

# CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT FOR BETTER INDONESIAN EDUCATION: A RECONSTRUCTED PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION REVISITED

A. Dr. Udin Saripudin Winataputra, M.A.<sup>1</sup>, B. Riza AlRakhman, M.Pd<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Open University, Indonesia

## Abstract

It is generally accepted that curriculum can be considered as a progressively modifiable ideas, plan, and reality. For Indonesian education to catch up with current scientific and technological progresses as well as changing Indonesian society's needs, the central government's efforts to continually improve the school curricula have been undergone recently. It is hoped the new curricula would be able to fulfill the Middle Range National Development Plan mission which call for revisiting all the better thoughts and efforts to improve the existing 2006 school-based curricula or the *KTSP* (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*) curricula.

This article analyzes foundational ideas and principles which could explain the why, what, how the improvement of the existing curricula are urgently needed. Conceptual analysis will be applied to look into all national foundational imperatives which call for improving school curricula as well as asking all national education stakeholders to enhance both national concern and collaboration for the betterment of future Indonesian generation through building and implementing quality education, primarily that for schools.

### Key Concepts:

Curriculum; modifiable ideas, plan and reality; national imperatives; foundational ideas; school- based curricula; national concerns and collaboration; quality education.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The national commitment to build nation and character has been known to be one of the Indonesian national goals. Explicitly, the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution has emphasized the development of intelligent Indonesian wellbeing, which then it has been fully adopted as the ultimate goal of the national system of Indonesian education. It is for achieving such fundamental goal that along the history of Indonesian education the government has developed and implemented some school curricula sequentially as those depicted in the following Figure.

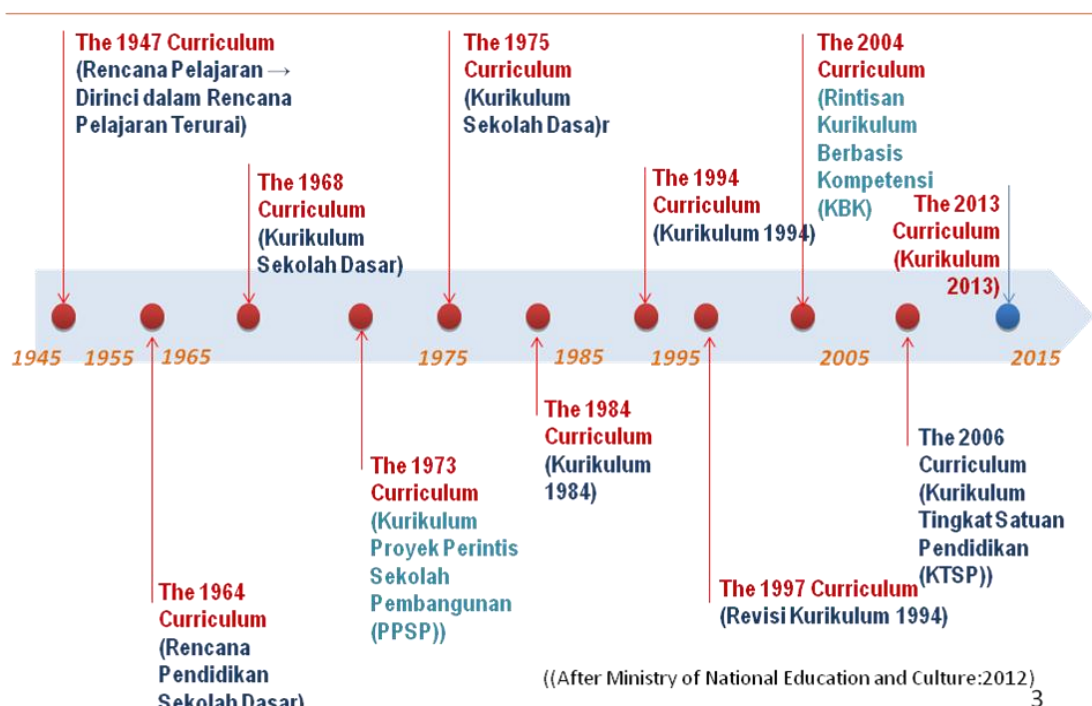


Figure 1. Historical line of Curriculum Implementation in Indonesia since 1945-2012

This article analyzes foundational ideas and principles which could explain why, what, how we should improve the existing curricula. Conceptual analysis will be applied to look into all national foundational imperatives which call for improving school curricula as well as asking all national education stakeholders to enhance both national concern and collaboration for the betterment of future Indonesian generation through building and implementing quality education, primarily that for schools.

The following questions are formulated to focus analysis and discussion.

