

## Work Package 1 – Preparation

# Environmental Project Analysis: Sri Lanka

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## Project environment: Sri Lanka

### General Country Information

In 2017, the population was approximately 21,444,000, 48% percent male and 52 percent female. The official national language is Sinhala, which is spoken by around 74 percent of the population. Their second national language is Tamil (18 percent). English is spoken by about 10 percent of the population and is considered to be the link language of government and conferences. The population development is positive; since 2016 it has risen by 1.14 percent. (Statista, 2019, o.S.)

### Structure of primary education

The education system in Sri Lanka is comparable to the education system in Great Britain. Although Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, the British colonial masters introduced the system in the early 19th century. As a result, the educational system in Sri Lanka is divided into the following stages: Primary school, junior secondary, senior secondary school, collegiate and university education. (IOM, 2014, p.8) There are currently 10,194 government schools in Sri Lanka. (School Census Sri Lanka, Ministry of Education, 2017) The curricula taught there are developed and made available by the National Institute of Education and Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka. Compulsory education in Sri Lanka begins at the age of five and lasts until the age of 14. These educational levels are financed by the state and are free of charge. Textbooks are also provided to school children free of charge by the state. The formal school education ends after 13 years of schooling and students then go on to complete the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E. Advanced Level), which is comparable to the British Advanced Level. (Fulbright, o.J., o.S., UNESCO, 2011, o.S.)

In addition to these state schools, there are also semi government schools which have a subsidized fee structure and private schools that are subject to a higher fee. The school

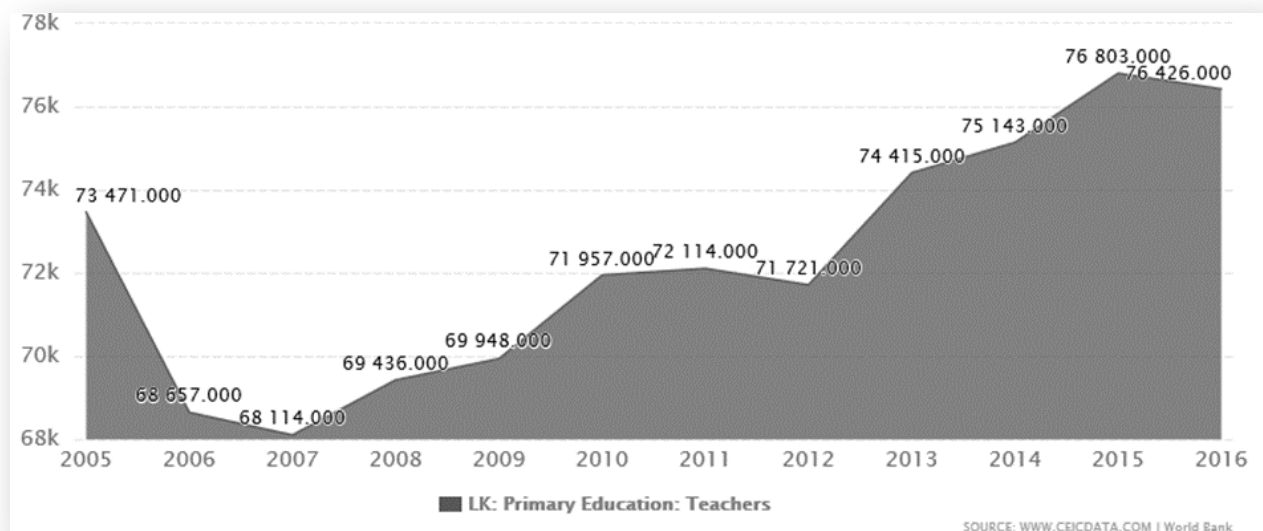


Figure 1: Primary Education Teachers since 2005 (CEIC)

plans of these schools are based on the curricula issued by the Ministry of Education. There are also opportunities to attend various international schools and be tested on various international qualifications such as Cambridge exams. (Fulbright)

According to the report of the Ministry of Education (Wehella, 2018, p.8ff.), 97.9 percent of teachers teaching in public schools have a university degree or a training certificate (see Figure 11). The Ministry divides teachers in Sri Lanka into five different subcategories: Trained Graduate Teachers are persons with a university degree and a diploma or training certificate. Trained Teachers are persons who have qualified in the Teacher Training Colleges. Trainees differ from Untrained Teachers in that the latter are included in the Sri Lanka Teacher Service and the former are not. The group “other” includes those teachers who are paid by other government institutions or private organizations. (Wehella, 2018, p.9f.)

