundry lists of the various teaching techniques that can be tried out. Very rarely are concrete and specific exercises provided, and no reading is even recommended. It must be noted that this analysis does not in any way negate the commitment and competence of individuals, but rather locates problems firmly within institutional and bureaucratic structures as well as in the realm of ideology which appears to be pervasive.

3.9 Teaching Of English

The major concern with the teaching of English in Sri Lanka remains the lack of competent teachers throughout the island. Recruitment qualifications remain low and training is woefully inadequate. This is an area in which a major reorganization of the existing structures and systems is urgently required. Under the current educational reforms English is now to be taught

⁵ Pavathma translates roughly as continuity or sustainability.

from Year One (and not as before from Year Three), yet the numbers and competence of teachers have not been improved. What would inevitably result is the further skewing of resource allocation, where better-qualified English teachers are concentrated in the major cities, and particularly within the Western Province. It is the case even now that the distribution of English teachers displays stark anomalies, with, for instance, over 1000 vacancies in the Eastern region and an excess of teachers in the Colombo District.

The texts used in teaching are also open to criticism from a similar standpoint.⁶ However, this report will focus exclusively on the texts' relationship to issues of ethnicity and gender in Sri Lanka. On this score too the prescribed English textbooks in *The World Through English Series*, revised in keeping with the new reforms, give cause for concern. It has been noted, for instance, that insufficient attention has been paid to diversity in the lesson on religious festivals in the Year 8 Reader.⁷ In this same reader the lesson "Life in the Land of Ice and Snow" which is said to describe "Life Around Us" appears singularly inappropriate, and could have been a fine opportunity to initiate the young learners into the current situation in Sri Lanka, including the plight of war refugees.

In summary, the local lessons in these readers are inauthentic and contrived, though there has been a huge improvement from the previous readers in bringing in ethnic diversity into the texts. However, the net outcome is that a level of superficiality prevails, and some stereotyping has crept in (as in the Muslim men invariably being portrayed as businessmen and traders). There is also a tourist-like quality to the entire text when it describes places and events in Sri Lanka, such as the *Esala Perahera* or the town of Nuwara Eliya.

In addition to issues of context, complexity and cultural inappropriateness, the use of an archaic and excessively formal style of language confounds the students' task in these texts under review. The Year 10 text introduces "Great Personalities of Our Time" in Lesson Unit 5, identifying CWW Kannangara, Martin Luther King Jr and Helen Keller as three great persons whose lives are described in detail. No role models from among the Tamil and Muslim communities have been described, nor have the students been asked to identify any others as a related activity. That such exclusions and omissions are not accidental but structural can be seen from similar examples that appear elsewhere within the curriculum, most recently in a UNICEF-sponsored Year Six supplementary teacher's handbook for the Conflict Resolution subject which has just been produced by the NIE.

The point is that English, which could have provided an opportunity for the pursuit of inter-ethnic understanding (of difference), has not been utilized for this purpose. Instead, even when the opportunity for bringing out local contexts and concerns exist, such as the lesson on elephants [Year 10, Lesson 6], the reading is taken from a foreign source ("Elephants in Zimbabwe"), which presents a scenario quite opposite to the Lankan situation, and one which is racist to boot.

⁶ See, for instance, Parakrama, A "The Tools and Rules are Theirs: Some Thoughts on the Language of Privilege and the Privilege of Language" for a critical account of these texts on the basis of their urban upper class bias, which has alienated the vast majority of students as well as (rural) teachers through the use of inappropriate materials and contexts.

⁷ See NIPU Survey of School Textbooks 1999 [in Sinhala], p. 42

3.10 Peace Education Teaching Materials

The Team examined the Peace Education materials produced by the National Integration and Policy Unit (NIPU), the Education Ministry's Peace Education Unit, and UNICEF's Education for Conflict Resolution Project.

Mr A S Balasuriya's three textbooks, written for the UNICEF project, appear to form the backbone of this programme in Sri Lanka. These texts were widely available in schools throughout the country, and have been translated into Tamil. The books are titled *Teaching Peace to Children*, *Peace Education: Learning Activities*, and *Conflict Management in Schools*, and were published in 1994, 1993 and 1992 respectively.

Though the texts provide many admirable models for understanding by the students, and though they follow an enlightened educational philosophy, no attempt has been made to grasp the nettle of the serious ethnic and war-related issues confronting Sri Lankan children in the 1990s and beyond. None of the conflict management case studies or activities describes any scenario like those faced by minorities on a regular basis in Sri Lanka. Nor is there any reference at all to gender-related conflicts in schools or the wider society.

In the text *Teaching Peace to Children*, which is a set of lessons for higher secondary students, too, no reference – explicit or implicit – is made to the ongoing war or even to ethnic conflict in general. The entire rubric of conflict management and peace education has thus been individualized to the exclusion of social and ideological cause and effect. The espousal of Gandhian *ahimsa* in these texts in such a context of war and atrocities on all sides, may not be sufficiently nuanced to deal with the complexities that children have to face on a daily basis. Though this certainly can be said to be a powerful and important beginning, it may have been useful to supplement this with some concrete and tangible real-life experiences describing the ways communities cope with war and extended trauma, both in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

The books tend to reproduce well-worn clichés and platitudes on peace, harmony etc., but because they do not touch on the vexed issues of our times they do not equip the students (or teachers) to deal with issues of violence, discrimination, prejudice, sexism and racism, which are the issues most important to deal with in order to support the development of an intercultural democratic culture and citizenship in Sri Lanka.

This majoritarian Sinhala perspective resonates throughout the Education Ministry's Peace Education programme. The core staff comprises 10 persons, all of whom are Sinhala-speaking. No permanent Tamil-speaker has been recruited, nor has such a need been felt, and this itself is a strong indictment on the project. The 35 workshops held during the last three years have been conducted in Sinhala, with occasional translations by Muslim resource persons chosen on an ad hoc basis, when the programme runs into Tamil-speakers.

In contrast, NIPU's national integration education programme has as its explicit goal "to foster among school children integrationist disposition and commitments [sic] to fundamental values and principles required for ethnic harmony, peace, democracy and national integration." However, the activities under this programme – six student exchanges, five student friendship committees, an art exhibition for North-East school children, teacher training workshops – do not appear to be sufficient in terms of both extent and impact to address these concerns in concrete and tangible ways during the period under review.

3.11 Social Studies

As a subject Social Studies has the potential to engage with the key issues of democracy, but this is not yet made full use of. Rather the social studies text-books over-represent the views of the Sinhala Buddhist majority. For instance in the Grade 7 social studies text the writers allocate 13 pages to explain the *Introduction of Buddhism in Sri Lanka* and a total of only two and-a-half pages for the other three religions.

The subject area covered by Social Studies was originally intended to include subjects such as History, Geography, Sociology, Civics and Government. However, one finds these prescribed texts to be skewed towards Geography (one-third of the syllabus). The following table as analysed by NIPU provides a clear illustration of the lack of proper representation and overall planning in creating the Social Studies curricula:

Books	Total No. of topics	Physical Geography	Human Geography	Introductory Science	Political Science	Other
Year 7	10	08	02	-	-	-
Year 8	11	04	04	01	01	01
Year 9	14	05	05	01	02	01
Year 10	15	04	02	07	02	-
Year 11	10	-	-	09	01	-
Total	60	21	13	18	06	02

In effect, the subject of Social Studies has become, to use Additional Secretary, Education Development, Prof. Lal Perera's, phrase, "a waste paper basket. Anything that needs to go into the school curricula is thrown into this subject". In contrast to this downgrading in practice, Social Studies has been conceived in the new reform as pivotal to the learning process.

Prof. Lakshman Jayatilleke, Chairman National Education Commission reiterates that learning about the *dynamics of society* is one of the most important additions made in Social Studies in the new reforms. However, the relation between theory and practice is not clear as is reflected in the Grade Seven book which superficially and inadequately addresses the social dynamic through topics such as:

1. Our School
2. Our Country's Geographic position and Early settlements
3. The Administration of Early Settlers

The most serious concern about this text is, however, that it excludes the most urgent issues of our times. The question of ethnicity and minority discrimination that have caused severe problems for the country and the society have not been addressed at all except in the last and final line in the Grade 11 book, under the chapter of *Safeguarding Human Rights* where it says, "Never before has greater attention been given to the world declaration on Human Rights as it is being given now in Sri Lanka due to the prevailing ethnic conflict in the country". It need not be emphasized here that however difficult it may be, students need to confront and be assisted in addressing the whole set of issues surrounding Sri Lanka's seventeen year old war.