1. What challenges in both national and world communities need to be considered in improving the school curricula for Indonesian educational system?
2. What strategies of curriculum improvement which are likely to answer challenges for the betterment of Indonesian education.
3. How could we understand the profile of the 2013 Curriculum improvement?

## 2. CHALLENGES FOR THE BETTERMENT OF INDONESIAN EDUCATION

The amount of 10 (ten) school curricula have been implemented within nearly seven decades of the Indonesian educational system. All ten curricula were developed at the national level and implemented nationally at school level throughout Indonesia. Except for the 1973 Curriculum which was developed through research and development strategy, the other 9 curricula were developed through management model (Wheeler:1972) i.e. the curricula were developed by applying top-down strategy in the Ministry of Education at the national level. The 1994 Curriculum and the 1997 Curriculum (Revised Version of the 1994 Curriculum) were developed and implemented in accordance with the 1989 National System of Education Act, which emphasizes the national-based curriculum. The 2004 Curriculum and the 2006 Curriculum were the curricula developed according to the National Education Act No. 20/2003. Both curricula were developed by way of applying competency-based curriculum development.

The 2006 Curriculum, then has commonly been called the school-based curriculum (KTSP=*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*). The idea of KTSP was mandated by the National Education Act No.20/2003 and to some degree were also inspired by local autonomy as it is applied in accordance with the Local Government Act No. 22/1997 which was revised through The Local Government Act No. 32/2004. Both Acts promote local autonomy at the region/municipality. It was then followed by decentralization of education according to the Education Act No. 20/2003. The National government hold the imperative that the national concern of education were basically endorsed through national standards of education. Within that context, the national government also is mandated by The Education Act (Article 38) with the authority to develop the Basic Framework and Structure of curricula. Whereas the operational curriculum has become the authority of each of school unit, and legally named as school-based curriculum (KTSP).

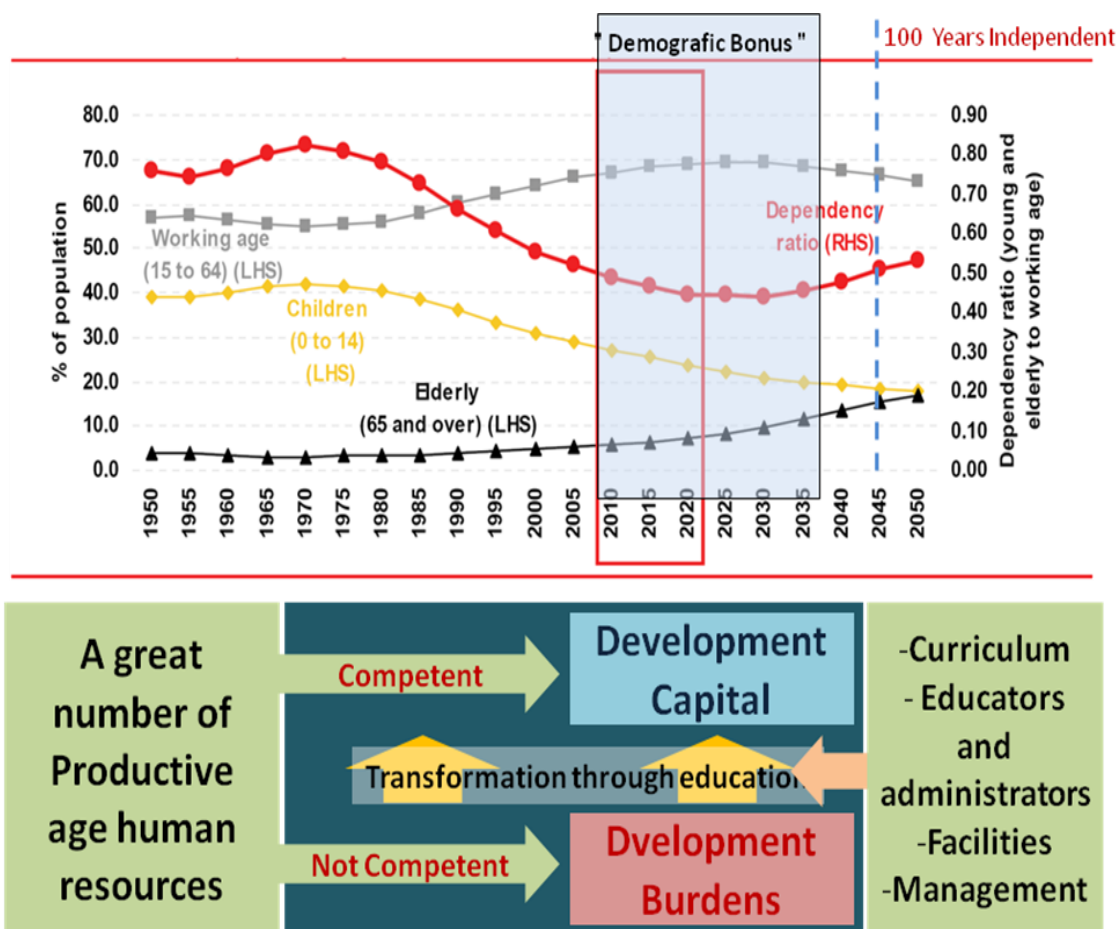
Having been implemented around six years, the 2006 Curricula are considered less relevant to the future challenges of Indonesian education. The subject-matter curricula which have implemented around sixty years, beginning with the 1945 Curriculum up to the 1997 Curriculum, need to be changed to the competency-based curriculum. Such curriculum design used to be piloted through the 2004 Curriculum and the 2006 Curriculum. However, both curricula even though they were called competency-based curriculum, in fact they essentially applied the subject-matter driven competencies. So, both curricula imply in themselves a paradoxical design.

