



LEARNING FROM LISTENING

A POLICY REPORT ON

MALDIVIAN TEACHERS

ATTITUDES TO THEIR OWN PROFESSION

VSO Maldives Valuing Teachers



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CONTENTS

• ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	3
• EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
• INTRODUCTION	7
VSO Maldives Education Programme Area Plan	7
Aim of the research	8
Research methodology	8
Structure of the report	9
• CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS	10
Socioeconomic and political overview of the Maldives	10
Education	10
Government education policy documents	11
Structure of the education system	13
External support in education	14
Donor agencies	14
• RESEARCH FINDINGS	15
Factors affecting teacher motivation	15
1. School leadership and management	16
2. Training and professional development	18
3. Availability of teaching and learning materials (TLMs)	22
4. Links with the community	24
5. Teacher workload and conditions	25
6. Student behaviour and student profile	27
7. School buildings and facilities	28
8. Other factors affecting teacher motivation	29
• CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	30
Underlying themes	30
1. Lack of teacher voice	30
2. Frequent change	31
3. Administrative focus	32
4. Lack of human capacity	
Recommendations	33
• APPENDICES	38
Appendix 1: Valuing Teachers research methodology	38
Appendix 2: Procedure for focus group interviews and 1:1 interviews	39
Appendix 3: Schools visited	42
Appendix 4: Meetings with secondary stakeholders – 1:1 interviews	43
Appendix 5: Secondary stakeholder workshop	43
Appendix 6: Round table agenda	44
Appendix 7: Round table delegates	45
• REFERENCES	45

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	Atoll Education Centre
CCE	Centre for Continuing Education
EDC	Educational Development Centre
EFA	Education For All
ESQIS	Educational Supervision Quality Inspection Service
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PDU	Professional Development Unit
TLM	Teaching and learning materials
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
VSO	An international development organisation that works through volunteers

As a result of dialogue since the World Conference on Education For All (EFA), held in Jomtien in 1990, in which countries made a commitment to ensure that the basic learning needs of every child, youth and adult are met and sustained, and the World Education Forum in Dakar, 2000, which reaffirmed the vision set out in Jomtien, much progress has been made towards improving access to education worldwide.

Thaana'
Thaana is the local
script and is only
used in the Maldives

As the *The Dakar Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2000), adopted by the World Education Forum on EFA, identified:

'The quality of learning is and must be at the heart of EFA. All stakeholders – teachers and students, parents and community members, health workers and local government officials – should work together to develop environments conducive to learning. To offer education of good quality, educational institutions and programmes should be adequately and equitably resourced, with the core requirements of safe, environmentally friendly and easily accessible facilities; well motivated and professionally competent teachers; and books, other learning materials and technologies that are context specific, cost effective and available to all learners.'

The conference identified as one of its strategies for meeting the goals the need to enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers. This was articulated in the framework as:

'Teachers are essential players in promoting quality education; they are advocates for, and catalysts of, change. No education reform is likely to succeed without the active participation and ownership of teachers.'

The Maldives has made great progress towards Education For All. Universal primary access exists, but not yet for children with special educational needs. Access to secondary education is an issue. A sharp decline in enrolment occurs at Grade 8 among atoll students, dropping from an enrolment in Grade 7 of 11,913 to 5,673 in Grade 8 (*Educational Statistics 2003 Maldives*). This is due to a lack of secondary education opportunities in the islands. The government is addressing this problem through population consolidation programmes, designed to encourage movement of island populations to regional urban centres where access will be available.

In terms of literacy rates, this is measured at 97% for adults, compared to 56.3% in South Asia; youth literacy is 99.1% compared to 70.6% in South Asia (UNDP Human Development Report 2003). However, these figures are assessed on ability to recite basic Arabic and Thaana' texts without necessarily implying a full understanding of the contents. Functional literacy is thus lower. There is a national syllabus and textbooks for teachers and pupils are produced for all the subjects. The challenge now is to improve the quality of the education being delivered.

VSO has worked in the Maldives for nearly 25 years, with strong experience of working with schools and teachers to improve the quality of education. The aim of the VSO Valuing Teachers research project was to gain a better understanding of the teachers' own views about their profession; factors that affect teacher motivation and steps that can be taken to address these. This research is based on the premise that if teachers are motivated, they perform better, and when they perform better, the quality of both teaching and learning improves.

² For details of the schools visited see Appendix 3

³ For details of the stakeholders interviewed see Appendices 4, 5 and 7

The report offers recommendations that will meet the teachers' needs according to the views of the various stakeholders involved and made in the context of current policy and practice.

FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER MOTIVATION

The factors that affect teacher motivation have been identified through analysis of focus group interviews and 1:1 interviews with teachers, supervisors and head teachers from a variety of schools – including small island community schools, Atoll Education Centres and Male' schools² – and through consultation with key education stakeholders³ and policy-makers in the Maldives. These have been further examined in terms of causes, effects and solutions, leading to policy recommendations.

The teachers identified the following factors that affect their motivation both positively and negatively:

1. school leadership and management
2. training and professional development
3. availability of teaching and learning materials (TLMs)
4. links with the community
5. teacher workload and conditions
6. student behaviour and student profile
7. school buildings and facilities.

UNDERLYING THEMES

From examination of the factors identified by teachers, through discussion with various education stakeholders and through careful analysis, a number of significant underlying themes become apparent:

1. **Lack of teacher voice** in many of the decision-making processes that concern them means teachers have little control over the events that affect them or over curriculum and delivery.
2. **Frequent change** at all levels has been prevalent and teachers become confused and demotivated. Maintaining commitment to long-term development of schools becomes a challenge for head teachers who are moved around frequently.
3. **Strong administrative focus** within the education system has meant losing sight of the importance of teaching and learning.
4. **Lack of human capacity** is a major constraint of the projects planned to improve quality.

Together, these four recurrent themes appear to form an educational ethos that is maintained from classroom to Ministry level. A lack of voice or active participation throughout the system seems to encourage a more administrative focus in which all stakeholders work within a very tight remit and lack the confidence or sense of ownership to take initiatives or work outside of their box. Frequent changes in policy, expected practice and human resources across all levels compound the situation by reducing cohesion and clarity of focus. With a clear focus on quality of education, consistent human resource inputs and greater participation – for teachers in particular – the Ministry's plans for changing practice are likely to be more successfully implemented.

There are currently so many good initiatives planned to improve the quality of education that the development of education in the Maldives is well underway. However, there is a serious lack of human capacity for meeting the professional development needs of senior managers, supervisors and teachers. Empowering school managers, supervisors and others to meet the professional development needs of teachers and developing greater cooperation, coordination and knowledge management throughout the education system is likely to support effective impact at beneficiary level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School leadership and management

- Redefine supervisor's role.
- Create a systematic way of training all supervisors.
- School heads should be trained in teaching and learning matters.
- Allow school heads to remain in post for a minimum amount of time.

2. Training and professional development

- Increase the capacity of training departments.
- Increase school-based professional development and funding.
- Provide systematic training of untrained teachers.
- Create forums for discussion of pedagogic topics at all levels.
- Harmonise external and government-funded education development projects.

3. Teaching and learning materials

- Allow teachers greater control over the curriculum, planning and delivery.
- Create a basic resources list to ensure all schools are able to deliver the curriculum.

4. Strengthening community relationships

- Improve communication between school, teachers and parents/community.

5. Teacher workload and conditions

- Ensure all schools have an appropriate number of teachers.
- Reduce the number of after school activities; allocate some responsibility to the community.
- Division of workload should be done fairly and with greater consultation.

6. Student behaviour and student profile

- Implement national and school discipline policies.
- Train teachers and school management in differentiation.

7. School buildings and facilities

- Ensure all schools have basic infrastructure.
- Improve physical environment and conditions to facilitate teaching and learning.
- Consider alternative ways of organising the two school sessions to reduce the issues of primary and secondary children sharing classrooms.

Without doubt, teachers are at the heart of the education system. In the Maldives, the school is also often the focal point for the island and teachers are under great stress to meet the needs of their pupils, their community, school management and the government. The pivotal nature of their role makes them susceptible to pressure. It is important that their needs are also taken into account in order to motivate them in their work, reduce the strain, increase their value and status in the eyes of others and for the education system to be effective and of high quality.

INTRODUCTION

‘Supervisors are teachers who have been promoted within their school based on experience and good practice

Their role is to support teachers in teaching and learning matters. According to interviewees, many supervisors perform administrative duties rather than teaching and learning support

More information is included in the section on research findings

‘Finally, after decades of research and experimentation on policies aimed at improving student learning outcomes through a better allocation of resources, more accountability, curriculum reforms and refined assessment systems, attention now seems to be focusing on an essential, but usually missing, element in policy interventions: teachers.’

(DUTHILLEUL, 2004)

VSO has gained vast experience of working with teachers in many countries for over 45 years and supports this through continued work with returned volunteers and programme managers in education. Teacher motivation has been identified as one of the key barriers to improving education. This has stimulated VSO to commission research that provides a powerful insight into the reality of life in the classroom. Teachers are the people who can really say what is going on in the classroom and what it is like to be at the frontline of education.

‘Together with our partners, VSO will use the information gained from the research, to press national and international policy-makers and donors for changes which are vital if education development goals are to be achieved: fairer terms and conditions for teachers, improved support and management systems, reduced bureaucracy and a greater say in decision-making for teachers.’

(VSO, 2002, FOCUS FOR CHANGE)

VSO has been working in the education sector in the Maldives for almost 25 years and has developed strong links with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and its various departments. The education sector makes up over half of the VSO Maldives programme. The VSO Maldives Education Programme Area Plan was recently written alongside the Valuing Teachers research project, which has proved to be a timely and valuable process.

VSO MALDIVES EDUCATION PROGRAMME AREA PLAN

Strategic aim: To improve the quality of primary education, particularly for island children.

- Objective 1: Enhance the capacity of 230 teachers in 20 schools to meet more effectively children’s learning needs.
- Objective 2: Enhance the capacity of 50 supervisors⁴ in 20 schools to support more effectively the professional development, confidence and capacity of teachers to meet children’s learning needs.
- Objective 3: Enhance the capacity of 20 heads of schools to support more effectively the professional development, confidence and capacity of supervisors to meet children’s learning needs.
- Objective 4: Enhance the capacity of the Educational Development Centre (EDC) to plan strategically and to employ effective organisational systems so they can effectively meet the professional development needs of teachers, supervisors and heads, and empower schools to meet the children’s learning needs.

The majority of education volunteers in the Maldives are school based. Currently, volunteers are focused in four atolls: Haa Dhaal, Noonu, Ghaaf Dhaal and Alif Dhaal, serving in Atoll Education Centres (AECs) and small island schools. There are two main roles: primary teacher adviser and primary outreach teacher adviser. The primary teacher advisers are based within the Atoll Education Centres working alongside teachers, supervisors and head

teachers, while the outreach advisers, who are based within an AEC, travel out to the much smaller island schools within the AEC cluster system, offering support to the more disadvantaged schools. Volunteers have also been placed within the Faculty of Education working on pre- and in-service teacher training. These volunteers are now supporting the teacher training courses being delivered in the regional centres.

VSO Maldives felt that the atolls were an ideal place for conducting the Valuing Teachers research, for many reasons. Teachers, schools, communities and policy-makers are extremely committed. There is already a very good basic infrastructure allowing effective methods of communication, hence initiatives, once set in motion, can be implemented widely and quickly. Very strong partnerships at local and policy-making level exist and the country is demonstrating a focus in change from basic provision to quality. This is evident through discussion with education stakeholders and through the initiatives that are currently being undertaken. UNICEF is supporting a pilot model school project with EDC to develop more child-centred methodologies and a higher quality learning environment. Teacher training is moving away from the centre, in the capital island of Male', to regional centres in order to reach teachers in the atolls and there are many more pilot projects in the pipeline. It is hoped that, given the current climate for change and the commitment to improving the quality of education in the Maldives, that there is an open doorway to raising issues that are likely to come out of the Valuing Teachers project.