This view is reiterated by the National Integration Programme Unit in its text book analysis where it has strongly condemned the exclusion of the subject of ethnic integration in the following terms: “not only have these text books been prepared in ignorance of the concept of National Integration, they do not attempt to provide any training in citizenship. The silence of these texts regarding these issues remain their short coming”⁸.

3.12 General Conclusion on Subject Analysis

In general, then, the subjects and programs considered above, while conceived as instruments for fostering ethnic harmony and cohesion, remain problematic in practice due to an aggregate of interconnected reasons which include administrative/bureaucratic and ideological ones as well as due to the inadequacy of resources and specialist personnel.

What seems to be problematic is the lack of an integrative approach in which the different subjects are related to the issue of democratic culture and citizenship. Substantial input in training of personnel would therefore be needed (See further part D).

3.13 Obtaining Feedback on the Study from Stakeholders

Since the informed response of key stakeholders and other experts is crucial to improving both the quality and acceptability of this study, three workshops were held on the 20th, 22nd and 23rd of November 2000, at which the draft report and related issues were discussed. The first half-day workshop held in Colombo included senior government administrators such as the Additional Secretary/Director General, Education Reforms, Ministry of Education, and the Director-General of the NIE, representatives of foreign donor agencies and the World Bank. The second and third whole-day workshops focused on those who were actively involved in related initiatives at the level of curriculum design, development and hands-on implementation, in civil society initiatives, in academic and training activities, as well as those who had proven expertise in the field. All the participants and many others received the draft report in advance (See Appendix C). In addition, the findings were discussed at five regional interviews with teachers, students, parents and community members and a cross-section of schools were visited at this stage in order to re-check the team’s conclusions with feedback from stakeholders who would not otherwise have the opportunity to share in such an exercise.

The consultants presented the main conclusions of the study to the respective groups and a fruitful structured discussion ensued. Given the constraints of time and place, as well as the busy schedules of the invitees, the workshop series proved to be very successful and greatly enhanced the work of the study team.

This free and frank exchange of views was supplemented with a questionnaire that sought responses to open-ended questions concerning the substance of the report from participants and other key stakeholders who were unable to be present at the workshops due to pressure of work (See Appendix E for Questionnaire). Over 75 such questionnaires were distributed to educators, administrators, trainers and other experts across the country, including in the plantation areas and the North-East Province. However, responses were received from only 25 or 33%, though each recipient was contacted a minimum of three times subsequent to the delivery of the questionnaire and the deadline for responses was extended by 45 days. Many respondents

⁸ See NIPU Survey of School Textbooks 1999

provided the consultants with detailed verbal responses to the questionnaire and these too have been incorporated into the following analysis.

We did have responses, verbal and written, from the war-torn North-East Province, the plantation sector, the urban and semi-urban milieux, the international donor community, those involved in alternate programs that seek to address these very issues, school principals and teachers, academics, curriculum developers, administrators, policymakers, among others, so the feedback was quite representative. These views have been incorporated into the study at various points, including the textbook analysis, the description of other initiatives and the final recommendations.

The consensus view of all those who responded was that the analysis of the general conditions that govern the Lankan educational context were accurately presented, though some respondents wanted a fuller account of other initiatives in related fields, a request which has been addressed in this revision. There was no rejection of any of the elements described in this section, only some requests for additional information, which indicates a near-100% acceptance of the report's analysis of the educational background and its consequences for national reconciliation.

The main area of concern from the respondents who had direct links with the current administrative structures was the inadvisability of creating additional institutions within the prevalent bureaucratic framework. The report acknowledges that the majority (over 75%) of the respondents rejected the proposal given in the draft report, for setting up a new autonomous institute in favour of using the existing institutional framework, though 90% agreed in principle with the need for a specialist mechanism for coordinating and facilitating the proposed work towards the ideal of democratic citizenship.

The conceptual apparatus used in the study received high praise, with respondents highlighting the usefulness of the notion of "difference" to avoid the fetishizing of narrow and divisive definitions of ethnicity. The analysis of the layers of violence embedded in the education system was endorsed by a majority of the respondents, while some others felt that the case was overstated though generally true.

Section III

3.14 Media's Role in Expanding Democratic Culture(s)

The contribution of the country's mass media institutions to creating and nurturing a peaceful multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious society with democratic values needs to be carefully examined by any study of education aimed at social reform. It is widely acknowledged that the media play a vital role in disseminating and reinforcing the key values embodied in an enlightened educational policy. It is also clear that classroom learning is less effective if the media continually presents an alternate picture, which in turn is reinforced by sociocultural institutions, including the family.

Hence, the media is a key protagonist in this comprehensive education process, and the Sida study sought to assess, albeit in a preliminary way, the performance of both the electronic and print media in this regard. The methodology adopted was to study local news reporting over a two-week period in January 2001, and to examine these reports for comparative content and presentation. In addition, the media coverage of the Bindunuwewa Rehabilitation Centre massacre in October 2000 was analysed to determine whether the reporting of this tragic incident reflected ideological and/or ethnic bias.

The data and analysis is not sufficient to make firm conclusions, but was adequate to point to trends and tendencies within the media, which need to be addressed if the press, radio and television can be used to catalyse and sustain the system of values embodied in education for democratic citizenship.

The Television channels were examined across language medium and ownership. This involved looking at the Sinhala, Tamil and English news of Sri Rupavahini Corporation (Rupavahini) and ITN, the Sinhala and English news of TNL, MTV (English), Sirasa (Sinhala) and Shakthi (Tamil) news. As has been observed in the literature, television has a mainstreaming role and the wide divergences that obtain in the print media are much less in evidence here.

The English, Sinhala and Tamil editions of Rupavahini news are virtually identical, differing only in terminology. One significant, if small, difference was the moderation displayed by the Tamil news in relation to describing the LTTE, whereas both the Sinhala and English news invariably referred to “LTTE [or Tiger] terrorists” and used the label “terrorist” (too) frequently. The Tamil news reports did use the label “terrorist”, but not with the same frequency, often referring simply to “the Tigers.” ITN too displayed uniformity across the three languages. Both ITN and Rupavahini tended to focus on the ongoing offensive in the Jaffna peninsula, often including footage from “The Special Media Information Centre” which takes a propagandist form. In fact, on occasions the subtitle that indicates the footage is a government communiqué had been omitted from the English broadcast though it was shown on the Sinhala and Tamil news.

The MTV, Sirasa and Shakthi news appeared to be disproportionately focused on individual incidents of crime and violence, but nonetheless appeared to display more political balance than either the pro-government state-owned Rupavahini and ITN or the pro-opposition TNL. However, in all of the television channels surveyed, the military news reports relied only on government military sources. Reports from the North-East were restricted to accounts of the ongoing offensive, with the sole “development-related” item – long service awards at Vivekananda College, Batticaloa – being only aired on the Tamil language news of ITN.

As relates to the reporting of the Bindunuwewa massacre, there appears to be near uniformity among mainstream Sinhala and English newspapers and television, which is predicated on the quick acceptance of an LTTE “conspiracy theory” at the detention/rehabilitation centre. On this issue, the partisan differences between the pro-government and pro-opposition media institutions appear to have dissolved in a common ideological position. In the print media, there were notable exceptions in a handful of feature-length articles, but the front page news reports tended to accept government statements at face value even when they appeared less than plausible. In sharp contrast, the Tamil language print media responded strongly against the carnage, refusing to be sidetracked by the LTTE bogey. The radical difference between the mainstream Sinhala and English press and the Tamil language newspapers, which has been noted by other studies⁹ was borne out in this preliminary study as well.

In general it should be noted that the media tended to sensationalize and/or expose viewers/readers to high levels of brutality and violence, with neither provocation nor warning. For instance, the showing of footage of a baby born with two heads was entirely gratuitous, as was the repeated display of the human spoils of victory during the military offensive Kiriwita 9.

⁹ See **Media Monitor I & II**, 1997/8, Centre for Policy Alternatives, Colombo, for a detailed account of the extent of this difference, which can be likened to inhabiting two distinct epistemic niches.

There can be little doubt that children are brutalized through the continuous barrage of this sort of “information”.

The study of Young Asia Television’s Shakthi (Sinhala) and Vilippu (Tamil) broadcast provided the team with the opportunity to engage with a media initiative that explicitly targeted peace, democracy and ethnic harmony. While this intervention is salutary and contains many important attempts at educating the public – particularly that most vulnerable demographic segment the youth – its audience rating is disappointingly low at 0.01% and 0.1% respectively for the Sinhala and Tamil programmes.¹⁰

We examined four parallel sets of programmes in Sinhala and Tamil, which focused on an opinion poll on the war, disappearances and harassment of (mainly) Tamils, a model parliament comprising school children, and constitutional reform. The topics were crucial ones and the programs took great care not to antagonise any particular constituency. In general the two language media mirrored each other, but there were some stark differences. Most notable were the programs devoted to the second session of the model parliament, which appeared to have very little in common.