Philosophically, all curricula implemented so far, predominantly used perennialism and essentialism mindsets which fundamentally treat the curriculum as a subordinate of well tested values and academic traditions.(Brameld, 1965, Oliva,1988). Academically continuous changing of curricula is nothing strange, it is natural. The writer shares the ideas that curriculum can be considered as progressively modifiable ideas, plan, and reality (Tyler,1949; Taba, 1962; Stenhouse,1975; Cohen and Deer, 1977; and Oliva,1986). Sociologically, curriculum changes should normally be congruent with changing needs and development in society. Here, the writer share with constructionism mindset, advocating curriculum to suit to community needs and development (Brameld, 1965; Oliva, 1988). It is also inspired by the ideas dealing with commitment to deal with 21st-Century Schools (Schrum and Levin:2009). On the other hand, competency-based curriculum which is basically advocated by progressivism, requires the curriculum nothing to be subordinate of well tested values and/or academic domains, but in reversed subject matters are subordinate of curriculum. In other words, the competencies needed should decide the curriculum, not in reversed. The 21st century education, requires the curriculum which are driven by the 21st Century's needed competencies.

Looking into the constitutional imperatives, as mandated in Article 2, 3, and 4 in The National System of Education No 20/2003, it is clearly understood that philosophically, the Indonesian educational system mix together eclectically all for mindsets, i.e.perennialism, essentialism, progressivism, and reconstructionism, which Brameld (1965) advocates as reconstructed philosophy of education. The National System of Education is based on and oriented to the development the great oughts/values, academic values, individual potentials, and community development needs. It is time to revisit and strengthen such philosophical foundations.

For Indonesian education to catch up with current scientific and technological progresses as well as changing Indonesian society's needs, the central government's efforts to continually improve the school curricula have been undergone recently. It is hoped the new curricula would be able to fulfill the Middle Range National Development Plan mission which call for revisiting all the better thoughts and efforts to improve the existing 2006 school-based curricula or the *KTSP* curricula. In addition, it is also argued that in achieving the era of 100 year Indonesian Independence in 2045, there will be unprecedented great number of productive age population, commonly called a demographic bonus. It is the responsibility of educational system to educate the great number of productive age population to become competent and responsible citizens. Any failure to do so, the demographic bonus will inescapably become the socio-cultural disaster. Of course, it must be no one among Indonesian who expect such a catastrophic dream. A shared national commitment with sustainable government and public efforts to prepare great Indonesia, must be strengthened.

The following is the illustration of demographic challenge for Indonesian education system to cope with. (After Ministry of National Education and Culture:2012)



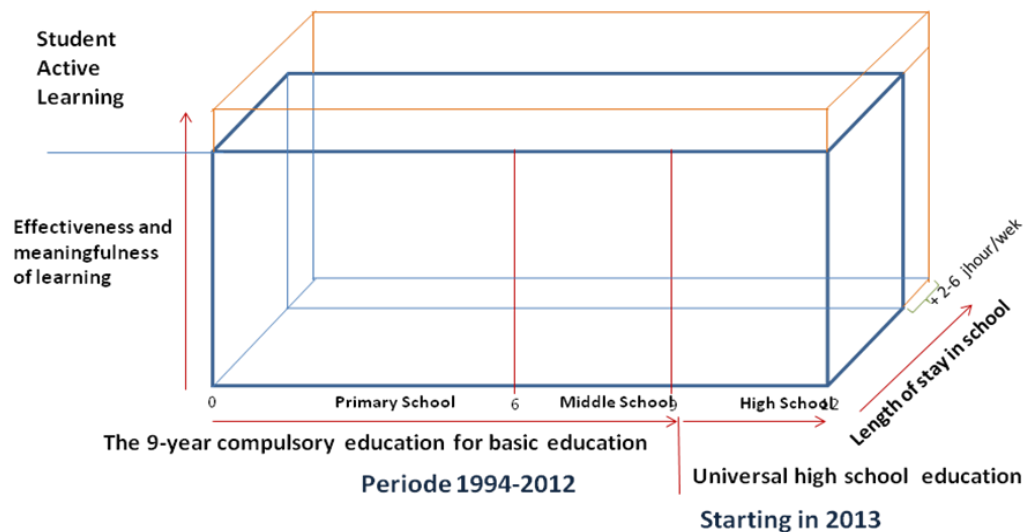
**Figure 2: Demographic Bonus** (After Ministry of National Education and Culture:2012)