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

This research sets out to build up a picture of the factors that affect teacher motivation in the Maldives. It aims to listen to teachers and what they have to say about teaching and what they think are the solutions to improving education. It represents the views and perspectives of the teachers themselves, enabling the education stakeholders to know what it is like at the chalk face in order to influence policy changes to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Maldivian schools.

The research was carried out by VSO volunteer, Louise Wheatcroft, who has worked in the Maldives Faculty of Education, has been a teacher for 13 years and is strongly committed to listening to teachers and to the improvement of teaching and learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out during March and April 2004 in six atolls⁵ : Noonu, Male'⁶ Gaaf Dhaal, Haa Dhaal, Alifu Alifu and Alif Dhaal. It involved a total of 11 schools, including small island community schools, atoll schools, Atoll Education Centres and schools on the capital island. A broad range of teachers was interviewed in order to represent the range of teachers currently working in the Maldives. The range includes:

- temporary teachers (untrained; completed secondary education with O-level passes)
- assistant teachers (untrained with a minimum of two O-levels, plus Dhivehi)
- permanent teachers (trained teachers: some Dhivehi medium, some English medium trained)
- primary, middle and secondary teachers
- local and expatriate⁷ teachers.

⁵There are almost 1,200 islands in the Maldives. They are grouped into 26 natural atolls and these form administrative units. Each atoll has an atoll office led by the Atoll Chief, who manages the islands within the atoll, each of which is managed by an island chief or *Gateeb*

⁶'Male' is the capital island housing 25% of the country's population (Maldives Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment, 1998). Almost one third of the students enrolled in the Maldives are enrolled in Male' schools. Many children are sent to Male' to receive schooling. (Ministry of Education: *Educational Statistics 2003 Maldives*)

⁷The majority of expatriate teachers come from India and Sri Lanka. Expatriate teachers form 36% of teachers in the Maldives. (Ministry of Education: *Educational Statistics 2003 Maldives*)

In the initial stages of the research, a total of 104 participants were interviewed including teachers (79), supervisors (13), VSO teachers (3) and head teachers (9). The teachers took part in focus group interviews as well as follow up 1:1 interviews with some of the teachers to explore the issues more deeply. (Focus group methodology is detailed in Appendix 2.)

Following the initial research, a number of secondary stakeholders were interviewed. A secondary stakeholder workshop was held in order to dig deeper into the issues and possible solutions according to the different perspectives of people from different levels and departments within the MOE, as well as from stakeholders outside the Ministry (see Appendix 5).

The final layer of the research was in the form of a round table meeting, which involved a range of education stakeholders from teachers to policy-makers, discussing the initial findings and recommendations (see Appendices 6 and 7).

The research has enabled us to build up a picture of the state of motivation and morale of teachers in the Maldives and of the factors that affect them.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report presents an analysis of the key issues that affect teacher morale in the Maldives today. In the main body of the report, each issue identified by teachers is explored from teachers' perspectives, secondary stakeholders' perspectives and then the current policy and practice is examined.

The final section summarises the findings and puts forward recommendations.

SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL OVERVIEW OF THE MALDIVES

The Maldives is made up of 1,200 small islands grouped in 26 natural atolls. Just over 200 islands are inhabited. Of these, 135 each have populations of fewer than 500 people and only seven islands have more than 3,000 people. Over 25% of the population lives in the capital, Male' (Maldives Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment, 1998). The smallness and dispersed nature of the islands settlement is a unique challenge to the Maldives' development process. The government has introduced a population consolidation programme through the development of infrastructures in the larger islands. Because of the geography of the country, the government finds it challenging to resource public services equally.

A highly centralised welfare state, all significant political and commercial activities in the Maldives take place in Male'. The country is divided into different administrative units, including atoll administration centres and island offices, but the real power remains in the capital's central ministries and departments. The Maldives remains relatively politically stable; President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has been in office since 1978. During this time, the country has seen rapid economic growth and development. The 2003 UNDP Human Development Report ranks the Maldives 86th out of 175 countries (with a Human Development Index of 0.751), making it one of only two South Asian countries to be classified as a 'medium human development' country. However, despite this success, the demand for political reform in recent years has increased. In response to demands for more political freedom and to the pressure of the donor community, the President has formed a Human Rights Commission. Recent debates about constitutional reform, including calls from the President for freedom of information legislation, a multi-party democratic system and an accountable legislature, signify a period of change for the Maldives.

Civil society organisations are few, new and weak. Currently, there are just three large non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that effectively work hand in hand with the government. There is little opportunity for advocacy and pressuring government policy. There is almost no existence of unions or organisations of professional and academicians, and therefore there are no teachers' unions to represent the views and voices of teachers. However, a new law on NGOs was passed in 2003, which recognises associations and gives them legal standing so that they can be held responsible for economic and social assets.

The Maldives is a purely Islamic country, whose social values, cultural systems, religious practices and, largely, the judicial system are guided by the Qur'an and Shari'a Law.

EDUCATION

Education has traditionally been and remains highly valued by communities and the Maldivian government. The Maldives outperforms most least-developed countries and those in the South Asia region in terms of access to primary education, literacy rates and equity. The adult literacy rate is measured at 97.0% (56.3% in South Asia); youth literacy is 99.1% (70.6% in South Asia); combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio is 97% (54% in South Asia); net primary enrolment figures are 99% (79% in South Asia); net secondary enrolment figures are 31% (UNDP Human Development Report 2003).

The pace of development has been rapid. In 1978, the government decided to move to a unified national system of education, providing universal basic education for all. The strategies thus involved the formulation of a unified curriculum for Grades 1–7, improvement of teacher training and the establishment and upgrading of new schools in the atolls. Two government schools (one AEC and one atoll school) were established in each atoll. School enrolment has

risen rapidly (from 15,000 in 1978 to 10,4408 in 2003(Educational Statistics 2003 Maldives)). Every island has at least one primary school teaching to Grade 6 and each child has access to seven years of schooling. Each atoll has at least one AEC teaching to (UK) O-level (Grade 10). Secondary schooling to A-level is available in Male' and the number of secondary schools in the atolls offering A-level education is on the increase. Schools are split into government, community and private. The two former categories can access government-trained teachers and resources. The private schools charge fees and are largely made up of untrained teachers catering for island students who migrate to Male' or remain in the less-developed islands.

A national teacher training institution was established in 1977, yet 33% of teachers remain untrained. There is a huge reliance on expatriate teachers from the South Asia region, who comprise 36% of the national teaching force. At secondary level, less than 25% of the teachers are local. At higher secondary level (Grades 10–12) the figure is less than 20% (*Educational Statistics 2003 Maldives*).

Government education policy documents

The government has three major policy documents that outline future directions for the development of education in the Maldives, plus the country's EFA plan.

1. MOE Republic of Maldives Education Master Plan 1996–2005

National objectives:

- Improve the quality of education while sustaining growth.
- Increase the relevance of education to the local environment.
- Increase trained manpower for national development.
- Improve and strengthen the organisation and management capacity of the education system.
- Increase trainable manpower.

2. Ministry of Planning and National Development: Sixth National Development Plan 2001–2005

Key policy objectives:

- Raise the quality of education at all levels.
- Increase community and private sector participation in education.
- Expand and promote information and communication technology in education.
- Strengthen educational policy formulation and management.
- Increase the human resource capacity of the education sector.

The following strategies for implementation in this policy have been identified as key to VSO's work in the Maldives:

Policy 5: Raise the quality of education at all levels

- Provide basic facilities and resources to all schools, irrespective of location.
- Provide school-based or cluster-based professional development opportunities for teachers.
- Localise, regionalise and strengthen school supervision and management, while centrally directing the school expansion and quality improvement.
- Develop an appraisal system to measure and recognise the quality of service and productivity of teachers and administrators.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to upgrade their qualifications.
- Increase trained teachers from 63% to at least 80%.
- Identify learning difficulties and special needs of students early and provide early assistance and intervention.

Policy 9: Strengthen educational policy formulation and management:

- Ensure the school heads and supervisory staff obtain degree-level training.

Policy 12: Increase the human resource capacity of the education sector:

- Provide ongoing in-service teacher training.
- Train specialists in curriculum measurement and evaluation and policy formulation.
- Provide opportunities for staff upgrading, further qualification, and incentives for staff to serve in the remote areas.
- Develop and begin implementing a Human Resource Development Plan for the education sector.

3. MOE Education Strategic Action Plan 2004–2006 (available in Dhivehi only; no official translation)

Key objectives related to teacher issues:

- Develop the relationship between parents and schools.
- Improve the quality of teachers.
- Retain good teachers and recruit new teachers.
- Improve the school supervision system.
- Make information regarding educational policies and targets available to all.
- Link educational policy with National Development Plans.
- Improve MOE systems.
- Improve training for school management.
- Create a network of schools.

4. MOE: The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports – Maldives

The plan outlines the following strategies for meeting the commitments made at the Dakar conference:

Improving educational efficiency through quality enhancement

‘Properly trained and motivated teachers, effective management and supervision, appropriate facilities and learning materials and a curriculum with suitable subject distribution and content are basic requirements for acceptable educational quality.’

Improving the quality of basic education and the quality of teachers

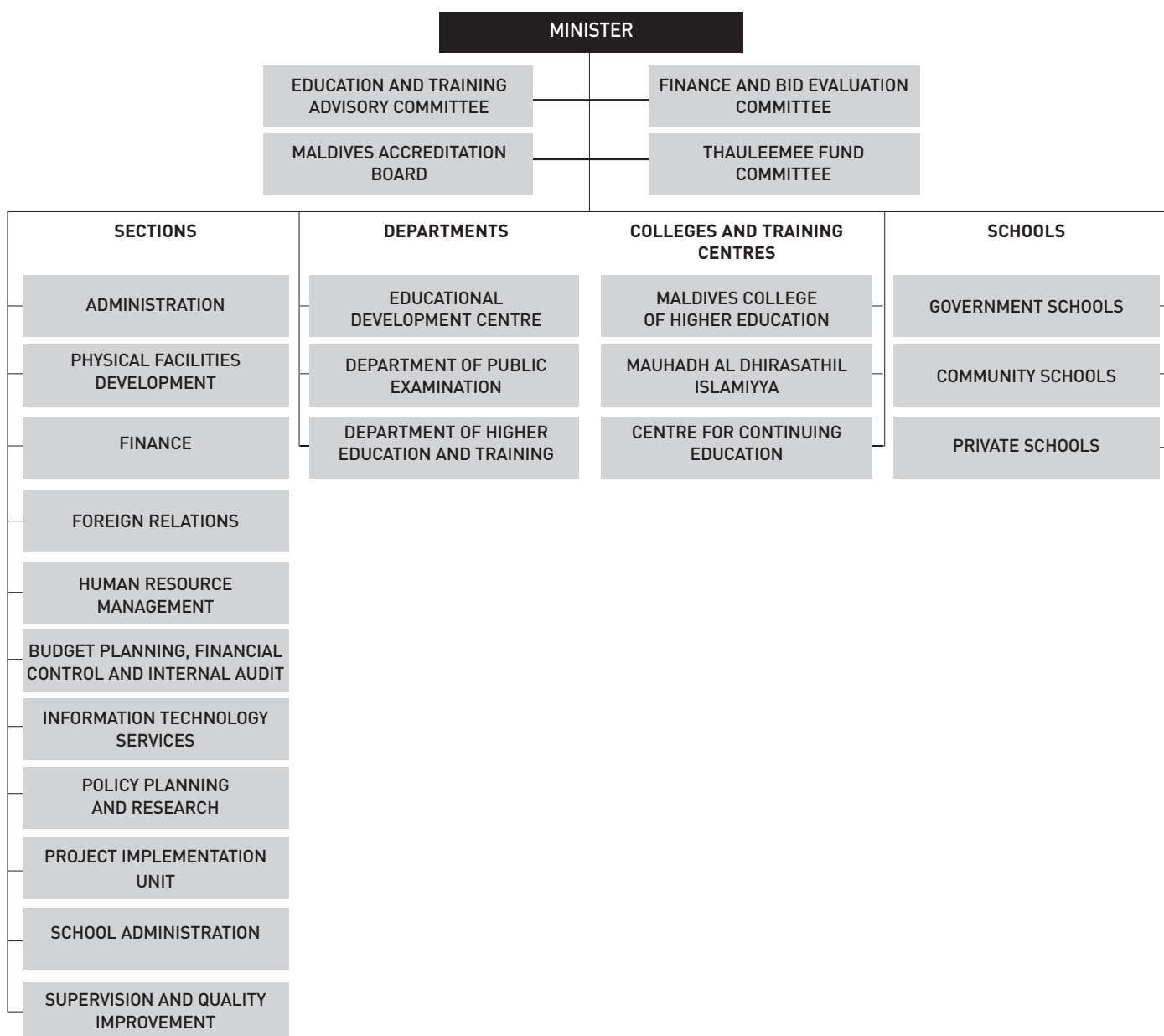
‘What is needed is to improve the professional competencies of the current cadre and recruit new local teachers with minimum academic and professional qualifications as the need arises.’