The choice of distinguishing the groups in this “model parliament” based on “ethnicity” already created some problems since it would have been much more in keeping with the theme of the program to separate the parties on the basis of political perspective (pro-devolution, anti-devolution etc). In the Sinhala version, for instance, the Sinhala group was represented by members of the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities, as identified by the cultural and linguistic markers. So too with the Muslim group, but the Tamil group was represented only by Tamils. Contrast this with the fact that two Tamils were shown speaking on behalf of the Sinhala group during this program.

In the Tamil version, however, a Sinhala represented the Tamil group on two separate occasions, leading one to speculate as to why this intervention(s) was not shown in the Sinhala version. Equally troubling was the fact that the substance of debate appeared to have been trivialised in the Sinhala version in comparison with the other.

In Shakthi’s discussion of the pros and cons of peace vs. war, the pro-war spokesperson was presented as very mild, humane, committed person who was fundamentally non-elite (his bedroom used for work, numerous pictures from his personal history including childhood, marriage and his receiving awards, the fact that he has entrusted his son to the military). He is given the lion’s share of the program and is Sinhala-speaking. No reference is made to the charges he is currently facing for alleged acts of violence.

On the other hand, the two pro-negotiation spokespersons – Dr P Saravanamuttu and Dr Jehan Perera – are both presented as members of the English-speaking elite (identified with NGO culture, seen in posh offices and shown speaking on cellular phones etc.). No reference is made to their (distinguished) pasts, and there is a way in which their profiles as presented will fit in well with the populist-chauvinist diatribes against NGO-funded peace-mongering. It is not as if

¹⁰ TRP audience rating survey conducted by LMRB, Colombo, which provides percentages of viewers from a total of 7,536,000 nationwide. We are aware that there concerns about the precise accuracy of these ratings, but the point is that only roughly 10,000 adults watch Sathi each week while under 100,000 watch Vilippu. Compare this with the audience rating of some of the Rupavahini and ITN programs which reach the 50% mark, or with Sirasa which is viewed by 21.6% and 26.2% of the total viewing public on these days respectively.

Sinhala-speaking peace activists are difficult to find. More troubling was the absence of serious discussion on the causes of this war in this and the other programs analysed. Unless the underlying issues, including questions of culpability, are discussed, programs such as Shakthi will be reduced to reiterating hollow (but necessary) platitudes about the horror of war.

Section IV

3.15 Other Initiatives

The study team looked closely at the initiatives undertaken by UNICEF, GTZ and DFID, as had been recommended at the workshop and interviews. The UNICEF project on Education for Conflict Resolution, the GTZ's Basic Education Sector Program (particularly the component for war-affected children) and DFID's social harmony project all share an exemplary concern for precisely the issues that this report addresses. The sustained existence of these programs is heartening as is the tangible progress made in each of them.

While recognising these successes, it is important to also mark the limits that individual projects within the existing framework cannot transcend. For instance, the UNICEF-sponsored additional teacher guide for year six reproduces majoritarian values and privileges (problematic) Sinhala Buddhist role models to the exclusion of all else, and yet there appears to have been no mechanism in place prevent such a travesty from taking place.

The GTZ program which advocates an integrated approach to peace education has produced an impressive text titled *Joyful Learning* under its Teacher-in-Service project, which is being piloted in the North-East Province. The decentralised initiative ensures greater stakeholder participation in planning, design and implementation, but the acid test would be whether national replication of the materials is possible. In addition, the newly conceived Basic Education for Children in Affected Areas, just inaugurated in Vavuniya, addresses a long-neglected need, but may have to expand its scope if it is to catalyse meaningful change in the context of war and its inevitable ascendancy of military logic.

This study envisages that the individual programs and project initiatives launched by UNICEF, DFID, GTZ and others can be drawn upon in the integrated process recommended, so that the lessons learnt to date can become the basis for future work. There is, moreover, a clear need to consolidate all available resources, while maintaining a healthy autonomy of course, towards the goal of forging a truly intercultural democratic culture via education. To this end the following strategies are recommended as providing an invaluable grounding and sound theoretical underpinning for the work ahead.

4 Part C – Strategies

4.1 Action research

Any project that attempts to deal with the realities in day to day life must address problems on at least two levels: one is the level of relevant conceptual and structural frameworks and another is the level at which those “conceptual frameworks” are played out in different communities.

An important question for any project whose aim is fostering intercultural democratic culture in Sri Lanka is how to introduce openness and responsibility in a way that is responsive to the specific social historical situation. In other words, how to make openness and responsibility feasible and how to facilitate thoughtful and responsible action that will open up horizons of possibility to move forward on issues related to democracy, democratic culture and citizenship.

One specific answer to this issue, but certainly not the only one, is to introduce action-research approaches into several levels of the educational system. Action research is a participatory and qualitative approach to research which directly involves teachers, students, parents and communities in defining and dealing with their own issues.

Since action research is by its very nature both ordered (and therefore in some way controllable) and at the same time unpredictable, it is a suitable and feasible research strategy that both fosters openness and is responsive to real problems of real people. Research on these terms is critical insofar as it clarifies past and present conditions in order to propose solutions for the future.

Any project hoping to shape democratic culture through education can, not only be contained within the discipline of education. It has to involve other disciplines as well (such as law, the social sciences and ethics) in co-operation with administrative structures in order to assure that any proposed solutions speaks to the many facets of a democratic state.

4.2 Teacher Education and Research

The emphasis placed on teachers also indicates that teacher education is important to any project aiming at enlarging the scope of democracy in Sri Lanka. This can be done by two complementary mechanisms; by strengthening teacher education in several ways, economical as well as infra-structurally, and secondly by introducing/strengthening action research focusing on what in this report have been called real problems.

The latter can be done through a systematic use of the papers written by student-teachers during their year of practical training in schools. Those papers then would be connected to ongoing research projects conducted by research-competent teacher educators and used as part of the content for the training of the first year students-teachers. An advantage of this is that teacher education would function as a centre and meeting place for the sharing of practical experiences of the actual situation in schools and in providing possible explanations/understanding of those experiences through relevant theoretical frames of reference. Important then is that teacher educators get the opportunity to run action research projects, i.e. that it would be possible to compete on equal footing for research grants such as those given by the NIE.

Preferably teacher educators should run projects jointly with NIE officials and academics from different disciplines of universities (for example law, social sciences, philosophy/ethics and education), in teams also representing a gender balance and the diversity of the Sri Lankan

polity. The content of this research is to be defined by the actual problems felt by the different types of schools. This would secure a bottom-up flow of information/knowledge, and be in accordance with an interpretation of the characteristics of a democratic culture.

It is important to note that the process of critical (action) research (as defined above) itself is crucial knowledge for student-teachers to have since it would enable them to conduct small-scale research projects when they become classroom teachers. They would then be able to function as facilitators of change and be able to take a stance on matters that concern the local community.

Projects and initiatives taken would also be recognised and possibly used by officials in the administrative system of the Ministry of Education, such as in the zonal office. Small-scale research funds could be introduced at the zonal level for teachers to utilise. For example, in the case of the “exemplary school” discussed in section 3.4 it would mean that their programs could be strengthened, by getting some extra funds to hire a Tamil-speaking teacher. Efforts undertaken by the school could be recognised and their experience spread through the educational system for others to learn from.

Important also is that action research conducted on all levels should not only deal with subject matter, but also with the relationship of subject matter to questions of intercultural democratic citizenship. This then includes studies on textbook content, teaching methods, the school’s relation to the surrounding community etc. Such a focus would enable teachers to adjust subject knowledge to real problems of the community to which the school belongs. If this approach also includes teachers working with students it would enable the schools to produce not only teaching materials in line with real problems of the actual community but also to nurture the students in active learning, stressed by the new reform.

4.3 Professional Teachers

The phrase “professional teachers” does not only refer to the fact that teachers must know what they are doing, but also that they should subject themselves to an explicit ethical code. Connected to this is the need to have explicit criteria for being a good teacher as well as the corollary that teachers are appropriately recognised when they live up to these criteria.

A concrete example of this argument is that selecting a particular teacher for training to become a principal should be based on an application process, which is measured against *explicit and public criteria* for being a good teacher. This is not currently the case.

Since recognition seems to be a major problem in Sri Lanka when it comes to education and schooling, criteria for good education, for being a good school, for being a good principal and teacher as well as being a good student have to be explicitly and publicly disseminated and discussed. Here the media could play an important role in raising public awareness.

Moreover, general procedures for selection of exemplars of exceptional teaching and leadership would have to be transparent. This would in itself contribute to not only heightening the standard of education for all students in Sri Lanka but also, and this is worth stressing, be one expression of a school system embracing a democratic culture.