### 3. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING INDONESIAN EDUCATION.

Having considered all challenges faced by the national Educational System, both internally and externally, the Government, in this case Ministry of Education and Culture has set up three main strategies, as follows.

1. Extending the 9 year compulsory education (Primary and middle school education) introduced beginning 1994, with universal high school education to which will be introduced step wisely beginning 2013. So the length of schooling later should gradually become 12 years.
2. Extending the length of stay in school around 2-6 hours per week in order to facilitate students to get various learning experiences leading to the improvement of the effectiveness of teaching.
3. Increasing the effectiveness and meaningfulness of learning by way of improving teaching and learning processes through the application of various modes of active learning.

The following figure describes a conceptual framework for the betterment of Indonesian education.



(After Ministry of National Education and Culture:2012)

Figure 3: Basic Strategy for the betterment of Indonesian Education

Why do we need to increase the effectiveness and meaningfulness of learning?

One of definition of learning proposed by Kolb (1986) is interesting to be discussed. It is understood that education is a process of building knowledge through transformation of experience. It means that the improvement in students' learning experiences will contribute to quality students' competencies. So systematic efforts need to be done in order that learning experiences the students actively involved in will get more effective and meaningful. Such condition need to be sustained in order that students' understanding as well as retention should increase progressively. At school level efforts need to be done to make sure that learning environment as well as school management are congruently contributive to student learning.

The enhancement of the 9-year compulsory education has continually been done since 1994. Meanwhile, the introduction of 12-year universal education will be commenced this year 2013. Recent curriculum development has been designed to inzease the effectiveness and meaningfulness of learning.

The whole design for increasing the effctiveness and meaningfulness of learning is depicted in the following figure.



(After Ministry of National Education and Culture:2012)

Figure 4: Basic Design for Increasing the Effectiveness and Meaningfulness of Learning

Holistically, the process of curriculum development applied in developing the Curriculum 2013 is described in the following Framework.