‘The quality of school staff will be improved through training of heads, regular and closer supervision of schools by trained supervisors, stronger emphasis on continuing in-service education of teachers, provision of incentives to teachers, such as bonuses, housing, to work in remote schools, recognition and rewarding of good teachers, and motivating teachers for self-learning through bonuses, salary adjustments etc.’

Each of the above policies and strategies for implementation will be examined in further detail in the report, in relation to their impact, current practice and recommendations.

STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

An organisational chart illustrating the departments and sections of the Maldives Ministry of Education



Schools are centrally managed by the Schools Administration Section, which is in charge of daily administration, provision of teachers, support for schools, monitoring performance, staffing (administration), procurement of resources/facilities, monitoring school budgets and coordinating infrastructure development of schools. The biggest schools now manage their own budget, but this represents only a handful of schools. Recently there has been a decision to restructure the system by introducing four education administrative zones, with one person in charge of each zone who reports to the section head. Little more is known at this early stage about how this will work or on its impact.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT IN EDUCATION

There are three international organisations that work in the Maldives on education programmes:

1. **VSO** supports the MOE by placing teacher advisers on islands in Atoll Education Centres and primary outreach advisers in the smaller island schools within atolls where there is greater disadvantage. The aim of this is to strengthen the capacity of teachers and supervisors. VSO also places volunteers in the Faculty of Education, working on teacher training module development and delivery. The area of special needs is also being supported and developed through the placement of a special needs adviser within the MOE's Educational Development Centre (EDC).
2. **The Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)** supports schools with their physical education and music programmes and also within the FE to develop physical education teacher training programmes. They are also working alongside UNICEF on a project to develop pre-school education.
3. **The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF)** has focused on early childhood development and the promotion and development of child-centred learning at primary level. They have funded material development projects in EDC and Faculty of Education and have funded a pilot project in a small number of schools to develop child-centred approaches in primary education and are now looking to expand the project in the remaining 22 under-served schools⁸ as well as in Male'. They are also providing funding support for Educational Supervision Quality Inspection Service (ESQIS) on the Promotion of Quality Education Programme that is in progress.

⁸22 schools have been identified for special attention through selected indicators pertaining to enrolment, physical infrastructure and teacher status. The Ministry of Education (MOE) proposed to UNICEF the need to address the issue of improving the quality of basic education of children in the under-served island schools of the country during UNICEF's Annual Review in 1999. In response to this need, the Twenty-two Schools Project emerged from the UNICEF's programme planning for 2000' (Government of Maldives and UNICEF, 2000). A number of activities have taken place since 2000

DONOR AGENCIES

The **World Bank's** Third Education and Training project, with a focus on pre- and in-service teacher training, is now in its fourth and final year. It has funded the training for degrees and masters in educational fields such as curriculum development.

The **British Council** has supported education in the Maldives for many years through scholarships funding and funding for projects through its small grants scheme. It has recently agreed to fund a much larger project: the 'AEC Project' – although not yet finalised, it will have a teacher training component and will be based in four atolls.

The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** has also provided funding for school health projects.

It is clear that the Maldives government is committed to improving education. The evidence for this is the high level of financial commitment made, the policies that are in place and the level of commitment of the people within the MOE. Having achieved near universal basic education, the watchword and the priority now is 'quality'. The aim of this research is to examine closely one factor that influences the quality of education – that of teacher motivation and its affect on teachers' performance as a means of assisting the government in its drive for quality education.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

⁹Profile of pupils refers to the range of abilities within a class

'Being a teacher means that we are always learning, even from the students. It is very fun working with children but also very hard.'

FEMALE TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

'I love working with children and I enjoy it when I can see learning taking place.'

FEMALE TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

'I wanted very much to be a teacher. Teaching is the best part of the day.'

MALE TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

Generally, teachers in the Maldives are motivated and work hard. However, this does not mean that their morale is high, and many are feeling undervalued despite their commitment to the profession. Local teachers are extremely committed to their island and their community. The islands have small populations ranging from 150 in the remote islands to a few thousand on the more densely populated islands. The communities are often extremely close knit. Teachers talked of the sense of duty that they feel when they are serving their community through teaching. Their love of working with children and knowing that they are making a difference, the enjoyment of seeing children make progress because of their input, makes them highly committed.

There is also the social side of the job to consider; school is the one place on the island where everyone gathers throughout the day. It is the ideal opportunity to meet with people. Because employment opportunities are very few on the islands, teaching is a good form of employment. It is relatively well paid and security is ensured with government posts.

Another very important motivating factor for Maldivian teachers is one of religion. The Qur'an states that children should be taught about Islam; for those teachers teaching Islam, they feel that they have a religious responsibility to do a good job.

FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER MOTIVATION

Each of the main factors that affect teacher motivation will now be examined in light of teachers' and stakeholders' views and through further analysis.

Through focus group discussions and more detailed 1:1 interviews with teachers the following were identified as the key factors that affect teacher motivation. Here, they are listed in order of priority, according to the number of times each issue was cited in the focus group discussion activities:

1. School management
2. Community/parents
3. Workload
4. Teaching and learning materials
5. Student behaviour
6. Training and professional development
7. School building/facilities
8. Profile of pupils⁹.

The next stage in the research process was to carry out 1:1 interviews with supervisors, head teachers, VSO teachers and a variety of education stakeholders. Finally, through careful analysis of all that was said, the following themes emerged as key factors that affect teacher motivation in the Maldives:

1. school leadership and management
2. training and professional development
3. availability of teaching and learning materials (TLMs)
4. links with the community
5. teacher workload and conditions
6. student behaviour and student profile
7. school building and facilities.

A number of other influencing factors were also cited. These are examined at the end of this section on research analysis.

1. School leadership and management

‘Teaching and learning is the most important activity taking place in schools. The MOE layer is very important; we concentrated on access and not student/classroom situations, more attention needs to be placed on teaching and learning.’

MOE OFFICIAL

This feeling represents the current situation in the Maldivian education system. Universal primary access has almost been achieved and now the focus is on providing quality education. In the round table meeting, much discussion was generated on the topic of school leadership and management. The consensus of opinion is that, currently, the leaders are administrators.

Throughout the research process, three underlying issues became apparent under the topic of leadership: selection of school heads; training; and frequent change.

1.1 Selection of school heads

‘Appoint good quality teachers in management.’

MALDIVIAN EDUCATIONALIST

Stakeholders are calling for a review and revision of the policy for appointing school heads. Experienced teachers with an educational qualification are needed for effective school management. A school leader must have many skills. Administrative skills are needed so that schools run smoothly and effectively, but they also need to have an educational background in order to understand fully students’ and teachers’ needs and how best to meet them.

‘If you run a business, I don’t think a manager who doesn’t know business will be a good manager.’

MOE OFFICIAL

1.2 Training

Because a school leader needs many skills, the training for such a post is crucial in preparation for the demands of the job. Not only should the selection process be well thought out but the training provided also needs to be to an appropriate level. Training should therefore include a focus on curriculum, as well as on management¹⁰ and leadership. There is also a need for middle management training in order to support the teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom.

According to teachers, school management can be a very positive motivator. Teachers explained that when managers praised their work and showed that they valued them through consultation and good communication, they felt more motivated.

'I feel happy when my work is recognised by the supervisors, headmasters, principal or parents; then we are encouraged to teach and put in more effort.'

SECONDARY TEACHER

However, when teachers feel unsupported by managers due to lack of positive feedback, little or no consultation regarding decisions that affect them, lack of access to resources and a teaching and learning matters, then they become demotivated.

'We are not able to perform as well as we want to as we don't get the support we need from management; we don't feel valued.'

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

Teachers said that school management tends to be primarily concerned with the administrative functions of the school. Of the teachers involved in the research, hardly any spoke of their head teachers coming into classrooms to see the teaching and learning taking place.

'We want to know why the heads don't come in to observe our lessons – then they would have some idea about what we are doing – they have been away from the classroom for so many years, they don't know our situation.'

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

In fact, there are school heads with no background in education and many school heads have spent very little time in the classroom as teachers. A few have been teachers in the past but many were trained overseas soon after completing their A-levels to become school heads. It is different in the case of Male' schools and the larger AECs, where principals have qualifications with a education background.

It would appear that school heads are mainly involved in the administrative functions of the school, while it is the role of the supervisor to support teachers in the classroom. However, many teachers also cited that supervisors were not providing the support that teachers need. Many of the teachers are untrained or recently qualified and want or need guidance. Some supervisors fulfil this role well and make classroom observations and give constructive feedback to teachers, supporting them in discipline issues, teaching and learning, planning lessons etc. Where this happens, it is much appreciated. In some schools however, this is not happening effectively and many supervisors are dealing with administrative rather than classroom matters.

'Our supervisor cannot always advise us; he too needs training.'

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

The current policy for appointing supervisors is that good classroom teachers can be promoted to the position of supervisor. It is the school management's¹¹ role to identify such teachers and recommend them for promotion. However, one issue that many teachers were concerned about is that there appears to be a certain amount of favouritism taking place in schools and it is possible for teachers to be selected for promotion because they are popular with the school head or island chief. Another reason given for some teachers being promoted is that they do not have the English language skills required to teach the English medium curriculum and are therefore removed from the classroom and given supervision duties. This situation creates demotivation in teachers who do work hard and are good at their job but are not rewarded.

Many of the interviewees felt that the reason why numerous supervisors do not support teachers in the classroom is because they do not have the skills to do so, and concentrate their efforts on the administration side of their role. Teachers therefore felt that teaching staff should be promoted to the role of supervisor because they are good teachers and not because of who they are or how many years they have been teaching. This then raises another issue of

taking many good teachers out of the classroom. If these good teachers become supervisors who deal with administration instead of using their skills to support teaching and learning in the classroom, their knowledge and skills will be wasted.

The issue of leadership and training and professional development go hand in hand. In order for teachers to receive the support that they are asking for in the classroom – both professionally and in terms of raising the status of teachers – then supervisors and management need further training. This is discussed in more detail in the following section on training and professional development, and in the section on recommendations at the end of the report.