As in the specific case mentioned above, the training of school principals, it seems as if this is used in what can be compared to a reward system on personal (or political) merits rather than professional merits (as defined above), or a mere recognition of long service. One indication of

this is the high age of those trained. The average age of the trainees is nearer 50 than 30. Age is certainly not the only criterion to be used for selection but it is a good indication of how resources are used. With this current trend it means that the training of principals has to be more frequent, because they retire at the age of 55. Consequently, many resources are spent for little benefit. Connected to this, if young teachers are selected on publicly transparent criteria, the selection procedures would function as an example of democratic processes at work and offer an opportunity for career development for teachers based on professional criteria.

And finally on this point, this would also encourage teachers to be facilitators for expected and continuous changes within a democratic society.

4.4 Diploma in Education for Intercultural Democratic Citizenship

To stress this point it would be necessary to strengthen teacher knowledge on matters that concerns intercultural democratic citizenship. A conception of intercultural democratic citizenship would then function as the glue between different areas of knowledge in the total approach stressed by the reform.

Introducing a 3-month diploma programme for teachers on “intercultural democratic citizenship” can achieve this objective. Such a diploma could in turn function as a license to be able to compete for action-research programs in schools. This diploma program should be based on knowledge from different disciplines, such as law, social sciences, ethics and education and most importantly, the methods used to train teachers should be in line with the essential characteristics of an intercultural democracy.

Examples based on teaching methods suitable for fostering a democratic culture include “problem-based learning”, components of peace education programs, and theatre techniques that deal with real life problems. The last, for example, were successfully conducted through programs for school children, which the team learned from a visit to Batticaloa. Moreover, with respect to this method, there is substantial learning to be gained from the experiences of professors at Eastern University who run such programs in an obviously extreme and difficult situation.

Important too is the emphasis on the training of professionals who will teach in this suggested diploma program, which will have to be closely related to national and international research on relevant issues in order to be internationally recognised. This international aspect is significant for the continuous development of the program and for giving teachers taking the diploma a possibility of national as well as international careers. This then can be connected to what has been outlined above – that is, a diploma and a program as the one suggested in Part D in this report are to be based on a formal relation between NIE, the Universities (including cross-disciplinary representation) and organisations representing civil society.

This formal relation can take many forms, but one consideration might be to establish a model, which includes research positions (time bound) that would aim at attracting active intellectuals of Sri Lanka as well as international researchers on issues central to the program and diploma. The research conducted should have as one of its characteristics that it be connected to the practical training of professionals who in their turn would train teachers. The professionals ought to be graduates from a wide variety of disciplines. There are national and international models for such an organisation that can be used as a starting point. One such model will be explicated in Part D of this report as a suggestion for not only a project with democratic citizen-

ship as its main target, but also for a sustainable structure within the already given structures of authority in Sri Lanka.

4.5 Manual for Subject Analysis and Media Promoting Democratic Culture and Citizenship

A strategy to deal with the acute need to strengthen the competence in intercultural democratic education is to work out guidelines and principles in the form of a manual and checklist(s), which, if carefully prepared, will be instrumental in preventing faux pas and omissions relating to issues of equity and non-discrimination across gender, language, religion, ethnicity and culture. It would also guide future work in these difficult and complex subject areas, providing practitioners with the benefit of the sustained international and local expertise on these issues. The preparation of this manual-cum-checklist should involve the active participation of representatives of all stakeholders, and it should be widely accessible and continually updated/improved. The involvement of NIPU would strengthen this approach.

Such a manual would also be productive to use in the training of producers of TV programs in order to promote the media's role in fostering democratic culture and citizenship. Here we would especially emphasise the YA TV programs, which seems to have great potential and promise to develop in this direction. Training in the mechanics of television production and the establishment of a core group of advisors of national stature will enhance the quality and content of YA TV's intervention.

4.6 An Integrative Approach

It is most important that any attempt to address the most urgent issues confronting Sri Lankan society from an educational perspective takes on an integrative approach that seeks to bring together all the stakeholders and participants in the process. Hence, in order to deal effectively with key democratic issues in the education curriculum it is imperative that an integrated mechanism should be in place to involve classroom texts and practices with textbook design and teacher training, with action-research and dissemination, with the structured recognition of individual and collective innovation, with parent and wider community input, and so on.

The need, therefore, is for a new mechanism that

- a) Avoids the bureaucratisation and isolationism of current programmes whose individual goals may be salutary but which can have no sustained impact on the system as a whole.
- b) Integrates the key stakeholders and participants in its processes of learning and dissemination, including teachers, trainees and trainers, academics and researchers, ministry officials and policy-makers, and involves representatives from among parents, community leaders and students.
- c) Cuts across the different elements involved in the teaching-learning process, by bringing into structured dialogue those responsible for these components, which include syllabus and textbook preparation and continuous revision, teaching methodology and classroom practice, action-research and more theoretical academic research that is of a trans-national nature, teacher training and certification, programme evaluation and monitoring, community participation and dissemination of information to create wide awareness, policy and administrative reform initiatives, and the facilitation of innovation through recognition at all levels.

- d) Is flexible enough to generate timely results, is sensitive to and yet not constrained by current legislative and administrative bottlenecks, and is sufficiently representative and recognised/ acceptable to all so that it can determine the terms of the national educational discourse and debate.
- e) Structurally involves influential civil society groups, concerned NGOs, regional organisations and other non-partisan actors in its ongoing dialogue in order to enrich the outcomes of its programmes.

It is clear from the above that the ideal mechanism would be one that retains an essential autonomy in decision-making and implementation, but is nonetheless firmly within the national educational framework so that it can best utilise the great resources available within the government system. It is one that requires local and international intellectual credibility, but is not confined to academe.

5 Part D – Suggestions

5.1 Suggestions Outlined

This section outlines the recommendations made in this report. Important to stress is what this report suggests are a concept and a model which, are coherent with an understanding of an intercultural democracy and citizenship through education. The concept and model are entirely within the frame of Education Reform (1997) and can be implemented within existing structures. The issue of location and exact relation to existing structures of authority will be discussed after the model has been explicated (5.5). The model implicate a structure which address issues of intercultural democracy on three levels; macro, meso and micro and should be understood particularly in relation to the strategies outlined in the previous section which in their turn is a result of the findings of the teams investigation into the current situation in Sri Lanka for education and democracy.

5.2 The Model for Intercultural Democratic Citizenship through Education

As has already been indicated, one model is explicated in the following section in order to outline projects, which seeks to address questions of intercultural democracy in Sri Lanka in such a way as to live up to its own criteria. This model should be seen as a consequence of the problems addressed and includes a strategy to put a structure in place which continuously would be able to address issues like those dealt with in this report. It has to be understood as closely related to structures of authority already in place in Sri Lanka.

Most importantly, the model is based on the conviction that to be able to deal with issues such as those raised in this report, all stakeholders have to be involved. A Sida-financed project aimed at strengthening the development of a democratic culture in Sri Lanka is most likely to succeed if it ensures the establishment of a mechanism by which this stakeholder participation can be maximised. This would have the additional merit of providing support in the building up of a structure which itself would function as an example of a participatory intercultural democracy at work.

In the following the proposed model will be introduced, its main activities explained and its suggested structure outlined. The next section contains an action plan for establishing the model, including suggestions for pilot projects. This outline then has to be further substantiated and contextualized through the suggested projects and the work of its steering committee.

The main focus for the model is an intercultural democratic citizenship as outlined above, which can be understood within the framework of the programme for national integration set up by NIPU and within a program also design to promote bilingualism.

The model needs to be materialised in such a way as to make its different activities co-ordinated, which is in line with the integrative approach suggested by this report. This is worth stressing since it directly point on one of the major results of the inquiry done by the team, i.e. the lack of integration between different structures of educational authorities, both horizontal and vertical:

- A. Horizontal:* This model meets the need to integrate and better co-ordinate activities between/ among the NIE, Ministry of Education, National Commission of Education, Provincial Councils, and Local Governments, not only in their day-to-day work but also especially in relation to the knowledge-producing sectors of Sri Lanka: Universities, Colleges of Education, the media, semi-governmental organisations such as NIPU (National Integration Program Unit), NCPA (National Children Protection Authority) and representative organisations of civil society as well as relevant international research communities and donors.
- B. Vertical:* This model meets the need to better integrate and co-ordinate activities of Provincial directors of education, Zonal offices, Division offices and the schools in such a way as to avoid the strong tendencies of top-down rule of schools. The model also allows for a better integration of schools with the surrounding community.