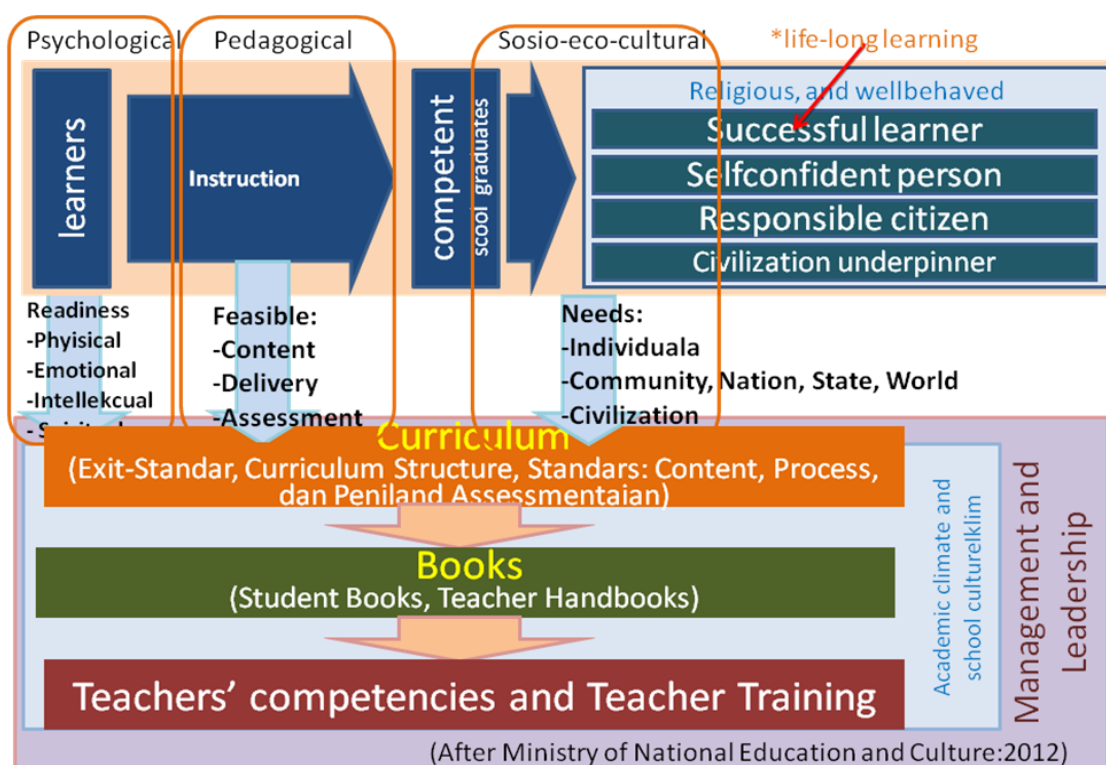


Figure 4: General Framework of Curriculum Development

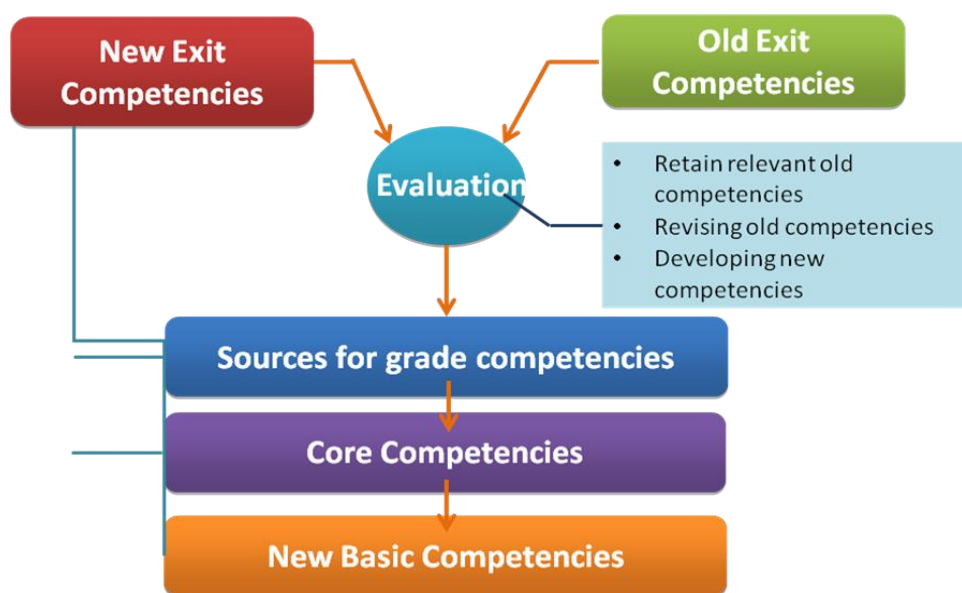
All efforts made through curriculum development have been designed to produce educated people who possess high valued characteristics, i.e. religious and wellbehaved persons, successful learners, selfconfident persons, responsible citizens, and civilization underpinner. It is within such context that comprehensive considerations in psychological, pedagogical, and socio-eco-cultural aspects have been reemphasized. Here the ideas and spirits of reconstructed philosophy of education are readdressed. The great oughts derived from religious creeds as well as values of the national ideals of Pancasila, academic values derived from science and technology, diversified students needs, and Indonesian socio-eco-cultural potentials are coherently considered in developing the 2013 Curriculum.

Further the national curriculum documents were comprehensively developed to include: exit standard of education; curriculum framework and structures; and standards of content, process, and assessment. To facilitate instructional process at school level teachers' handbooks as well as students' book are designed to be developed and managed at national level. So it does for preparing national trainer of master teachers who will work with teachers in each of school cluster for school-based in-house training. Other supporting schemes designed to facilitate curriculum implementation at school level are improving school leadership and management through the enhancement of school-based management introduced so far.

#### 4. THE PROFILE OF CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT FOR INDONESIA'S NEW ERA

The development of the 2013 Curriculum is basically the improvement of the 2006 Curriculum to suit to new challenges for future Indonesian education approaching a 100 year Indonesian independence in 2045. Therefore the process of curriculum development follows the assessment of the existing 2006 Curriculum. The whole process is depicted in the following Figure.