Leadership also influences the issue of workload. Teachers are concerned that management staff are distant from the classroom situation and are not listening to teachers enough. As a result, they do not understand the teachers' situation and make unrealistic demands regarding workload. This is also discussed in the section on workload and addressed in the recommendations.

1.3 Frequent change

Many school heads are moved around at short notice and frequently. Yet heads need a set period of time in a school in order to make an impact and ensure commitment. The change of heads is also unsettling for teachers. There are a number of occasions where heads are moved on because of complaints from the community. There needs to be a more appropriate means for monitoring and appointing school heads rather than moving them around, as this can have adverse effects on the teachers and on the long-term development of the school.

Throughout the research, many similar solutions were suggested by both teachers and other stakeholders. The need to improve the role of supervisors to support teachers in the classroom, and for school leaders to have an education background was echoed throughout the interviews. This is supported by the policy-makers who are currently striving to address these issues through training programmes within the newly established Professional Development Unit (PDU) and through revision of school head appointment procedures.

2. Training and professional development

In schools where teachers have access to professional development from supervisors giving constructive feedback, VSO teacher input and workshops, school-led workshops, teacher exchange systems or teacher training programmes, teachers feel valued and enjoy learning and improving their teaching skills and knowledge. Where there is a lack of access to quality training or in-service professional development, teachers feel devalued, not supported professionally and lack confidence.

Four possible reasons for this are:

- School management is not trained to support the professional development of their teachers.
- School management focuses on administration not teaching and learning.
- There is no forum for discussion of educational issues – no opportunities for teachers/supervisors/heads to meet.
- Lack of capacity at Ministry level to deliver teacher training courses and in-service professional development.

Training and professional development is key to improving the quality of education being delivered in the Maldives. It is important that people in education at all levels are updated with current ideas and methodologies in order for teachers to feel supported. Innovations such as curriculum change also require training at all levels if they are to be implemented effectively.

In the current approach to teacher training, there are two main phases: pre-service initial teacher training and the ongoing professional development of teachers, which enables them to develop their skills as professionals.

2.1 Pre-service teacher training

According to the Ministry of Education (Educational Statistics 2003 Maldives), 33% of teachers are untrained but expected to perform the same duties as trained teachers.

'In my first month of teaching there have been so many difficult things; not knowing how to write a lesson plan, learning how to use the textbooks, students not behaving – shouting and throwing things; this makes me sad, sometimes I have to repeat the lesson.'

UNTRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

In order to fill the vacant teaching posts in schools, untrained temporary teachers are appointed. These are usually school leavers with O-level passes. They are expected to take on the role of class teacher without any training or school orientation programme. They are often extremely motivated but find it hugely challenging to take on the duties of teachers. Consequently, over time, many become demotivated because of a lack of professional support.

'Now I have only my own ideas, I want more ideas. I would like to go on a course in Male'.'

UNTRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

Using temporary teachers is a short-term measure but the needs of these teachers must not be overlooked because they are currently responsible for teaching thousands of students. Maintaining their motivation is important, and is linked to improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Ideally, they need access to pre-service training either in Male' or at one of the regional centres and they need professional support and development while in post beforehand.

The Faculty of Education is responsible for pre-service teacher training and now offers courses at all levels from the Advanced Certificate in Teaching Primary (ACTP) to degrees. The College is based in Male' where most of the courses are conducted, but in response to the demand for more teachers to be trained, regional centres have been established where teachers can attend courses within their region. There were plans to have five regional centres running by the end of 2004. However, the Faculty of Education has not been able to recruit staff for four of the centres; attempts to recruit from local schools failed because the students were not satisfied with the quality of teaching and wanted to be taught by faculty staff. The number of students receiving training has tripled in the last two years but the human capacity is currently greatly reduced while lecturers are away upgrading their own qualifications, funded by the World Bank's Third Education and Training Project.

There is a heavy reliance on part-time lecturing staff recruited from the local schools and MOE departments. The majority of these people already have full-time commitments. How to maintain quality and consistency of teaching when numbers of students are increasing so quickly is an issue that needs consideration. Modules are being developed at the Faculty of Education with trainer's guides to support all trainers in delivering courses; the intention is to train individuals from atolls on the materials within each module. However, because of a lack of capacity, it has been difficult to identify suitable people for training.

2.2 In-service teacher training and professional development

Teachers who are trained also require further professional development in order to continue improving their skills and to raise the quality of the education that they deliver.

'Access to good quality training indicates that we are valued and supported professionally.'

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

However, there has been very little in-service professional development going on in schools despite the MOE's efforts and will to deliver in-service training to teachers. The Ministry struggles with the capacity that it has to meet in-service demands. Because of the geographical constraints, in-service provision for all teachers is difficult to achieve and in the past has been very ad hoc in nature. In the last three years, the mandate for in-service teacher training has changed three times. Initially, it was the responsibility of the in-service department in the FE. The team was then moved to ESQIS within the Ministry and from there it has recently moved to the EDC, also within the Ministry. EDC is primarily responsible for in-service teacher training and curriculum development. The PDU, which manages the in-service programmes, has the following main objectives:

- Provision of in-service teacher training programmes to improve teaching and learning in the atolls and Male' with a plan to cover all the atolls within three years, delivering programmes depending on the needs of the schools.
- Provision of supervisor training in Male'. The PDU has just begun the first round of supervisor training courses, with two batches of 40 per year planned for those supervisors who are interested and have potential.
- Provision of content upgrading programmes for primary teachers in English, maths, combined science and Dhivehi, aiming to provide a bridge for higher-level studies.
- Provision of basic skills training for temporary teachers in modular form.

Currently there are only five local staff working in the PDU and in order to carry out the planned programmes, they have to rely on supervisors in Male' and those who have undergone the training themselves to deliver training in the islands. This may mean taking them away from their current jobs for short periods.

There are plans for the EDC to be involved in two externally funded projects to train teachers and provide in-service training at regional centres. There are two main projects planned: a British Council project, which will involve setting up five regional centres within AECs, with trained professionals in each centre. The trainers will be selected from Male' schools and will be trained in Male' by the PDU. They will be responsible for identifying the training needs of local teachers. The overall aim is to develop the AECs as professional hubs.

The second project is the World Bank Integrated Human development Project, worth US\$15.76 million. One of the components of the project will be a secondary teacher training project. Again this will involve setting up four more regional centres in different atolls. The project involves the building of accommodation blocks for students coming from the satellite islands¹². Each centre will be managed by two professionals who will plan and conduct in-service teacher training programmes on local islands. This will require EDC support.

One of the major constraints to the success of many of the initiatives for training programmes is lack of human capacity. As noted above, PDU comprises just five local staff. EDC will be stretched to support these projects. Within Male', it is the same individuals that are called upon to deliver any form of educational training, both pre-service and in-service.

One way to reduce the strain on EDC would be for schools to lead their own professional development programmes, but school-led professional development is rare. As examined in the previous section on leadership, school management staff are currently unable to lead training programmes because of their own lack of educational experience and background, and with their focus on administration. In a small number of schools workshops are organised by VSO teachers; principals in the larger schools run training programmes and there have been some excellent examples of peer support programmes, where teachers have visited other schools to observe good practice or more experienced teachers have worked with less experienced teachers. This form of professional development was highly valued by all the teachers involved.

For supervisors to be responsible for the professional development of teachers, they need to be clear in their role and confident in their abilities to support teachers. For this to happen, they need good quality training in teaching and learning, and in supporting teachers, both trained and untrained.

‘There is a struggle between trained and untrained teachers and the teaching methodologies used. If all teachers are trained well and all use similar methods it will be more effective.’

ISLAND SCHOOL SUPERVISOR

‘Many newly qualified teachers are forced to change their methodologies by teachers who are already in the system. Newly qualified teachers are heavily influenced by the more experienced teachers.’

MOE OFFICIAL

This supports the need for in-service training programmes for all staff on effective teaching strategies and curriculum delivery in line with what is taught in the FE so that there is consistency within schools and newly qualified teachers are supported once they are in post.

To assist school management in leading in-service training programmes, it would help if there were materials available for them to use. Within the different education departments there are suitable materials that could be used for training teachers and these at the moment are not easily accessible for schools. If all schools were to be made aware of the materials and they were made easily available, then school management could apply them and conduct their own in-service training programmes.

Another form of improving professionalism in teaching is through discussion of educational issues and topics at all levels. Teachers have expressed a desire for more opportunity for them to get together and discuss teaching and learning matters.

‘The Ministry can’t provide in-service support to every island because it is too expensive. Some funding to allow teachers on a number of local islands to meet would be great. We could have planning meetings, discipline meetings, etc. That would motivate teachers. We would have the opportunity to be professional.’

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

‘Supervisors and heads need training because methodologies are changing; we need to keep up with the changes. We would like to have the chance to get together with other heads and discuss these things. A mechanism for sharing ideas with other schools would be good.’

PRIMARY HEAD TEACHER

Discussions were initiated surrounding the possibility of a principals’ forum in Male’ but so far it has not been effective. There were school heads’ conferences planned every year to bring together the heads from the atolls but this has financial constraints. Some meetings do take place but tend to be ad hoc.

It is evident that there are many initiatives now taking place regarding teacher training and professional development within the MOE. How all these projects will be managed by the different sections, particularly EDC, needs to be monitored for these ideas to succeed.

Improved training in teaching and learning for everyone in the teaching field is key to addressing a number of the other factors that affect teacher motivation. As mentioned in the previous section on leadership, training for school management and supervisors is essential for making initial teacher training effective, as this allows them to support the newly trained teachers in newer methodologies and when using the new materials produced by EDC. It also

supports them in providing the ongoing professional development of teachers that teachers are requesting.

Training for all school staff in differentiation techniques is also crucial not only for improving the quality of teaching and learning that takes place but also for addressing the issue of student behaviour and the broad student profile situation that teachers are struggling to manage.

Awareness-raising for parents will also go a long way to address many of the problems that teachers face. If parents are made aware of new ideas in teaching methodology and materials, they will support teachers more in the classroom and with their children at home.

It would also be hoped that if training for management has a stronger teaching and learning focus then they would be more confident to support teachers and would focus their energies more on developing the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

Much progress is being made regarding training and professional development and the establishment of the PDU within the MOE is a major step. Training courses are being revised and written to improve supervisor training and there are a number of new externally funded projects in the pipeline with teacher training components. The Faculty of Education is also raising the number of students receiving pre-service teacher training.

3. Availability of teaching and learning materials (TLMs)

The term teaching and learning materials refers to resources such as stationery, as well as curriculum materials, books, reference materials for teachers, science equipment, IT and photocopying/printing facilities.

The extent of the issue varies depending on the type of school. Many of the teachers in the community schools cited a lack of resources as a major obstacle to motivation, and being able to perform well in their jobs. Indeed, some of the schools visited had only the teachers' guides and pupils' books and no other reference materials. In the larger AEC schools, however, where there was a library, computer rooms and laboratories, the issue was effective use of such resources. There appears to be great disparity in the provision of TLMs. Some of the issues cited were:

- lack of up-to-date TLMs
- relevance of the curriculum
- use of curriculum/lack of control over the curriculum and delivery.

Teachers in the community schools have to cope with the very minimum of resources. They have the teachers' books, pupils' books and a small amount of stationery such as chalk and paper.

'I want to make teaching aids but we don't have enough materials and the local shops don't sell materials. We have spent the last two days without chalk.'

UNTRAINED PRIMARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Many of the teachers in the community schools are untrained and so are limited in their teaching ideas and strategies. For those teachers who are trained, some feel frustrated at not being able to implement the ideas they gained in training because of a lack of resources in their schools. They rely purely on the curriculum materials provided. Many of these teachers said that they would like access to teachers' reference books for each of the subjects they teach, in order to upgrade their own content knowledge and to develop more ideas for teaching each subject.