The vertical and the horizontal components connect through the focus on what in this report has been defined as real problems, which demand a ‘bottom-up’ approach. This approach is made more precise by introducing action research within the model, which would guarantee, in addition to the relevance of the knowledge produced, an involvement of local communities and can as such be seen as the driving force for change towards an intercultural democratic citizenship in Sri Lanka.

In order for the model to work, its different activities needs to be co-ordinated by an administrative unit. In the following section the essential components of such a unit will be suggested and its main tasks outlined.

5.2.1 The Macro Level

The model is constructed on the macro level as a unit involving three components; a) Administration and Planning (through a Steering Committee initially, and subsequently the Board of Management), b) Research, and c) Training:

The Steering Committee directs and takes responsibility for the activities and consists preferably of representatives from the NEC, the Ministry of Education, the NIE, NIPU, the University system, the Colleges of Education and the NCPA. Once the model MIDCE (Model for Intercultural Democratic Citizenship through Education) is fully operational and the requisite legislation is in place, the duly constituted Board of Management will take over the functions of the Steering Committee.

Research is conducted using action research methodologies and on issues relevant to intercultural democratic citizenship and peaceful living competence. In practice this research should be sensitive to “real problems” identified at the micro level, i.e. in schools, local communities etc.

Two time-bound research positions will be created in accordance with the ‘professor two’ system, i.e. open to national as well as international applicants and selected by the Committee to meet identified required competencies to develop research on relevant issues. The research component is crucial and can be supported by the establishment of bilateral connections to universities in Sweden with substantial knowledge/research related to education and democracy. To these positions should be connected resources such as office, computer with internet access, library access etc. to attract intellectuals from different disciplines, nationally as well as internationally. By this system a continuous impetus for high quality research is ensured. The “professor two” should then not only engage in research but also conduct seminars for professionals trained by the unit.

The unit will be responsible for training graduates from different disciplines (hereafter called instructors) who in their turn will train teachers to obtain a diploma in intercultural democratic education. The training will consist of substantive knowledge of issues relevant for intercultural democratic citizenship and a democratic culture as well as relevant methodologies for teaching and research. In this regard, action research methodologies are important as well as knowledge of fields like “problem based learning”, “co-operative learning”, “didactics” as well as relevant components of peace education programs and theatre techniques to be used in a therapeutic context to enhance personal and group development. It is, of course, crucial to break the convention of using authoritarian styles of teaching, which would in itself hinder the goal of developing insights into democratic and peaceful ways of life, as well as hampering the very process of education itself, and therefore also handicapping the emergence of responsible subjects, inevitable for an intercultural democracy.

The unit would need permanent staff with research competence in order not only to administer the activities of the unit, but also to actively collect and disseminate the findings of research to the relevant stakeholders. In addition, the staff will conduct their own research. The permanent staff should be represented on the board for the unit.

For the training of instructors, both the Colleges of Education and the newly constructed centres under Sida’s primary education project, where all infrastructure facilities needed already are in place, such as administrative staff, dormitories, lecture halls, rooms for working with smaller groups and so on can be used.

5.2.2 On the Meso Level

The structure involves the training of teachers. A three-month course is suggested. Teachers should be able to apply for the training leading to a diploma in intercultural democratic education and citizenship. Selection is to be made on publicly transparent criteria for being a professional teacher. And the diploma should function as a prerequisite for being able to apply for small-scale action-research projects at the micro level (see further below). Again this training has to be not only substantially within the framework of a culture of democracy, but also within the framework of a program for national integration. The training also has to be in accordance with methodologies in line with democratic values and norms. The diploma should be so constructed as to meet international standards.

For this training the newly established centres (former teacher training institutes etc) for in-service training can be used. There will be 84 such centres all over Sri Lanka. Those centres will also be staffed, which means that the necessary infrastructure is already in place. The training of teachers can be on a day-to-day basis or for several days at a time, depending on local circumstances. To this centres then can be attached funds to be applied for by teachers or schools to run programs and/or projects on issues central for a democratic culture. As for example community based programs run by the exemplary school mentioned in this report (see section 3.4) could be recognised and funded.

5.2.3 On the Micro Level

This suggested structure involve programs and action-oriented projects run by individual teachers, group of teachers or schools as a unit, involving the surrounding community. Small-scale action research projects can for example be about introducing new methodologies, construction of school materials and so on. A needed competence though for running projects such as those should be the diploma on intercultural democratic education and citizenship.

Through those projects knowledge adjusted to local circumstances would be obtained and can be used for researchers in the unit as empirical material and/or as influences for addressing relevant issues and problems to develop theoretically in order to generalise findings.

Most important to stress are the connections of the levels in this suggested structure. Those connections would guarantee bottom-up flows of relevant information/knowledge in order for research on macro level to address relevant problems. Connections will be obtained by the methodologies used when teachers are continuously trained and by seminars at the macro level and by reports on projects run at the micro-level. Those reports should be used in the training of new teachers and in in-service training.

5.3 An Action Plan for Setting the Structure in Place and Outlining its Specific Tasks:

5.3.1 Steering Committee:

A steering committee is needed in order to oversee and support a pilot-project (see below) and to take responsibility for formally establishing the Unit for Intercultural Democratic Citizenship through Education (IDCE) within a time frame of two years. The establishment of IDCE is based on the outcomes of the pilot-project. The steering committee should resign after the task is fulfilled and be replaced by the duly constituted Board of Management of the unit.

The steering committee is recommended to consist of representatives from: the Ministry of Education (Director General of NATE, Additional Secretary: 2 persons); NIE (Director of Academic Affairs, Director General: 2 persons); Universities (from the disciplines of law and social sciences: 3 persons); Colleges of Education (Commissioner General, a President: 2 persons); National Child Protection Authority (Chairman: 1 person); NIPU (1 person); NEC (1 person) Representatives from Civil Society (2 persons); Sida (Officer placed in Sri Lanka, one additional expert: 2 persons), comprising a total of 16 persons.

5.3.2 The Overall Project

Main tasks for the project for which the steering committee is responsible:

- a) Setting up the structure for the Unit for Intercultural Democratic Citizenship through Education (IDCE), including creating the necessary legislation.
- b) Establishing curricula and develop courses and materials to meet international standards.
- c) Setting up a Research Programme for the Unit with input at different levels.
- d) Addressing the issues brought up at the micro level as outlined in this report.
- e) Involving all levels and all stakeholders in a participatory and non-hierarchical manner.
- f) Testing out the action-research programmes.
- g) Testing out all short-term courses.
- h) Ensuring that the final outcomes should be concrete and self-sustaining.
- i) Steering the Pilot Program during its initial phases.

5.3.3 The Pilot Program

This report recommends a pilot project which will carry forward the philosophy and understanding of the MIDCE through its preliminary phase, and which will provide a concrete and tangible means of measuring its success on the ground, while also addressing urgent national needs in the educational sector that cannot afford the luxury of a long delay in implementation.

It is crucial that the core pilot team is comprised of persons who would be able to catalyse fresh initiatives and to maximise the chances for innovative solutions. This is to stress the need for creative solutions not hindered in the initial stages by bureaucratic routines and circumstances. Such persons can of course be found within existing structures of authorities as well as outside of these structures. The emphasis here is not on where such persons are found so much as to stress the need of highly qualified persons with an insight in intercultural democratic citizenship and education and who also will have the necessary authority to act. It would also be advisable to connect an international research qualified consultant to the pilot-team. Depending on the qualifications of the pilot-team there can be a need for Sida to support training of the team, preferable by a connection to national and international intellectual milieus where substantial knowledge on intercultural democratic citizenship and education can be found.

Types of schools to be involved in pilot-projects and areas:

1 AB school, 1C school, 1 Type Two school.

Three schools each (conforming to the above criteria) in each of the following three areas
Uva Province: Moneragala, Eastern Province: Batticaloa, Southern Province: Hambantota

The pilot-project is conducted in order to run four micro-projects. One person for each micro-project will be assigned from the pilot-team. The following brief sketches must suffice to identify the key areas and modalities selected for piloting, since further elaboration would necessarily straitjacket the pilot team as well as the steering committee, thereby running counter to the very principles of democratic partnership that this report espouses. So too with the over-arching research component, which, it is envisaged, will inter-connect with both the pilot program as well as other short-term and contingency-based needs of the unit and the wider educational community. It is, however, suggested that this research would cover the entire spectrum from action-research, teaching methodology research, participatory research, national-level research, tracking and follow-up studies, content analysis, evaluations etc.