(After Ministry of National Education and Culture:2012)

Figure 5. Conceptual Framework for Developing Exit Competencies

The Exit Competency Standard (Standar Kompetensi Lulusan = SKL) is a minimum requirement for students to fulfill at each level of schooling exit criteria. Hierarchically, it relates to all of the essences of the national educational goals pronounced exhaustively in the National Educational Act No. 2/2003. The Exit Competency functions as a criteria for scaling down the essence of education and the formulation of each School Level and Grade Level Core Competencies or CC (Kompetensi Inti or KI), and Basic Competencies or BC (Kompetensi Dasar or KD).

Derived from the Exit Competency Standard or ECS (Standar Kompetensi Lulusan-SKL) the CC consists of four clusters of psycho-social aspects that interact interdependently and coherently to produce integrated desirable personal qualities, i.e.: (After Ministry of National Education and Culture:2012):

*Cluster One:* spiritual-based affective competencies to deal with ability of individual to accept, internalize, and apply all goodness derived from religious creed and norms.

*Cluster Two:* socio-cultural-related affective competencies to deal with the ability of individual to accept, internalize, and apply all goodness derived from the great truths Pancasila (The Five Principles) in related environment.

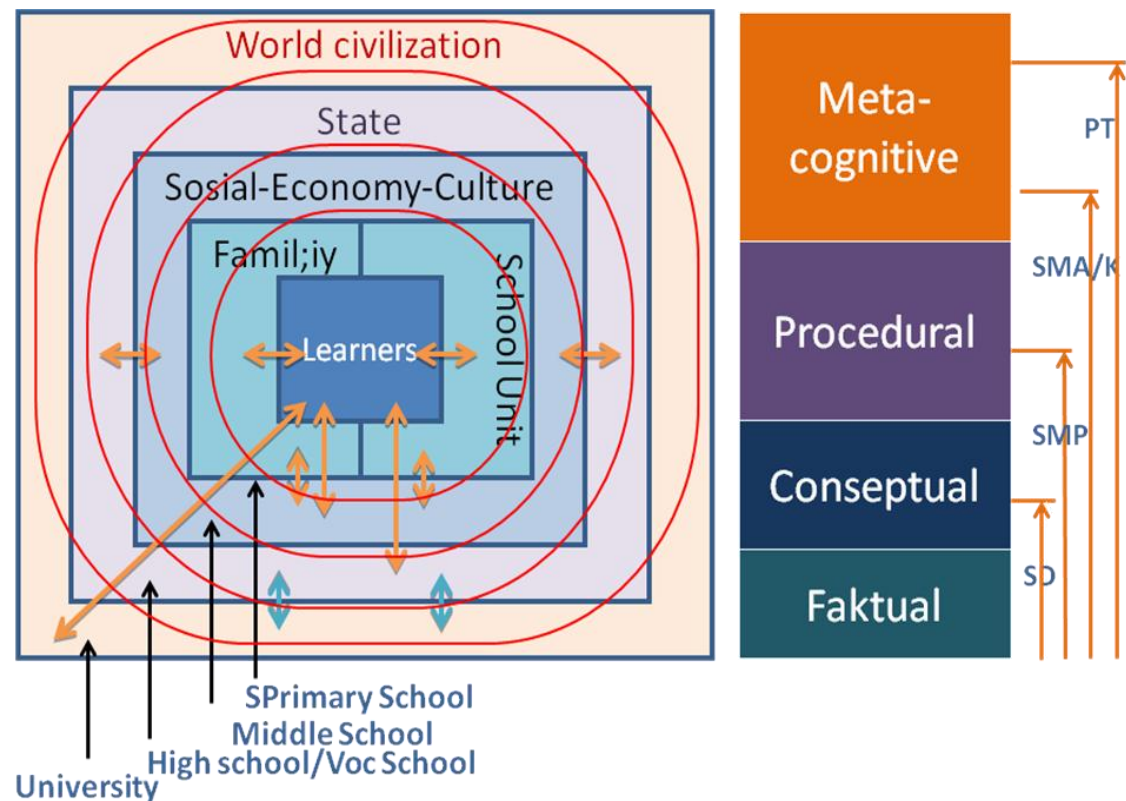
*Cluster Three:* knowledge-based competencies to deal with abilities of individual to recognize, comprehend, apply, analyze, evaluate: natural, social, cultural, political, technological dimensions of life at local, national, and international spheres.

*Cluster Four:* skills-based competencies to do with intellectual, social, and kinesthetic abilities i.e.: observe, question, associate, apply, present, reason, create; read, write, model, map out, modify, use, create: cooperate, and collaborate.

It looks that such competencies clustering has synthesized all taxonomy ideas of educational objectives, such as the earliest Bloom Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain (1956) and Revised Anderson Taxonomy of Cognitive Domain (2004), Katzwohl Taxonomy of Affective domain (1962); Simpson Psychomotor Domain (1967) and the newest 21st Century Skills.