Funds to purchase TLMs have to be requested through the island office, which has no set budget. Accessing funds depends greatly on the relationship between the island chief and the school. Often it is the responsibility of the community to raise the funds needed for schools and, of course, each community has its own capacity for such fundraising. There is therefore no consistency between schools in terms of the TLMs that teachers have to work with. In turn, this creates inequality for children and in the quality of learning that takes place.

'The biggest problem is a lack of resources. I am here to teach science but I have no equipment; just a few beakers and some candles. It is not enough to teach the curriculum.'

TRAINED MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Where schools do not have the necessary resources, there is a concern that the curriculum is not being delivered. It is strongly felt that it should be the responsibility of the Ministry, through the EDC, to provide the basic requirements to all schools, according to their needs.

Being provided with a structured curriculum can be a motivating factor for some teachers, especially the untrained teachers who need a framework to follow, but for others it is demotivating.

'The major constraints are the teaching guides. Teachers are not trained to use the guides and if they are trained, then what? Can they have control over how to use them?'

MOE OFFICIAL

Many teachers are using the curriculum materials without any training and are not using them effectively. In fact, some schools have not even received the updated materials. There is a definite lack of clarity over the amount of control schools have over the use of the materials. In some schools, teachers are confident in changing lessons and adapting the materials, but some teachers would like to adapt the materials to make them more appropriate for their children's learning needs; they are often restricted by school management or parents.

'Sometimes, parents complain if we don't use the pupil's books. Sometimes we don't think the pages are appropriate but have to use them anyway.'

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

With many of the island children not having sufficient command of English, teachers find it hard to deliver the curriculum as it is but feel powerless to change the situation. In one school, teachers recommended that for the children who could not read and write, they should use pre-school materials and not follow the pupil's books. Parents were willing to do this and not spend their money on books that were too advanced for their children, but the school would not allow it.

In response to these issues, the EDC are doing two things:

1. revising the materials to make them more accessible for island children
2. attempting to develop mechanisms for training/orientating teachers around the new materials.

Through greater collaboration with the PDU and Faculty of Education pre-service teacher training, the EDC aims to train supervisors and trainee teachers on the use of the new materials. They also initiated the use of feedback from island teachers to inform the latest revision of materials. Training teachers, supervisors and school management on how to implement the national syllabus and materials is a crucial component for making these effective, but a link with parents is also needed, and all parties need to be clear on the use of the materials. This may address the concern that schools and teachers need a mechanism for identifying their own needs regarding materials, and a way of informing the EDC so that the materials match the needs more closely.

4. Links with the community

Teachers cited community as a very strong influencing factor on their motivation. Serving their community is very important to them.

'I like this job because I want to make this island a good society. My ambition is to become a teacher.'

TEMPORARY TEACHER FOR ONE YEAR

Teachers identified the importance of having good relationships with parents and community in order for effective teaching to take place. When parents are supportive of teachers, teachers feel valued. Parents show their support through coming to school to talk with teachers about their children, through helping in class or school and by helping children with homework. Problems arise due to lack of parental awareness of different teaching strategies and their value; because of this they complain when children don't produce enough written work in books. Teachers find this upsetting at times and can become demotivated.

'If the parents are unhappy with me, I feel sad but I try to correct my mistake and have good relationships with them.'

UNTRAINED TEACHER

'Parents and teachers have a different perspective of education. Both are not working together. Both have perceived separate roles. Courses involving parents and teachers could be run in communities about a shared vision for education.'

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

These issues could be addressed by working more closely with parents through workshops and greater communication between school and community. Other stakeholders reinforced this view and highlighted the importance of involving parents more in the schools' decision-making processes through more clearly defined roles for parents.

This could be achieved through strengthening existing networks such as parent-teacher associations and school boards and through improving the educational programmes put out on radio and television. There is currently a radio programme entitled 'Mudharisunge Dhuniye' or 'Teacher's World' produced by CCE (Centre Council for Continuing Education), which broadcasts several education programmes regularly. During discussion with stakeholders at the round table meeting it was suggested that these programmes could be focused on themes that could be effectively used as a motivational tool for teachers. It would also be a useful method of imparting important information to teachers and communities, particularly in the atolls, which would enable both school and parents access to the same information and would help in building relationships through all parties – MOE, school and parents – having shared goals. Education programmes focusing on teaching ideas and activities that would be useful for teachers and parents might also serve to address the issue of lack of resources in the atolls.

Through involving parents more in creating whole school discipline policies alongside teachers and management, a shared understanding of expectations and procedures would be established. This would serve to provide more support for teachers in the classroom regarding the issue of student behaviour, which will be discussed later in this report.

In the workload section of this report, teachers express concern over the amount of extracurricular activities in which they are often expected to be. With greater involvement of the community in organising and leading such activities, teachers could concentrate more on the job at hand: teaching and learning.

An interesting point to make, however, is that despite the lack of participation of parents in

¹³Information on overtime came from the interviews with a number of interviewees

many schools, the community still has a tremendous amount of power when it comes to influencing the appointment or removal of head teachers. In some cases, the parents also put a lot of pressure on the schools to provide extracurricular activities. Parents and schools need to be working together, with agreed common goals, for all needs to be met and an effective partnership developed.

It is important to note that in the recently published Education Strategic Action Plan 2004–2006 (available in Dhivehi only), there are components relating to improved community involvement and greater transparency for all.

5. Teacher workload and conditions

‘I don’t have enough time to do my lesson plans because I have 48 periods a week. I am very tired and don’t have the energy required to be the teacher I would like to be.’
TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

In the very small number of schools where teachers felt there was a reasonable maximum number of lessons to teach per week, they were happy with the workload. They had enough time to plan and prepare lessons, mark books and spend time at home with their family.

Yet the vast majority of teachers cited workload as a demotivating factor. The number of periods taught by teachers varied between 25 and over 40 periods per week. Examples of teachers’ typical working days are given to highlight the disparity between the workload of teachers:

- **Teacher 1:** Teaches one session only. Teaches 24 periods per week with two free periods per day. She is happy to do the extra clubs and activities on Saturday mornings.
- **Teacher 2:** Teaches two sessions: 07:00–11:30, 11:55–15:10 and often in the evenings.
- **Teacher 3:** Teaches two sessions: 06:45– 14:00 and then extracurricular activities until 21:30.
- **Teacher 4:** Teaches 40–57 periods per week, with additional administrative duties.

Clearly there is no regular working day for teachers. There are policies on the number of hours they have to work before claiming overtime¹³, and a limit to the amount of overtime they can claim, but there are no limits on the maximum amount of hours that they have to work. Teachers have to work a seven hours per day, 35 hours per week before they can claim overtime. Overtime can be claimed up to a maximum of 51.5 hours and can only represent one third of total pay. Many teachers work way over 35 hours.

Increased workload is due to a number of factors, including lack of teachers, too many extracurricular activities, teaching methodology, and lack of participation in decision-making.

5.1 Lack of teachers

‘The main problem is not enough teachers. At the moment we have no Grade 4 or 5 teachers so we are covering those lessons too. In the afternoon session, the morning session teachers have to come in again.’
UNTRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

According to the MOE’s Education Statistics 2003 Maldives, 67% of current teachers are trained. This leaves 33% of teaching posts covered by untrained, temporary teachers. Because of the drive to train more teachers, many teachers are sent to Male’ or a regional centre from their schools for training. This leaves a shortage of teachers in the schools, which in some islands are very difficult to fill because of a lack of people with appropriate qualifications. In the main, temporary teachers are school leavers with O-level passes. If positions are unfilled, greater pressure falls on the remaining teachers, who have to take extra classes, which they are often not qualified or competent to teach. It is the policy to fill posts with local

teachers but where this is not possible, expatriate teachers are employed. According to the Education Statistics 2003 Maldives, 64% of teachers are local and 36% are expatriate.

5.2 Too many extracurricular activities after school

‘Every night there are meetings or extracurricular activities. We don’t get enough time to spend with our families.’

TRAINED MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Because there is often only one school on an island, there are two sessions: a morning session and an afternoon session (a primary session and a secondary session). Meetings such as coordination and subject meetings and extracurricular activities such as remedial classes and sports have to take place in the evenings and even during weekends. Some teachers therefore have to attend school nearly the entire day and evening, leaving them very little free time.

The school is often the focal point of the island and the demand for extracurricular activities is great from the community. Schools are under pressure to meet the community’s needs, particularly in islands where the community provides funds for the school. Teachers said they would very often be notified of a meeting after school the same day, or tasks would be allocated without much warning – they had very little time to complete the tasks because of teaching and after extracurricular commitments.

There is a policy statement that schools should provide the maximum opportunities for students, but this is for schools to manage themselves¹⁴. The MOE encourages schools to take on academic activities. For example, all schools should organise remedial classes. But there are also instructions intended to limit the number of activities. For example, in primary schools, there should not be any inter-school sports activities other than singing and Qur’an competitions. Secondary schools have to produce an extracurricular activities calendar to be approved by the Ministry.

Some school heads believe the focus of schooling should be educational and therefore have few extracurricular activities other than those that support the curriculum. Others believe in bringing community and school together by providing many different types of activities. Currently, it is the responsibility of teachers to lead, organise and run extracurricular activities, which requires much of their time and energy. While the majority of teachers support the idea of extracurricular activities, they are not happy with the extra workload that it often entails. Many teachers cited that it is often the more capable teachers that get given the extra responsibilities; that these tasks are not allocated fairly and this results in increased workload for some teachers.

Many stakeholders identified the possibility of allowing greater responsibility among the community for organising and leading some of the activities such as sports, clubs and Scouting/Guiding, which would allow teachers to focus on the academic activities. This would also serve to strengthen community relationships as discussed earlier.

5.3 Teaching methodology

Every day, teachers have to mark several piles of books or worksheets handed in from each lesson. This takes up a considerable amount of their day. Marking usually consists of ticks and crosses and is not constructive to move children forward in their learning. There is no time for this kind of marking. Often when teachers attempt something new, a different kind of activity to teach a concept, it may not require work to be recorded in books. Parents and supervisors often complain that the teacher is not doing their job properly because the children are not producing a written record of learning. This relates back to the previous section outlining community relationships and the importance of making parents aware of different teaching strategies and ways of learning. Supervisors and school management too need to be aware of such strategies.

¹⁴This information was gained from a number of different interviewees at policy level but many of the interviewees were unclear about this policy

5.4 Lack of participation in decision-making

Underpinning many of these issues is a lack of teacher participation in decision-making. Teachers are rarely, if ever consulted about decisions that affect them.

'We want management to listen to us. Teachers are the people doing the job but they make the decisions for us.'

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

For many teachers, the issue seems to be a lack of involvement in decision-making by school management. Teachers feel they are not consulted about the decisions that affect them. For example, with the activities being organised, they are not consulted about who will be involved and when but are given orders and instructions. Teachers have many good ideas about the organisation of the school, curriculum, planning and extracurricular activities but don't feel that the opportunities exist for them to contribute towards such decisions. In some schools, teachers meet to discuss the plans for the week ahead, but apart from that they have little involvement in making decisions.

'Teachers are part of the machine to be used but are not used for their ideas.'

VSO PRIMARY TEACHER ADVISER

As mentioned earlier, if management training was to have a greater focus on teaching and learning, then it is hoped that school management would show a greater interest, through improved confidence, in the academic side of their job and include teachers more in decisions related to teaching and learning. It was suggested by a number of interviewees that head teachers do not know how to involve teachers in the school development process and this is an area of training that needs addressing.