5.3.3.1 Child Protection Committees

The protection of children from corporal punishment as well as other forms of abuse both at school and within the domestic environment is a *sine qua non* for the meaningful implementation of any truly democratic and pluralist agenda. Thus, this micro-project will involve the formation of Child Protection Committees involving parents, teachers, students and community leaders, with the assistance of the NCPA. These pilot committees can provide a concrete experiential basis for nationwide implementation with relevant modifications to suit local conditions and cultural constraints. Such an innovative program is all the more important in the context of a brutal war, which tends to normalise trauma among children, making it socially “invisible”.

5.3.3.2 Dissemination and Dialogue on Textbook Analyses (including those already conducted by NIPU)

An important result of the study here reported on points on the need to develop an understanding of the role and function of school texts and teaching methodology in the construction and hierarchising of identity within and between the different ethnic and religious communities. The NIPU study of textbooks has provided a useful start, which can become the basis for a continuing nationwide dialogue. The proposed pilot project will facilitate this dialogue and ensure that its processes and findings are widely disseminated as well as those studies conducted within the proposed projects.

The dialogue provide an opportunity and a conduit for textbook compilers and other officials involved in the production process to be accountable to stakeholders and the public in general. It is only through this accountability and the sensitivity to stakeholder needs and constraints that it engenders that textbooks can maximise student learning potential while at the same time fulfilling the national educational agenda in a fundamentally non-discriminatory manner in line with an intercultural democratic citizenship and education indicated by the Educational Reform.

5.3.3.3 Innovative Programs

A key lacuna in the present system is its inability to cope adequately with creativity and innovation at any level along the local, zonal, provincial, national continuum within the educational structures and procedures. At best, innovations can be treated as harmless and ignored, while at worst they are actively eradicated. Hence, this micro-project seeks to foster and facilitate innovative and creative individual responses to felt constraints and problems in relation to core democratic values and norms, at any or all of the levels in the educational continuum, but with a strong emphasis on the school and classroom. Recognition of such innovation provides the necessary impetus for its sustainability, as well as opening a window for replication elsewhere through dissemination and discussion. It is recommended, therefore, that a zonal level competition and sharing process be initiated through which such potential innovations are encouraged and rewarded, and where creative problem solving techniques are developed. This reward-cum-recognition should be part of a transparent process involving the wider community as well as teachers, principals, administrators and students.

5.3.3.4 Mass Media Support

The absence of any systematic and widespread means of communication between and among the various sectors and stakeholders in the arena of education is a major obstacle to the creation of a democratic and pluralist ethos which is both aware of and sensitive to ethnic, cultural, religious, regional and other difference (as well as similarity) in the broader Lankan polity. In

this respect, the mass media, which has hitherto been blamed for fanning ethnic, religious and ideological dissension, can be brought in to provide a bridge and a means of enhancing the goals of intercultural democratic citizenship through education.

To this end, a micro-project which ensures the widest possible dissemination of all the other pilot initiatives at the local, regional and national levels, and involving both the electronic and print media in their state and non-state modalities, is crucial to the success of the overall democratisation project.

As the analysis of this study has shown, Sri Lanka's mass media institutions need also to be brought in to the education process so that effective reinforcement of intercultural democratic values is ensured. Education of media personnel and the establishment of regular systems of monitoring are crucial in this regard, and this pilot project seeks, *inter alia*, to establish an ongoing dialogue among the stakeholders and practitioners. An additional component to media support is to develop the capacity for Information technology in which schools can be connected in networks for mutual support on national as well as international grounds.

5.3.3.5 Methodology

- a) Child Protection Programs: To support initiatives to establish Child Protection Committees within schools, suggested by the NCPA, which should be enhanced to develop activities in line with both educational and nurturing objectives. Dissemination through media support and IT (Information technology).
- b) Dissemination and production of textbook analysis done on the following subjects: English, Mother tongue, History, Social Studies, with others to be added in time. To conduct seminars and workshops for parent groups, student groups and teachers. Dissemination through media support and IT.
- c) Community-based competition for innovative programmes in schools concerning issues central for democratic values:
 - i. Innovative programs are to be held at three levels. On individual basis at the classroom and school levels.
 - ii. To introduce procedures in order to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process. The stakeholders are in this case: parents, students, school staff, and the community at large.
 - iii. Emphasis should be made on programs and projects involving the community.
 - iv. Dissemination and reward through continuous media support and IT.

Those innovative programs will function as examples of small-scale action research programs. Consequently this is to be connected to what has been suggested above, i.e. to introduce funding on the meso-level for small-scale action research projects run by teachers with the diploma.

- d) Mass Media: Mass media support will cut across all micro programmes and involve the establishment of a Journal or as supplements in all newspapers as well as radio and television coverage in three languages for wide circulation or reach. This Journal/Supplement targets all stakeholders/interest groups and can in addition be published on the web.

5.4 Sustainability and Related Issues Regarding the Unit IDCE¹¹

It is important to note that the micro-projects within the suggested pilot-project are designed to simultaneously start the overall project at both the macro- and micro-levels. The third phase (year) of the overall project, begins when the whole model is materialised and in place, and when full scale activity would be possible on the basis of the established procedures tried and tested by the pilot-project. Activities will already be in place in some areas, and can be expanded from there on a wider scale during a fourth phase. The fifth phase is to consolidate the model and to establish procedures for continuing monitoring and evaluation at all levels.

The key concern for policy-makers and funders, however, is the short-term viability and long-term sustainability of the proposed unit, the IDCE. It is proposed that the Swedish government sponsors the model and unit in the formative three-year phase, and provides 50% of the funding for a further two-year period. The initial costs involved will include infrastructure and basic facilities for the core staff, as well as office space for contract, visiting and adjunct faculty. The provision of a well-equipped library and computer facilities are essential for the running of a premier research and training unit of this kind, which must have international credibility. In addition, a small-scale offset print workshop is required to handle the IDCE's journal and other materials used in the dissemination of information. Though actual costs involved should be worked out by the Steering Committee, it is envisaged that other donors including the World Bank and UN system will be willing to consider such a project for long-term funding.

After, the initial five-year transition, and once all capital costs have been met, the IDCE will partially finance its recurrent expenditure in the next five-year period through fee-levying diploma courses, particularly those that are open to foreign nationals, as well as its ongoing research and dissemination programs. The research program will bid for international funding and consultancies, while the dissemination arm will be self-supporting through the sale of its journal and other publications. The production of supplementary texts for schools can also be undertaken within the unit. Short-term ad hoc courses and training programs can also be a means of sustainability. Thus, at the end of ten years of operation, the IDCE's goal will be complete financial independence in terms of its recurrent expenditure.

5.5 The Question of Location and Relation to Existing Structures

What is important to stress is that what is suggested by this report is a concept and a model for intercultural democratic citizenship and education. Such a model has here been outlined and needed considerations emphasised. The exact location of the structure implicated in this model is beyond the scope of this report, but what is crucial, following the suggestions made in this report, is that where ever this structure and model is located *the integrative approach* must be sustained.

The integrative approach involves connections between state institutions, universities and civil society. Without these connections, involving stakeholders on all levels, and an understanding of an intercultural democracy built on an acceptance of difference, the model will come out as a mechanical and instrumental action plan which at best can facilitate more effective administration of the educational system, but at its worst will be functioning counter-productively in

¹¹ To be pronounced "idsay".

hindering the expansion of the spheres of democratic culture in Sri Lanka and thereby going against the goals of Education Reform of Sri Lanka.¹²

Therefore, this report strongly suggests that concerns such as those highlighted have to be the basis for any negotiations on a project aiming at the continuation of the process to expand and establish intercultural democratic values and norms within the Sri Lankan society through education. This report is both part of and strongly suggests a continuation of such a process outlined herein, while recognising that this beginning constitutes only a small part of the crucial work ahead.