The introduction of CC is intended to refocus the whole dimension of all learning areas within the curriculum system to be consistent and coherent with the attainment of the Indonesian Educational goals. It was not the case in the 2006 Curriculum which instead of having CC as integrator of all curriculum and instructional processes, it held Competency Standard or CS (Standar Kompetensi=SK) of each of all learning areas as each subject catalyst for attaining the Exit Standard Competencies. It is argued that in order for curriculum to attain the 21st Century Schools missions, or promoting Indonesian education for 2045 challenges, decision on of CC is very strategic.

Conceptually and programatically, the whole curriculum organization and learning paradigm was described in the following Figure.

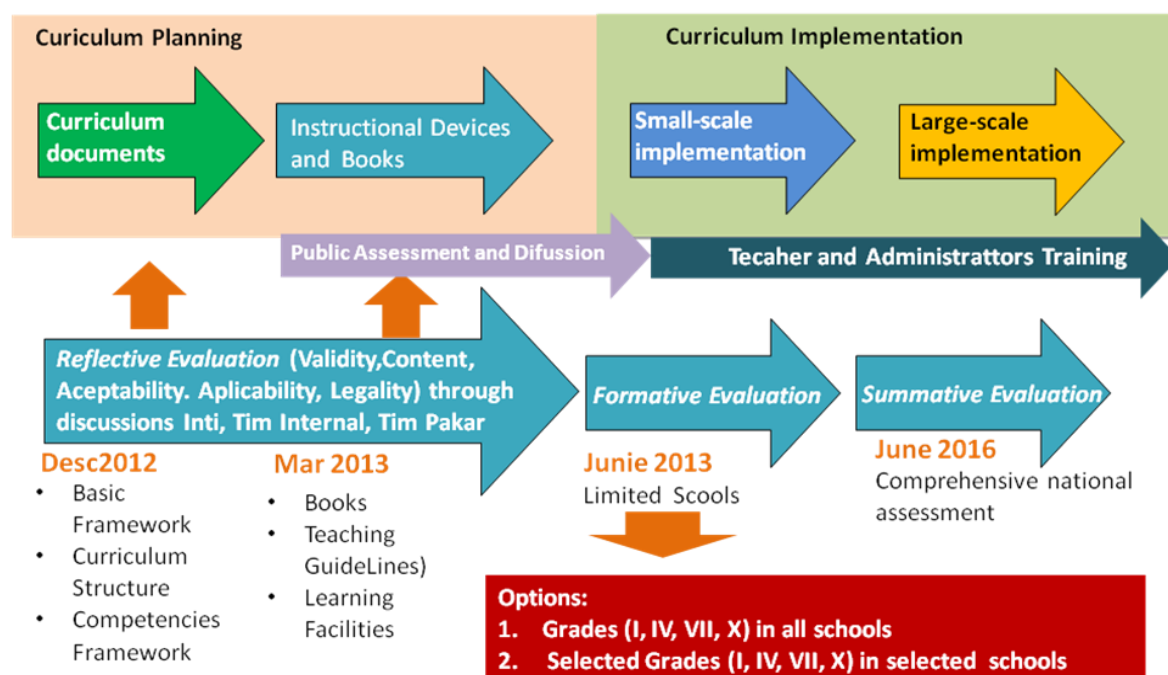


(After Ministry of National Education and Culture: 2012)

In the Indonesian National System of Education (Republic of Indonesia:2003) the terms stream, stage, and form of education are legally settled. There are three streams of education, i.e. formal, nonformal, and informal education. Within the formal stream there are three stages of education, i.e. primary school education to include primary school and middle school; high school education to include general high school and vocational high school, and higher education, to include university, institute, and academy. It is for all formal education that curriculum improvement is promoted, with special emphasis on school education, i.e. primary school, middle school, general high school, and vocational high school.

The above Figure illustrates a national coherent curriculum design focussing on the development of individual learners' competencies. Competencies dealing with factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive dimensions are progressively and spirally developed and articulated since primary school up to university levels within the context of the expanding community orientation beginning with family up to universally world contexts. Here a mixed progressivism and socio reconstructionism mindsets are reemphasized. It is understood that in pursuing the future Indonesian young productive generation to approach the 2045 Indonesian era, such mixed mindsets are highly reconsidered. However, it is not to mean that perennialism and essentialism mindsets are forgotten. Knowledge dimensions to deal with conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive aspects, which are considered the core education content derived from academic traditions and well-tested values are included hierarchically in progressive degrees of sophistication along the stage of educations. Again, here a reconstructed philosophy of education is revisited and reinforced.