Clearly, there is a huge disparity between teachers in terms of workload, and this disparity depends on many factors, as outlined above. The key issue is lack of control for teachers over their workload due to lack of teacher participation in school decisions and lack of freedom in delivering the curriculum. If teaching methodologies could change then teachers may free up time from marking for more purposeful activity.

6. Student behaviour and student profile

In some schools, teachers were very happy with student behaviour and it was a significant motivating factor for these teachers.

'If I can control the class and have good classroom management, then the lesson goes well.'

UNTRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

Discipline was therefore not an issue for everyone but was a significant issue for most teachers. There appears to be less of a problem in the early grades but in Grades 6 and 7 the problem increases. There is also less of a problem for local teachers than expatriate teachers, which may be due to cultural and teaching style differences. Teachers feel demotivated when:

- students disrupt lessons, don't complete their homework, show a lack of respect for teachers and are disinterested in studying
- there are ineffective school disciplinary procedures and a lack of support from management and parents regarding discipline procedures
- social problems within families affect a child's behaviour and ability to learn – some assistance is needed for such families/parents/children.

'When the class is noisy and undisciplined I lose my train of thought and this leads to mistakes in class.'

SECONDARY TEACHER

'Sometimes I have to repeat the lesson because students have disrupted the lesson.'

UNTRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

Student discipline is strongly related to student or class profile. Teachers cited that there is often too broad a range of abilities in their classes. There are children at one end of the spectrum of ability who cannot read and write and then there are the children at the other end who are extremely able. A few teachers are providing teaching at a more suitable level for these children; some teachers are not catering for their needs at all. This is due to a lack of training, lack of support from the management (in turn through lack of training) and because of pressure from parents to complete the pupil's books. The curriculum materials are aimed at the average student, which results in the children at either end of the spectrum not having their needs met. Because teachers are not trained sufficiently in differentiation and because the curriculum is so rigid (or the perception of how it can be used is rigid), teachers are not able to cope with the wide profile that their classes present. This subsequently leads to discipline problems in class when students become bored or frustrated. And this has a detrimental effect on the quality of teaching and learning taking place, which in turn affects motivation.

Another factor that adds to the already existing broad range of abilities in a class, are the students who are repeating grades because they have previously failed the end-of-year examinations. They will be repeating the curriculum and can therefore become easily bored and disruptive. If they failed it the first time, then that might suggest that the curriculum was not appropriate for their needs.

Teachers also feel frustrated when they feel that discipline issues are not appropriately dealt with by management or when they are not supported by parents. There seems to be a lack of clarity in schools regarding discipline procedures and policy.

'Some teachers use different rules so the children become confused; we need to follow the same rules.'

TRAINED PRIMARY TEACHER

Schools need to have a school discipline policy that all teachers follow in order for some consistency to be established and to provide support for teachers in the classroom. The roles of teachers, supervisors, management and parents need to be clearly defined. This is in addition to effective teaching strategies being employed that aim to meet all children's needs with the support of more relevant curriculum materials.

As discussed in earlier sections, training for school management, supervisors and parents on teaching methodologies that aid differentiation is extremely important if teachers are to feel supported in using different teaching techniques to meet the varied needs of their students. This supports the idea that many of the factors that affect teacher motivation are interrelated. Through training for all and greater communication between all parties, student discipline problems could be greatly reduced.

7. School buildings and facilities

A number of school building issues are demotivating factors for teachers. There is frequently a lack of classrooms. Many schools have to operate in two sessions (morning and afternoon) meaning that any extra classes or activities have to be carried out in the evenings, increasing the workload for teachers and children.

In many schools there is one large hall, divided by partitions into separate classrooms. This makes the classrooms very noisy; it is subsequently difficult to teach and learn, and this in turn has an impact on student behaviour. The Schools Administration Section's policy is to update schools systematically with partitions that go up to the ceiling to reduce the problem of noise carrying in the halls.

Where staffrooms exist, they are often crowded and difficult to work in.

8. Other factors affecting teacher motivation

8.1 Temporary teachers

Temporary teachers cited a number of demotivating issues: low pay yet often carrying out the same duties as permanent staff; job insecurity; and no training or support given. Many temporary teachers lose their job after a year and schools are then allocated another inexperienced teacher, despite schools requesting experienced teachers from the MOE. Neither schools nor temporary teachers are happy with this situation. Despite this, many temporary teachers appear to be surprisingly highly motivated.

8.2 Career path

A number of interviewees identified the fact that teachers have very little room for moving up the career ladder in teaching. What is interesting is that very few teachers identified this issue as affecting their motivation. Secondary and tertiary stakeholders appeared to find this more worrying than teachers themselves.

There are five grades within the teaching career structure. The first two grades are untrained. Once a teacher is trained, there is no promotion other than upgrading qualifications. If a teacher manages to upgrade past degree level, they are usually taken away from the classroom to undertake other responsibilities within the MOE. Once a teacher reaches Grade 5, there is nowhere else to go. Good teachers move out of teaching and into administration, which leads to a loss in good teachers. Supervisors, too, have no way of moving up the ladder other than into a head teacher's position, but this requires further qualifications. In secondary schools, teachers may become heads of department but this does not carry with it any increase in salary, just extra responsibility. There is thus no reward system, no formal recognition, for being a good teacher.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will draw broad thematic conclusions on the basis of the research findings, and will then go on to make specific policy recommendations with a view to increasing teacher motivation in the Maldives.

UNDERLYING THEMES

From analysis of the factors examined in the previous section, it is possible to identify a number of underlying themes running through all factors. These themes act as barriers to the improvement of the quality of education being delivered in the Maldives. They are:

1. lack of teacher voice
2. frequent change
3. strong administrative focus
4. lack of human capacity.

Before making specific recommendations to address the demotivating factors, the report will briefly examine these underlying themes.

1. Lack of teacher voice

‘Teachers are not consulted, not involved in decisions, management comes from the top down.’

MOE OFFICIAL

What emerges from this study is a basic theme of lack of teacher voice. Teachers have very little power to make changes within their schools let alone to influence educational change nationally. Neither is there any body to speak up for teachers, due to an absence of teacher unions or civil society. Instructions come from the top down, which is indicative of the way the country is governed. When examining the factors that affect motivation in the previous section, it becomes apparent that teachers have very little involvement in any of the decision-making that goes on at various levels in the education system, particularly in their own schools. Teachers feel that they are merely the deliverers of education. Decisions about what to teach and how to teach, who will take certain extracurricular activities, what their training needs are and what national policy changes are needed are made without teachers’ input.

Indeed, teachers were keen to take part in the research and once they were involved in the focus group activities they had much to say and appeared to enjoy greatly the opportunity to talk to someone about their issues and concerns. So many teachers said how happy they were that someone came to listen to them and how good it is that finally their views will be heard by others in the Ministry.

Interestingly, it was not only the teachers who wanted a forum to talk. The other education stakeholders also seemed to relish the opportunity to gather together and discuss educational concerns. This perhaps demonstrates the current climate of opening up and the door is now open to such forums of discussion where in the past it was not.

‘We want management to listen to us. They’re not even discussing ideas with teachers, they just finalise the decisions among themselves.’

MIXED GROUP OF PRIMARY/SECONDARY TEACHERS

'Teachers are not involved in the decision-making processes in school. The school management decide on the teachers' training needs and decide on the workshops (if there are workshops organised).'

MOE OFFICIAL

Changes are now taking place and the Ministry is recognising the important role that teachers have to play in educational reform. Indeed, when the second round table meeting was being planned, the policy-makers actually requested that teachers and supervisors, especially from the islands, attend the meeting so that they would be able to have input in the discussion.

'At policy level, we need to listen to the people in the field.'

MOE OFFICIAL

It has to be noted that some action is already being taken to address this concern. The Curriculum Development Unit within the EDC did send out questionnaires to teachers on the islands to gain feedback on the existing English materials and they used this to inform revisions made. They are also including teachers in the working parties involved in the revision of materials. The need to involve teachers is being acknowledge and the MOE is seeking to address this.

The issue of lack of teacher voice is addressed in a number of the recommendation:

- Recommendations on **leadership** propose that school management include teachers in teaching and learning decision-making processes and in the writing of whole school development plans.
- **Training and professional development** recommendations propose that school leaders are trained to initiate needs-based training and consultative meetings.
- Recommendations on **TLMs** suggest that the EDC develops mechanisms for gaining feedback from island teachers to inform materials development and, through improved, relevant materials and training, gives teachers greater control over the use of curriculum and materials.
- In **student behaviour and profile** recommendations, it is proposed that teachers be involved in the writing of school discipline policies.
- In **teacher workload and conditions**, it is recommended that school management should organise tasks and meetings in consultation with teachers.

To summarise, it is recommended that teachers should be more involved in school decision-making processes in order to have ownership of changes and innovations and to feel respected as professionals.

2. Frequent change

Change is pervasive throughout the education system in the Maldives as a result of the rapid pace of national development. Changes within the MOE are continual, affecting senior staff positions, Ministry mandates, office location and curriculum revision. Change is also prevalent within schools, with high turnover of management and teaching staff as well as new curricula, schemes of work and materials to implement.

'Change is a huge demotivator. Teachers are unwilling to plan or prepare because of timetable changes, switching subjects. Teachers are subjected to frequent management changes. Every time a new principal arrives, teachers have to make huge changes.'

VSO TEACHER ADVISER

This issue interacts with the lack of teacher voice. Because teachers are not involved in the decision-making that takes place in schools, they become confused and left alone to respond to the changes forced upon them. If teachers were involved more in making decisions then

they would have ownership over the changes and thus be more committed to making the changes a success.

The issue of change is addressed in a number of the recommendations:

- Under **leadership**, it is recommended that head teachers be allowed to remain in post for a minimum amount of time (to be agreed). Also, through involving teachers more in the decision-making processes in school, rather than imposing change on them, they will be more able and willing to implement changes as they have greater ownership of the changes.
- In the recommendations for **TLMs**, it is suggested that all teachers are informed of curriculum and syllabus changes and are trained to implement the changes and use the new materials.
- Change is also addressed in the recommendations on **strengthening community relationships**. Through greater collaboration with the community, teachers will have more autonomy to make changes

It is essential that while recognising that change is essential for growth, change needs to be managed more effectively through improved communication between all stakeholders and greater use of participatory methods

3. Administrative focus

Another theme that runs through many of the issues is the focus of school management, where there is a strong tendency to prioritise administrative tasks. There was common agreement among a range of stakeholders that there needs to be a shift here towards teaching and learning

The focus on administration is addressed in a number of the recommendations:

- Within the section on **leadership**, clear job descriptions are proposed for supervisors, to include a focus on supporting teachers in the classroom. And by ensuring all supervisors receive training to enable them to support teachers in teaching and learning matters, it is hoped that supervisors will no longer be performing essentially administrative roles. It is strongly recommended that all school heads have an education background and are trained in supporting their staff in teaching and learning matters.
- **Training and professional development** is seen as a key factor in addressing this issue. Through training in teaching and learning for all management staff, and through the creation of a forum for discussion of teaching and learning topics and more school-led training programmes, it is intended that there will be a greater focus on what is taking place in the classrooms.

A greater focus on teaching and learning, teachers and students at all levels and in all areas of educational development is required to improve the quality of education

4. Lack of human capacity

There are currently so many good initiatives planned to improve the quality of education that the future development of education in the Maldives is well underway. However, there is a serious lack of human capacity at teacher training level. Managing this constraint in order to ensure that projects are effective requires a great deal of collaboration and cooperation. There is a critical need to expand the pool of available and appropriately qualified people, such as teacher trainers. The provision of incentives for trainers to work in other atolls also needs consideration. Experienced staff do not want to leave Male' where their families and services are and this has been a barrier to effective project management.