¹² In this connection, the study team also recommends learning from the experience of the GTZ as outlined in Section IV of this report

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Interviews and meetings held between 11th July 2000 and 18th August 2000

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President and lecturers
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Kandy

President
Sri Pada College of Education
Kotagala

Mr. R Manickaraja
Zonal Director of Education
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Prof. Chitrlekha Maunaguru and lecturers
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The Principal
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The Principal
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The Deputy Principal
D S Senanayake Madhya Maha Vidyalaya
Kurunegala

The Deputy Principal and staff
Peradeniya Junior Secondary School
Peradeniya

The Principal
Heendeniya Muslim Vidyalaya
Peradeniya

The Principal
Norwood Tamil Maha Vidyalaya
Dickoya
Hatton

Interviews and meetings held between 11th July 2000 and 18th August 2000

The Deputy Principal and staff
Norwood Sinhal Maha Vidyalaya
Dickoya
Hatton

Students – Grade 10 and 11
Vivekananda Girls' Maha Vidyalayam
Batticaloa

The Principal and Staff
Eravur Rahumaniya Vidyalayam
Eravur

The Principal, staff and Parent group
Mahajana College
Batticaloa

The Principal and students
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Pulliyadimunai

The Principal
Thimbirigasyaya MMV
Habarana

The Principal
Moragaswewa MMV
Habarana

Appendix C

Participants at the workshops held on the 20th, 22nd and 23rd November 2000

Mr. R Medagama
Additional Secretary – Reforms Implementation
Ministry of Education

Dr. T B Gunawardene
Director General
National Institute of Education

Dr. Michael Hirth
GTZ

Prof. Chandra Gunawardene
Open University

Dr. Harsha Athurupane
World Bank

Mr. P W Gunasekere
Consultant
Ministry of Education

Ms. Bernie Yatawara
Programme Officer
DFID

Mr. Jean-Luc Bories
Head of Programme
Children Affected by Armed Conflict
UNICEF

Mr. Jaufer
Programme Officer
UNICEF

Ms. Lilani Amerasinghe
Education for Conflict Resolution Project
National Institute of Education

Mrs. Wettasinghe
Director – Life Competency
National Institute of Education

Mr. Sumathipala
Director — Social Studies
National Institute of Education

Mr. T Thanaraj
Education for Conflict Resolution Project
National Institute of Education

Mr. Herat
Department of Education, Wayamba

Mr. Annasami
Principal
Norwood Tamil MV

Mr. Wilgamuwa
Principal
Nungamuwa Model School

Principal
Norwood Sinhala MV

Pearl Illukumbara
Mahaweli College of Education

Mr. S J A Joseph
Director of Education Hatton (Sida Cell)

Mr. Haider
T B Jayah Muslim MV

Mr. Wickramasinghe
Zonal Education Department, Piliyandala.

Dr. I L Ginige
Deputy Director Genereal
National Institute of Education

Mr. Wilfred Perera
Assistant Director General
Education Management Development Centre
National Institute of Education

Mr. P Samarasekera
Peace Education Unit
Ministry of Education

Mrs. Indrani Kariyawasam
Ministry of Education

Mrs. Chandra Semasinghe
Ministry of Education

Mrs. S M Rashad
Ministry of Education

Mrs. D Ramakrishna
Ministry of Education

Mr. R Ramanayake
Director
National Authority on Teacher Education
Ministry of Education

Dr. Jehan Perera
Director
National Peace Council

Dr. Sumanasiri Liyanage
National Integration Programmes Unit

Mr. Ericksson
Deputy Head of Mission
Embassy of Sweden

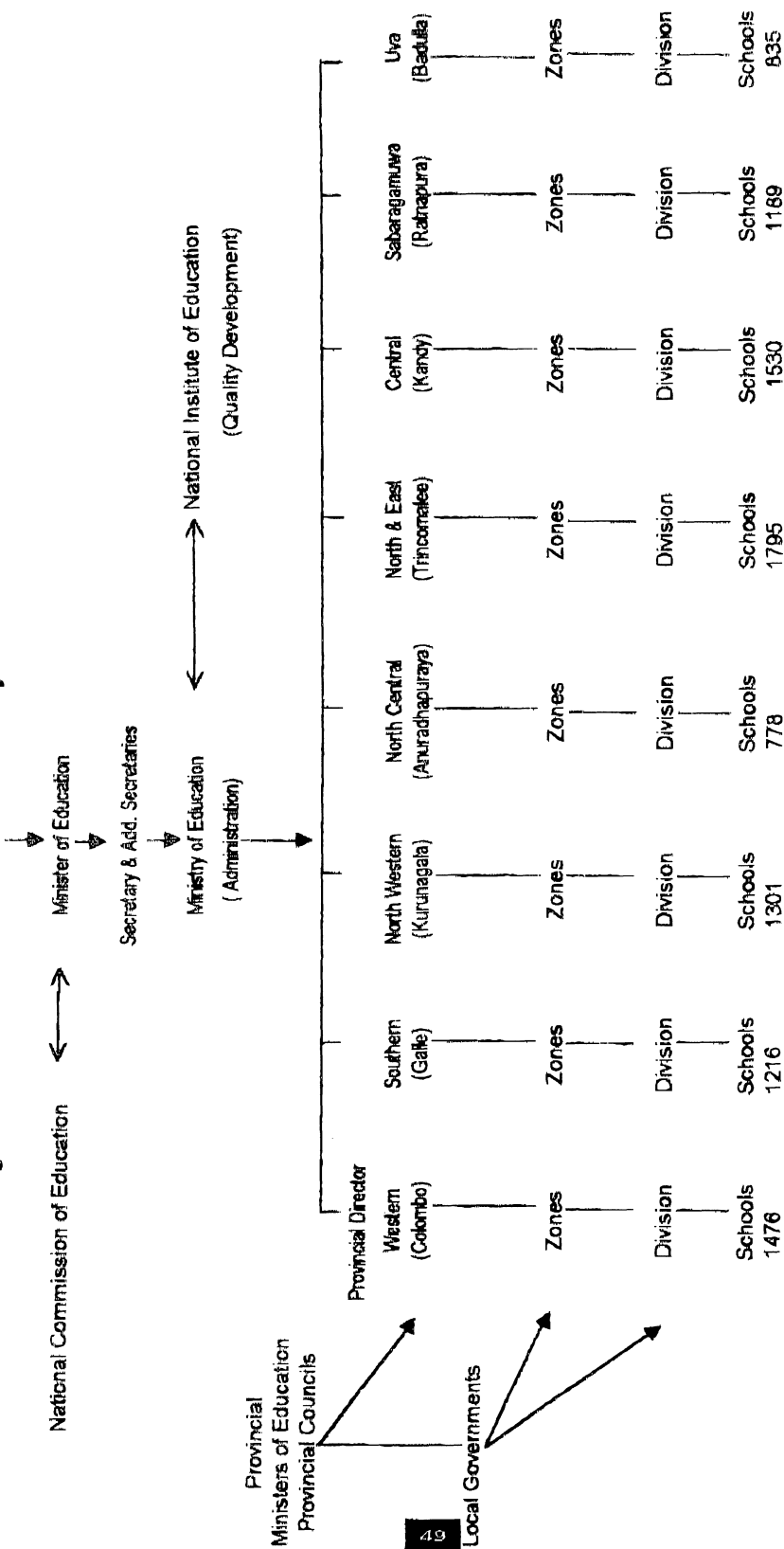
Ms. Stina Karlun
Second Secretary
Sida

Ms. Sujatha Wijetilleke
Programme Officer
Sida

Ms. Annika Nordin- Jayawardene
Sida – Stockholm

Appendix D

Organizational Structure of the Education System in Sri Lanka



Notes: There are 233 National schools all over the island governed directly by the Ministry of Education (Census 1997)

Appendix E

Report on Current Efforts to Facilitate Democratic and Pluralist Values Through Primary and Secondary Education in Sri Lanka

Please provide us with your observations, comments, criticisms etc on the following areas of the Report. Please feel free to use extra space if necessary and/or to add other areas not included in this questionnaire.

1. The General Overview of Education in Sri Lanka as Contained in Parts A & B:

2. The Key Concepts and the Analysis of the Educational Reforms (Part B):

3. The Analysis of the Life Competency, English Language, Peace Education and Social Studies subjects:

4. The Suggested Institute (IDCE) Outlined in Part D:

5. The 4 Pilot Projects Outlined in Part D:

6. Any Other Comments (Please Specify):

Workshop/Seminar at which Report was Presented/Discussed

7. Please identify the strengths and weaknesses of the workshop/seminar that you attended, providing an overall assessment of its usefulness:

8. What, in your view, were the most important conclusions (if any) reached at the workshop/seminar?

Optional

Name: **Institution:**

2000-05-16

Ministry of Education and Higher Education

CONSULTANTS, THE SWEDISH EMBASSY
SRI LANKA

DRAFT

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A STATE OF THE ART REVIEW OF
CURRENT EDUCATION FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN SRI
LANKA AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON POSSIBLE WAYS TO MOVE
FORWARD.**

1 Background

Sweden/Sida has cooperated with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Sri Lanka for 12 years. The main effort has been to up-grade the quality of primary education with a special focus on disadvantaged children. The programs have had a number of components from schoolbuildings to pedagogical methods and have in many ways been innovative.

1998 the Swedish country strategy for Sri Lanka changed and an agreement was made between the Sri Lankan and the Swedish governments to focus on conflict reduction through efforts in the areas of democracy, peace and economic development that benefits the poor.

As a response to this, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education proposed a project on the development of peaceful living competencies at primary school level (annex 1) which could be seen as a part of the development of the new schoolreform. The document has been approved by the Department of External Resources at the Ministry of Finance. This took place early 1999. It was agreed in April 1999 that Sida should finance an outside consultant to develop the project.