To come up with the stages of the Curriculum 2013 implementation, the following Grand Design has been proposed and reconsidered further.



(After Ministry of National Education and Culture:2012)

The process of curriculum improvement includes a developmental processes to include curriculum planning, curriculum implementation, and curriculum evaluation, a common standard of curriculum development we all recognised (Saylor and Alexander;1976). Curriculum planning stage to produce all curriculum documents, learning resources, and teacher training programs are being finalized at the national level. For implemetation a decision has been proposed by the Ministry to begin with 30% of primary school's grade One, and Four; all middle schools for Grade Seven; and all high School's Grade X, throughout Indonesia.

All related legal underpinning aspects to include the revisions of Government Regulation No. 19/2005 and all related Ministry Regulations to deal particularly with National Standards of Education, and curriculum are being done by related government institutions at national levels. It is expected that all needed frameworks and facilitating components will get aproved and publicly affirmed in the middle of the year 2013.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. A curriculum can be considered as aprogressively modifiable ideas, plan, and reality.
2. For Indonesian education to catch up with current scientific and tehnological progresses as well as changing Indonesian society's needs, the central government's efforts to continually improve the school curricula have been undergone recently. I
3. The new curricula are expected to fullfill the Middle Range National Development Plan mision which call for revisiting all the better thoughts and efforts to improve the existing 2006 school-based curricula or the *KTSP* (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*) curricula.
4. Foundational ideas and principles which could explain the why, what, how the improvement of the existing curricula are urgently needed. Conceptual analysis have been applied to look into all national foundational imperatives which call for improving school curricula as well as asking all national education stakeholders to enhance both national concern and collaboration for the bettermen of future Indonesian generation through building and implementing quality education, primarily that for schools.
5. The development of the 2013 Curriculum is basically the improvement of the 2006 Curriculum to suit to new challenges for future Indonesian education approaching a 100 year Indonesian independence in 2045.
6. The process of curriculum improvement includes a developmental processes to include curriculum planning, curriculum implementation, and curriculum evaluation. At curriculum planning stage all curriculum documents have been produced; learning resources, and teacher training programs are being finalized at the national level.
7. For implemetationthe Curriculum a decision has been proposed by the Ministry to begin with 30% of primary school's grade One, and Four; all middle schools for Grade Seven; and all high School's Grade X, throughout Indonesia.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] American Association of School Librarian (.....) *Standars for 21st-Century Learners*.
- [2] Anderson, L.W. and Kathwohl, D.R. Eds. (2001) *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, New York: Longmann
- [3] Brameld, T. (1965) *Education as Power*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc
- [4] Cohen, D.E. and Deer, C.E. (1977) *Curriculum Development Framework*, North Ryde: Macquarie university (Unpublished)
- [5] Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential Learning*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc
- [6] Katzwohl (1962) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook of Affective Domain*, New York: MacMillan
- [7] Ministry of National Education and Culture (2012) *Pengembangan Kurikulum 2013*, Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Unpublished)
- [8] Oliva, P.F. (1988) *Developing the Curriculum*, Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company
- [9] Republik Indonesia (2010) *Peraturan Presiden 17/2010 Tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional*, Jakarta: Sekretariat Kabinet
- [10] \_\_\_\_\_ (2003) *Undang-Undang Nomor. 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*, Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara
- [11] \_\_\_\_\_ (2010) *Rencana Strategis Pendidikan Nasional Tahun 2010-2015*, Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional
- [12] \_\_\_\_\_ (2005) *Peraturan Pemerintah No. 19 Tahun 2005 Tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan*, Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara
- [13] \_\_\_\_\_ (2006) *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional No. 22 Tahun 2006 Tentang Standar Isi*, Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional
- [14] \_\_\_\_\_ (2006) *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional No. 23 Tahun 2006 Tentang Standar Kompetensi Lulusan*, Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional
- [15] \_\_\_\_\_ (2006) *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional No. 24 Tahun 2006 Tentang Pelaksanaan Peraturan Pemerintah No. 22 dan 23 Tentang Standar Isi dan Standar Kompetensi Lulusan*, Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional
- [16] \_\_\_\_\_ (2010) *Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional*, Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara
- [17] Schrum, L., Levin, B.B. (2009) *Leading 21st –Century Schools: Harnessing Technology for Engagement and Achievement*, Thousand Oaks: Corwin A SAGE Company
- [18] Stenhouse, L.W. (1975) *Curriculum Research and Development*: London: Open University of London
- [19] Taba, H.J. (1962) *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice*, London: Harcourt and Brace
- [20] Tyler, R.J. (1949) *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- [21] Wheeler, D.W. (1972) *Curriculum Management*, Bantam Books: London