Lack of human capacity is addressed in recommendations concerning **training and professional development**:

- Increasing the capacity of both the PDU and the Faculty of Education will enable them to ensure better quality training and greater coverage. It is recommended that schools are encouraged to lead their own professional development programmes, supported by increased training for supervisors and head teachers in order to reduce the strain on trainers within MOE departments. However, the training of school management and supervisors needs to be carried out first for this to take place. An action plan/timeline would be useful to manage human capacity for all of the proposed projects and courses with the trainers identified in order to reduce the strain on already overstretched individuals and departments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are seven main recommendations:

1 School leadership and management

- Redefine supervisor's role.
- Create a systematic way of training all supervisors.
- School heads should be trained in teaching and learning matters.
- Allow school heads to remain in post for a minimum amount of time.

2. Training and professional development

- Increase the capacity of training departments.
- Increase school-based professional development and funding.
- Provide systematic training of untrained teachers.
- Create forums for discussion of pedagogic topics at all levels.
- Harmonise external and government-funded education development projects.

3. Teaching and learning materials

- Allow teachers greater control over the curriculum, planning and delivery.
- Create a basic resources list to ensure all schools are able to deliver the curriculum.

4. Strengthening community relationships

- Improve communication between school, teachers and parents/community.

5. Teacher workload and conditions

- Ensure all schools have an appropriate number of teachers.
- Reduce the number of after school activities; allocate some responsibility to the community.
- Division of workload should be done fairly and with greater consultation.

6. Student behaviour and student profile

- Implement national and school discipline policies.
- Train teachers and school management in differentiation.

7. School buildings and facilities

- Ensure all schools have basic infrastructure.
- Improve physical environment and conditions to facilitate teaching and learning.
- Consider alternative ways of organising the two school sessions to reduce the issues of primary and secondary children sharing classrooms.

In the tables that follow, each of the recommendations is outlined with solutions given at two main levels: national policy level and school level. National policy level solutions are actions that either need to be taken at policy level or indeed have already been identified at national level and are being addressed. Additional policy actions are included to ensure that the solutions are actionable.

1. Improve leadership and management in order to ensure an appropriate focus on teaching and learning

NATIONAL POLICY SOLUTIONS	SCHOOL SOLUTIONS	ADDITIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
Training of all supervisors in academic issues	Supervisors to support teachers in teaching and learning matters	Need systematic way to train all supervisors Clear job descriptions for supervisors based on type of school
Senior management training in teaching and learning matters Only people with teaching backgrounds to be appointed as heads of schools Appraisal system for management Opportunities for management to observe and share good practice	School management to take an active role in teaching and learning matters in their school School appraisal system to be implemented	Assess the quality/relevance of the management courses available Make school management more accountable – appraisal system for management Appointment policy of school heads needs revising Allow school heads to remain in post for an agreed minimum amount of time
Train heads to write school development plans Schools to write whole school development plans involving teachers in the process	School management to include teachers in teaching and learning decision-making – greater teacher participation Whole school improvement plan	Monitor school plans – ESQIS

2. Ensure that all teachers are trained appropriately and have opportunities for ongoing professional development

NATIONAL POLICY SOLUTIONS	SCHOOL SOLUTIONS	ADDITIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
Training for school management on teaching and learning	School leaders to initiate workshops for staff based on needs identified by observations/school supervision/requests from teachers	
PDU to train supervisors in academic support	Supervisors and senior staff to make regular classroom observations and give constructive feedback	Increase capacity of PDU
Short/long-term course availability to be sent to all schools	Disseminate information to all teachers	Create a transparent database of teachers and training opportunities (in Dhivehi)
ESQIS to inform in-service programmes run by EDC/PDU		Procedures to be established for meeting the training needs of schools
Provide training for all untrained temporary teachers	A supervisor to be assigned to each newly qualified or untrained teacher Create a school orientation programme for newly qualified and untrained teachers to be implemented by supervisors	Increase the number of teachers being trained while balancing the demand to train teachers with the number of lecturers available in order to ensure quality of training in Male' and the regional centres
Create forums for discussion of educational topics at national, regional and school level	Regular staff meetings and peer support in classrooms to discuss educational topics, share learning with colleagues and with teachers from other schools in the atoll	Funding for school professional development programmes to be included in school budgets or schools to put in proposals Make training materials widely available to schools – National development of modules and materials.
National externally funded projects to train teachers, supervisors and management in a number of atolls (World Bank, International Development Bank, British Council, Integrated Human Development Project)		Harmonise the education development projects concerned with teacher training and professional development Greater communication between donor agencies in order to maximise the effectiveness of the projects in order to eliminate conflicting constraints such as a huge dependence on particular departments within the MOE eg, PDU capacity to fulfil the needs of the various projects is limited Ensure human capacity is in place to carry out the proposed projects

3. Ensure that teachers have the necessary materials and training to deliver the curriculum and have greater autonomy over delivery

NATIONAL POLICY SOLUTIONS	SCHOOL SOLUTIONS	ADDITIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Make the curriculum more relevant for island schools</p> <p>Develop support materials for the syllabus</p>	<p>Allow teachers greater control over the curriculum, planning and delivery</p>	<p>Trial materials in island context, gain feedback from island teachers on new materials to inform revisions</p> <p>Develop mechanisms for schools to inform EDC of TLM needs</p>
<p>System to be implemented to ensure all schools receive orientation/training on new materials</p> <p>Nationally announce revised syllabuses</p>	<p>Schools to ensure all staff are trained in the use of curriculum materials (include in school orientation programmes)</p>	<p>Mechanisms in place to ensure coverage of training and materials</p> <p>EDC and Faculty of Education to work more closely together to support one another's initiatives in pre- and in-service training</p>
<p>Ensure that all schools have the basic resources to deliver the curriculum</p>		<p>Create a basic resources list based on curriculum requirements</p> <p>Increase support to island schools</p>

4. Strengthen community relationships

NATIONAL POLICY SOLUTIONS	SCHOOL SOLUTIONS	ADDITIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Community level solution</p> <p>Parents/community to take on more responsibility for after-school activities</p>	<p>Improve communication between school, teachers and parents/community</p> <p>Involve parents more in decision-making</p>	<p>Investigate ways to involve communities in organising and running extracurricular activities</p> <p>Improve effectiveness of parent-teacher associations/school board through clearly defined roles and policy directions</p>
		<p>Investigate the family island council initiative with a view to expanding good practice</p>
	<p>Make parents more aware of teaching and learning matters and ways in which they can be supportive to schools</p>	<p>Ensure that in all training programmes there are modules on involving parents/community</p>
		<p>Improve existing awareness programmes – radio/TV</p>

5. Reduce workload and improve working conditions for teachers

NATIONAL POLICY SOLUTIONS	SCHOOL SOLUTIONS	ADDITIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Establish a policy on the maximum number of hours a teacher should be working in school</p>	<p>Reduce the number of extra activities through deciding on an agreed number of activities that fit within the school development plan</p>	<p>Where there is a shortfall of teachers, MOE should provide suitable teachers</p>
	<p>Parents/community to organise and run extra-curricular classes that do not fit within the school plan</p>	<p>Policy-makers to consider ways to reduce the number of activities run by schools and to allocate responsibility to the community</p>
	<p>Tasks and meetings organised in consultation with the people involved</p>	
	<p>Work should be divided equally among teachers by management</p>	

6. Improve student behaviour through more effective discipline policies, training and improved curriculum relevance

NATIONAL POLICY SOLUTIONS	SCHOOL SOLUTIONS	ADDITIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
<i>(Also covered in training, TLMs and community)</i> Train school heads to write school discipline policies	Create school discipline policies with staff and parents	Implement national discipline policy currently being written
Train teachers in differentiation	Trained supervisors and management to support teachers in improving skills in differentiation	Ensure that all training programmes (heads, supervisors, teachers) contain modules on differentiation
Make the curriculum more relevant and provide training on using materials Include in the curriculum an emphasis on values/morals	Teachers to be able adapt materials to suit the needs of their children	Requires EDC revised curriculum as well as more autonomy for teachers
Awareness programmes for parents on behaviour management/adolescent issues/influence of media etc	Awareness programmes for parents on differentiation and use of materials	As per strengthening community relationships above
	Streaming and grouping of classes	Policy-makers to consider ways of reducing ranges of ability in classes through streaming, grouping, and additional human resources

7. Improve physical environment and conditions to facilitate teaching and learning

NATIONAL POLICY SOLUTIONS	SCHOOL SOLUTIONS	ADDITIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
Improve the teaching and learning conditions by replacing partitions with floor-to-ceiling partitions		Ensure that all schools have basic infrastructure
	Improve discipline procedures and teaching methods	Policy-makers to consider the alternative ways of organising the two sessions to reduce the issues of primary and secondary children sharing classrooms

In conclusion, it is important to say that in carrying out the research for this report, the author found teachers in the Maldives to be extremely committed people with a strong sense of duty and care for their students. They work hard and are professional even when they have not received any formal training. Teachers are very keen to improve their performance and this desire should be respected and supported by all stakeholders. Supporting teachers in their professional duties through good leadership, providing good quality training and ongoing professional development, enabling provision of the necessary resources and allowing them to be involved in school decisions, will lead to empowered and motivated teachers who feel valued as professionals. It is through these motivated teachers that the Maldives government will realise its vision of quality education.

APPENDIX 1: VALUING TEACHERS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. In-country desk-based research: national education plans, budgets, academic papers, NGO sector plans and educational statistics. International context: EFA.
Provides background information of Valuing Teachers global and national context.
2. First stage of participatory research
Focus group interviews with teachers (six teachers per group on average)
Variety of teachers interviewed:
 - temporary
 - permanent
 - assistant
 - primary, middle and secondary
 - small island community schools, atoll schools, AECs and Male' schools.

Male', Haa Dhaal, Ghaaf Dhaal, Noonu, Alifu alifu and Alif Dhaal atolls.
3. 1:1 interviews with teachers to discuss the issues further.
Confidentiality of all participants maintained.
4. 1:1 interviews with supervisors, head teachers and principals to find out their understanding of teachers' issues.
Provides overview of key issues.
5. 1:1 interviews with secondary stakeholders.
Gives a deeper insight into the underlying causes behind the teachers' issues and ways to overcome them.
6. Secondary stakeholder workshop to investigate the causes and effects of the issues affecting teacher motivation and morale.
Shares preliminary findings. Allows key players to begin to contribute to development of policy solutions.
7. Data analysis to examine the causes of the issues – qualitative data rather than quantitative.
Explores the factors affecting teacher motivation in more depth.
8. Policy research desk based and through 1:1 interviews with secondary stakeholders.
Provides further examination of current policy and practice in relation to policy solutions and recommendations.
9. Recommendations drafted and round table meeting to gain feedback.
Adds a further layer to the research, gains feedback on the recommendations and further solutions identified.
10. Report drafted, edited and published.
Launching of the Valuing Teachers campaign to raise the status of teachers.

APPENDIX 2: PROCEDURE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS AND 1:1 INTERVIEWS

1. Meet with head/principal to discuss the research and process. Ensure all teachers have received copies of the concept note and letters. Collect background information on the school and context.
2. Arrange to meet with all the teachers.
3. Meeting with all teachers to explain the research and process and ask for volunteers.
4. Select from list of volunteers approximately six teachers.
5. Carry out 1:1 interviews with head teacher, VSO teacher and supervisors.
6. Carry out focus group interview.

COLLECTING BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SCHOOL:

- Type of school: government, public, private or community
- Management structure
- Number of students
- Number of teachers; trained and untrained
- Number of supervisors
- Island history
- Any specific positive/negative impacts on the school.