In February 2000 an initial assessment of the project was made. The conclusion was that thorough assessment needs to be made before any project activities can start. This assessment is to include suggestions on how education for democracy and peace can be made in Sri Lanka.

Since 1991 UNICEF has been supporting the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education to develop and carry out training programmes on Education for Conflict resolution. Master teachers, teachers, principals, education officers and education administrators have been trained for 2-5 days. An evaluation of this support from 1995 shows increased awareness on the role of education for conflict resolution but the concrete changes in the classrooms and schools in terms could not be seen. The cascade training model where trainers train each other were also criticised.

While co-ordination of this project is kept at the National level the implementation has been decentralised to Provincial level where activities such as drama festivals, peace camps and training workshops for various staff in the Ministry of Education are planned on a yearly basis. The amount committed for this programme for 2000 is about SEK 550 000.

Through humanitarian support to "Children Affected by the Armed Conflict in Sri Lanka" Sida is involved in the funding of this programme.

The special unit for Peace and Ethics in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is co-ordinating complementary activities on Peace Education. This unit has been set up by a special instruction from the President. A cadre of 150 Master teachers have been introduced at district level. They have been trained for 5 days and its planned that they will train 2 teachers in each secondary school. The Master teachers have been supporting schools to develop peace weeks, peace camps, drama festivals and peace committees. The Ministry of Education has set aside about SEK 250 000 for year 2000. It seems the Master teachers sometimes do work on these funds and at times on the UNICEF funds provided to the Provinces from the Ministry of Education.

Various IGOs and NGOs also work on peace education. The main aim is to promote integration of various ethnic groups and promote an increased understanding of the internal conflict as well as conflicts at classroom, school level and in families and communities.

The Ministry of National Integration and Ethnic Affairs also supports certain peace education programmes.

The UNICEF supported programme focuses on inner peace, development of conflict resolution skills for peace with neighbours and peace in the school as well as the family and the community while some of the programmes by IGOs, NGOs and the programme co-ordinated by the special Unit on Peace and Integration seem to in addition also provide opportunity to discuss political factors that have led to the armed conflict in the North East and possible solutions to this conflict.

2 Purpose and Scope of the STUDY

1. Relevance

The current country strategy for Sri Lanka is focused on solving conflict and/or trying to address the root-causes of the conflict in the society. It involves economic development as well as work with democracy, human rights and humanitarian assistance.

Sri Lanka has changed due to the war and by urbanisation and modernisation. It is strongly felt that children need to learn ways to deal with differences, to have a critical mind, to get enough self-confidence to be able to speak up, to learn to solve conflicts and other problems. This project can be one way of supporting a smoother way to peace and democracy than what would otherwise be the case. The involvement of the parents is crucial for a good result.

The project is in line with the white paper by the Swedish Government "Democracy and Human Rights in Sweden's Development Co-operation" (SKR 1997/98:76) as well as Sida's action programme on Justice and Peace.

2. Implementation capacity

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has a keen interest in the project and is in the process of coordinating similar initiatives within a special unit.

The Education for Conflict Resolution-project, described above, has created an awareness for the need for such education.

3. Sustainability

The ongoing educational reform presents an opportunity to build in a component of education for democracy and peace into the ordinary curricula and/or as a pedagogical method.

The purpose of the assessment is to :

- 1) get an overview of what is already being done in the field of peace and democracy education and to evaluate lessons learned from some experiences made by the Ministry of Education, Provincial education administration, civil society and the media.
- 2) analyse how a pilot project can be mainstreamed in the current

education reform at primary and secondary level, and the current school book reform and new directives for teaching Sinhala and Tamil as a second language for all students and how additional components can be added to the original proposal.

- 3) give concrete suggestions on what could be the objectives, the organisation, the content and methodology of a pilot project in schools with both primary and secondary education taking into consideration children's participation and giving emphasis on school boards as well as other forms of co-operation between the school and the community.
- 4) give concrete suggestions on the training needed among the staff in the schools, teacher training colleges or school administrators in order to carry out the pilot project and sustain the possible results of the project.
- 5) to suggest mechanisms for sharing of experiences among various organisers of education for peace and democracy
- 6) give suggestions on various complementing activities to the project in the schools i.e. support to media activities and civil society
- 7) to investigate possibilities of building up the capacity in one University in Sri Lanka to carry out local action research in education for peace and democracy.
- 8) to analyse the current resource base in Sweden and Sri Lanka to support Education for Peace and Democracy.
- 9) to analyse the relevance of the project and the implementation capacity. The Study will enable Sida to make informed decisions on future support. It will also be shared with staff at the Ministry of Education including the State Secretary of the Ministry of Education. Various actors in the field who provide information for the study will be asked in a workshop to give their views on the study.
- 10) to suggest pilot provinces, zones, schools and Colleges of Education as well as possible counterparts in media and non-formal education by the civil society.

3 The Assignment

3.1 The Framework for implementation

- a) The main project will be at school level and promote action and attitudinal change among students, teachers and principals. There will be parts on awareness raising but the focus will be on activities at classroom and school level to promote integration of Sinhala and Tamil students and

the development of a democratic culture. These interventions can be complemented with support to the civil society and media activities.

b) The interventions can be at both secondary and primary level. If schools are selected where there is both primary and secondary level it is advantageous if the programme is directed towards the whole school.

d) The cascade model of master trainers who train teachers will be complemented with direct interventions at school level.

e) Schools will be selected in two provinces of which Western province should be one and the other could be North Western, Central or Uva provinces.

f) All actors in the schools including teachers and students will be seen as relevant persons to participate in the analysis of the project during the preparation, and to give suggestions for implementation and evaluation.

g) Children's participation will be promoted through school councils and other relevant activities of consultation.

h) Parent- and Community participation will be promoted through School Development Societies and informal consultations.

i) The new policy to provide as a second language either Sinhala or Tamil pending on the mother language of the students will be applied in these schools. This will be combined with other integration activities. Schools with a Tamil stream will be given priority. Exchange programmes between various schools will be part of the project.

i) The project co-ordinator will be placed in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Isurupaiya. The project will work in close collaboration with the selected provinces and zones. The project co-ordinator will work in collaboration with a reference group of experts and be guided by the recommendations from a Steering committee.

j) The project will at the initial and implementation phase be seen as an integral part of the Education reform. It will be implemented in the context of the new curriculum. Lessons learned from the project will be integrated in the implementation of the Education reform. The Steering committee of the project will include representatives that are involved in the education reform.

k) The project should be based on lessons learned from other educational initiatives in the country that aim at promoting peace and democracy and try to co-ordinate efforts.

l) A resource group need to be attached to the project and a steering committee with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Further analyses need to be made to see how this framework for support can be implemented and there is a need to analyse if:

- Teacher Training Colleges can be involved in in-service training.
- The educational department a university can be involved in action research of the project with the aim to develop the capacity for action research on education in Sri Lanka and develop local capacity on Education for the promotion of Peace and Democracy.
- Entry points for the project in the current curriculum
- Problems and risks with this type of project.

4 Methodology, Evaluation Team and Time Schedule

The survey will be carried out by one international consultant and two local consultants representing the two major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. The international consultant will be the team leader and work in close co-operation with the local consultants during 6 weeks. After 4 weeks of writing a draft report will be presented to Sida for comments. The report will thereafter be discussed at two workshops in Colombo where government staff and NGOs are given the opportunity to comment on the draft survey. The international consultant will then spend an additional 2 weeks in Sri Lanka for further data collection. One workshop will be for the IGOs and NGOs and one for the staff in the programs run by the government.

The local consultants will submit their report to the international consultant who will finalise the draft report and the final report.

The international consultant will work 6+2 week in Sri Lanka and have 4+2 weeks of writing afterwards.

The local consultant will work 6 +2 weeks with the international consultant and have 3 weeks for writing afterwards.

Tentative dates for the first visit is 10 July to 26 August 2000

The study will be a combination of evaluation of documentation and interviews with responsible people for current initiatives for peace and education as well as organisers and participants in activities. Principals, teachers, parents and student in current projects will be interviewed. A gender balance should be sought. Decision-makers responsible for the education reform, curriculum development, teacher education, research at the university, committees to monitor and reform education at national, provincial and zonal level should be interviewed.

The Embassy in collaboration with the MEHE will provide a list of people to be interviewed and the consultants will add people as the work moves on.

5. Reporting

The evaluation report shall be written in English and should not exceed 40 pages, excluding annexes. It will contain a 5 page summary. Format and outline of the report shall follow the guidelines in the attached annex. The first draft report shall be submitted to Sida no later than 26 September 2000. the final draft report will be submitted 2 November. The evaluation report shall be written in Word 6.0 for Windows (or in a compatible format) and should be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing.



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