1:1 INTERVIEWS:

- How well motivated do you think teachers are in this country?
What are the signs of a well-motivated teacher?
What are the signs of a poorly motivated teacher?
- Why do you think this is so?
What do you think are the factors that affect teacher motivation?
- Do you think it is affecting their performance? How?
What do you think about the link between teacher motivation and performance?
How does teacher motivation affect performance?
- What do you think teachers need in order to perform well?
What motivates teachers to perform well in their job?
- What are the obstacles to improving teacher motivation?
- What could be done to reduce the obstacles to teacher motivation?
What do you think could be done to improve teacher motivation?

Also ask questions to gain responses to issues identified by teachers in other schools

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS:

1. Methodology

- **Objective:** To find out the teachers' own perceptions on their job/motivation/satisfaction, the causes for demotivation and their ideas for solutions.
- **Organisation:** To invite 6–8 teachers of the same gender (head teacher should be aware but not involved) to a free and undisturbed classroom or a space under a tree etc. Round chairs arrangement. Plan 1.5 hours.
- **Materials needed:**
 - plain paper (A4 sheets)
 - flipchart
 - two charts already prepared – one smiley face and one unhappy face with labels –
 - cause/effect
 - marker pens
 - post-it notes
 - blu-tak
 - refreshments.

2. Procedure

- **Introduction:**

Go around the circle, each person introducing themselves.
Re-explain the research project; aims, method and follow-up – a copy of the report will be sent to the participants and some may be invited to a discussion workshop in

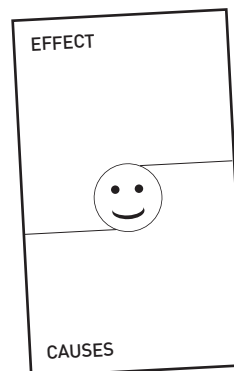
 - Male' to discuss the findings.
 - Background of researcher.
 - Set rules: listening to one another, taking turns, constructive debate.
 - Ensure confidentiality.
 - Record number of teachers, gender make-up and qualifications.
- **Activity 1: in pairs (10–15mins)**

Objective: To encourage teachers to reflect on their perception of their job.
Discuss from hour to hour your working day and to note down on own sheets:

 1. What really makes you happy and gives you job satisfaction
 2. What really demoralises you? What makes you feel bad?
 - Sit with each group for a couple of minutes and ask them to talk through their discussion.
 - Take in their sheets.
- **Activity 2: whole group (10–15 mins)**

Objective: to find out teacher perception on the characteristics and the reasons for being a well-motivated teacher (effects and causes).

 - Draw a smiley face on a large piece of paper and divide it top and bottom into effects and causes.
 - Ask the teachers what makes them feel happy at school/during their working day.
 - Teachers draw/write their answers on post-it notes and stick them onto the causes section of the sheet.
 - Then ask what are the effects of the things that make them happy?
 - Teachers draw/write their answers on post-it notes and stick them onto the effects section of the sheet. Effects = characteristics of a happy and motivated teacher.
 - Record any extra comments on a separate sheet of paper.



- **Activity 3: whole group (10–15 mins)**

Objectives: to find out the characteristics of a poorly motivated teacher; to find out what teachers feel are the causes of an unmotivated teacher.

- Repeat as for Activity 2 but this time draw an unhappy face.
- Ask the teachers what makes them feel unhappy at school/during their working day.
- Teachers draw/write their answers on post-it notes and stick them onto the causes section of the sheet.
- Then ask what are the effects of the things that make them unhappy?
- Teachers draw/write their answers on post-it notes and stick them onto the effects section of the sheet.
- Record any extra comments on a separate sheet of paper.

- **Activity 4: whole group (50+ mins)**

Objectives: to find out the main causes for teacher demotivation from their perspective and their view of solutions.

- Ask the whole group to brainstorm the different education areas that affect their lives as teachers.
- Place them as headings in a table (may need to prompt or provide some of the areas if the teachers find this difficult). For example:

National policy/ management administration	Regional or atoll policy/ management administration	School	Class	Community	Personal/ home

- Each teacher picks the three main things that negatively affect their motivation to teach, writes them onto post-it notes and sticks them onto the chart. As a group, organise the post-it notes into themes, eg training issue or salary issue.
 - Whole group discussion to rank the issues from most demotivating down to least demotivating.
 - In pairs, ask the teachers to come up with solutions for each of the issues; write the answers on post-it notes and place them alongside the themed issues.
 - Discuss the solutions as a group and add any new ones.
- **Conclusion:**
Summarise what has been said in the discussions and ask teachers whether it is a true reflection of the current situation of teachers and find out if anyone has anything else to add.

APPENDIX 3: SCHOOLS VISITED

- **Hoandhedhoo Community School – Gaaf Dhaal Atoll**
The school is a community school on a small island of approximately 1,000 people. The school has only four classrooms, nine teachers and caters for Grades 1–8, plus a newly established pre-school. There are 234 students. They have two sessions per day but no extracurricular activities
- **Thinadhoo AEC – Gaaf Dhaal Atoll**
A large Atoll Education Centre with over 2,000 students, this is one of the few schools outside of Male’ that manages its own school budget. The school caters for primary through to A-level qualifications. There are two sessions per day with a number of extracurricular activities
- **Maalhos Community School – Alifu Alifu Atoll**
This is a small community school with around 100 students. It caters for Grades LKG to 7.
- **Iskandar School – Male’**
A large government primary school and reputedly the best in Male’/Maldives, with over 2,000 students enrolled from Grades 1 to 7. The school hosts many extracurricular activities.
- **Kumundhoo Community School – Haa Dhaalu Atoll**
This small community school with nearly 300 students caters for Grades 1 – 7. They have two sessions per day.
- **Noonu Meynaa School – Noonu Atoll**
This government primary and secondary school runs two sessions, catering for Grades 1–10 with 674 students on roll.
- **Noonu AEC – Noonu Atoll**
This government primary and secondary school runs two sessions, catering for Grades 1–10 with 670 students on roll.
- **Thaajuddeen School – Male’**
This large government primary school caters for Grades 1–7 with around 1,500 students on roll. The school runs two sessions
- **Fodhoo Community School – Noonu Atoll**
Fodhoo is a small island community not far from Velhidhoo or Holhodhoo. The island population is 402 and there are 53 students. Multi-grade teaching is used because of the small class size: Grade 1, 2 and 3, 4 and 5, 6, 7.
- **Kulhudhuffushi AEC – Haa Dhaalu Atoll**
This large government primary school has almost 2,000 students on roll. It caters for Grades 1–7.
- **Omadhoo Community School – Alifu Dhaalu Atoll**
This small community school has 250 students on roll. It caters for nursery to Grade 7.
- **Alifu Dhaalu AEC – Alifu Dhaalu**
This government school has nearly 800 students on roll. It caters for Grades 1–7.

APPENDIX 4: MEETINGS WITH SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS – 1:1 INTERVIEWS

- Mohamed Fahumee Hassan – Section Head of Policy, Planning and Research, MOE and Principal of Dharamavantha School, Male’, Hulhule-Male’ school
 - Ismail Faiz – Policy, Planning and Research Section (‘E’ Section), MOE
 - Shehehnaz Abdullah – Project management and Coordination section, MOE
 - Mr Ahmed Aboobakur – ‘E’ Section, Human Resource Management Section, MOE
 - Adam Shareef Umar – Senior Teacher Educator, Professional Development Unit, EDC
 - Ms Zahiya Zareer – Director General, EDC
 - Aishath Mohamed Didi – Programme Officer, UNICEF
 - Aishath Akhmeema – Senior Educational Supervisor, ESQIS
 - Dr Ahmed Shareef – Dean, Faculty of Education
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- Shifa Mohamed – Principal, Iskandhar School, Male’
 - Fathimath Azza – School Supervision, ESQIS
 - The Honourable Dr Mahamood Shougee, PhD – Minister of State for Education, MOE
 - Fathimath Nahid Shakir – Senior Curriculum Developer, EDC
 - Abdullah Solih – Assistant Director General, School Administration Section, MOE
 - Ahmed Anwar – Former Administrator in MOE, PhD in Teacher Retention

APPENDIX 5: SECONDARY STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

Agenda:

1. 09:00 Welcome
2. Aims of the workshop: to share initial findings and seek feedback from stakeholders as a further stage of information gathering
3. PowerPoint presentation – The Valuing Teachers campaign
4. Activity 1: in pairs identify factors that affect teachers’ motivation
5. Show pie chart – results of the research (primary respondents)
6. Activity 2: causal maps. In three groups (?); each group takes one of the top-three factors and draws a causal map.
7. Summarise the points made by the participants
 - a. The next step
 - b. Thank you
8. Refreshments

Workshop report:

Attending participants:

1. Mr Abdullah Solih – Assistant Director General, School Administration Section, MOE
2. Ms Aishath Ibrahim Maniku – Lecturer, Faculty of Education
3. Fathimath Azza – School Supervision, ESQIS, MOE
4. Mr Hussain Haleem – Assistant Vice Rector, Maldives College of Higher Education
5. Mr Mohamed Didi – Assistant Lecturer, Faculty of Education
6. Fathimath Nahid Shakir – Senior Curriculum Developer, EDC
7. Ian Butterworth – VSO Education Programme Manager
8. Douglas Taylor – VSO Programme Office Volunteer

APPENDIX 6: ROUND TABLE AGENDA

Valuing Teachers Policy Round Table Meeting

Date: Wednesday 14 July 2004

Time: 16:00–20:00 followed by dinner

Venue: SHE building Hall B

TIME	SESSION	DURATION	FACILITATOR
16:00	Welcome and introductions	15 mins	
16:15–16:35	Aims/objectives of the meeting Initial findings	20 mins	Louise
16:35–17:15	Discussion groups: Give each group a section of the recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do they see as the constraints to the recommendations? • What are the strengths in the system to make the recommendations possible? • What changes need to be made to strengthen the system? • Who plays a role in taking the issues forward? • What actions need to be taken to ensure the recommendations take place? • Which recommendations would you prioritise and why? 	90 mins	Chair Louise Group facilitators
17:15–18:05	REFRESHMENTS	20 mins	
18:05– 18:30	Continue discussion groups	60 mins	Chair
18:30–19:45	Feedback from discussion groups Question time	15 mins	
19:45–19:50	Conclusion – The way forward Endorsement of the recommendations Complete the report Launch the Valuing Teachers campaign VSO and Ministry programmes informed	05 mins	Louise
20:00	MEAL		

APPENDIX 7: ROUND TABLE DELEGATES

NAME	EMPLOYER/DEPARTMENT
• Dr Mahamood Shougee	Minister of State for Education
• Aishath Akhmeema	Senior Supervisor, ESQIS, MOE
• Fazna Ahmed	School Principal
• Mustafa Lutfi	Overseer, MOE
• Mohamed Shakir	Supervisor
• Azma Ali	Supervisor
• Fathimath Azza	School Supervision, ESQIS, MOE
• Fathmath Anji Naeem	ESQIS, MOE
• Ian Butterworth	VSO Education Programme Manager
• Aishath Ikram	Assistant Director, Ministry of Planning and National Development
• Nasheeda Rasheed	Supervisor
• John Barrs	VSO Primary Teacher Adviser
• Adam Shareef Umar	Senior Teacher Educator, PDU, MOE
• Fathmath Seeniya	Teacher
• Hussain Fayaz	Supervisor
• Yumna Saleem	Supervisor
• Ahmed Naaem	Supervisor
• Ahmed Fahmy Didi	ESQIS, MOE
• Naseema Yoosuf	Assistant Director, CCE
• Dr Abdul Muhusin Mohamed	Assistant Executive Director, Department for Higher Education and Training
• Shifa Mohamed	School Principal
• Zahiya Zareer	Director General, EDC, MOE
• Shiva Aryal	VSO Programme Director

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