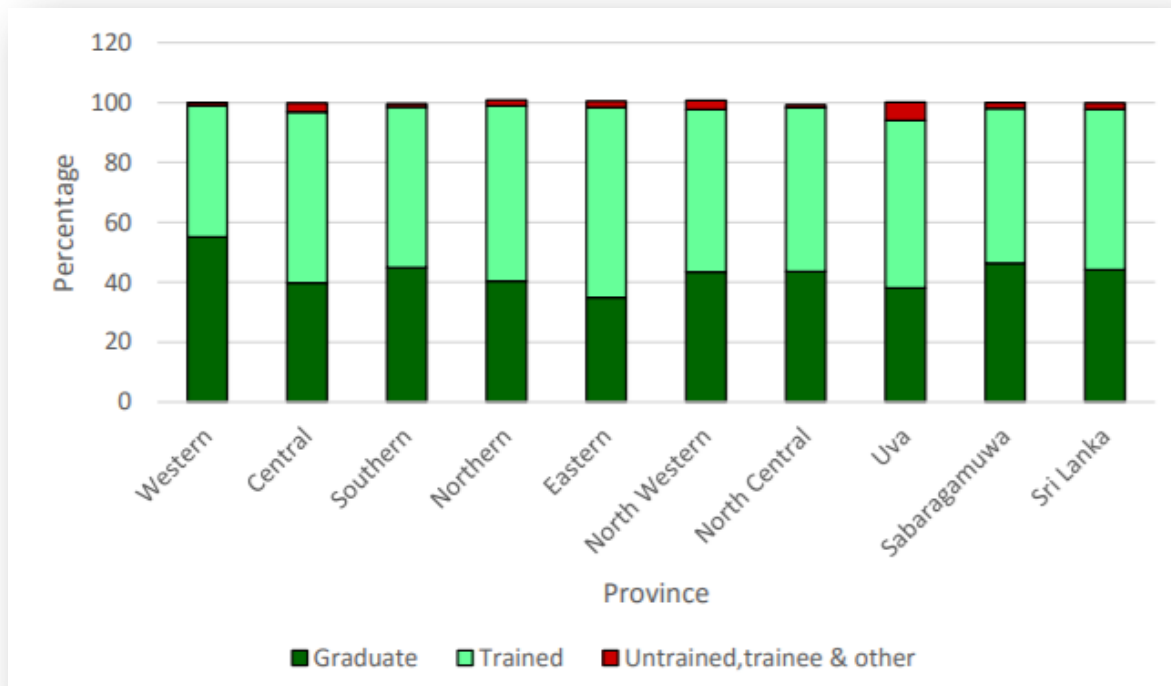


Figure 2: Teacher Education Degree in Sri Lanka

Another important aspect in the analysis of Sri Lanka's educational landscape is that a large part of the inhabited areas in Sri Lanka are considered peripheral. This is partly due to the fact that there are insufficient transport links and that many basic care structures such as educational and health facilities are lacking in these areas. Many trained teachers have little interest in teaching in these regions. To counteract this, the government has decided that teachers in training or those whose training is financed by the state are obliged to teach in these peripheral areas for three years. The persons can name three eligible areas or give preferential votes, the ministry finally distributes the teachers to the respective places. In addition, teachers can volunteer to teach for a certain period in these peripheral regions, which the Ministry rewards with various incentives and promotions. (Dharmadasa et al., 1996; Wehella, 2018).

### Structure of teacher training

There are various training and development programs for pre-service and in-service teachers in Sri Lanka :

#### Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs at Universities

In Sri Lanka, the demand for qualified teachers is much higher than the amount of quality programs available. Therefore, having a professional degree is not a compulsory

requirement for teaching in schools. Pre-service teacher education is offered by the faculties of education and departments of education at a few universities, but of the 17 universities in Sri Lanka there are only two with faculties of education and three with departments of education. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.13)

While the design of the BEd programs offered at each university differs, the curricula across all of the programs are heavily focused on theory with students being encouraged to apply that theory once they enter the classroom. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.16) Additionally, programs prepare teachers to teach at the secondary school level with a lack the specialized courses for primary, junior secondary and senior secondary teachers. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.18)

### **Pre-Service Teacher Education at the National Colleges of Education**

There are 18 National Colleges of Education (NCoE) which provide 2 year pre-service teacher education programs in Sri Lanka. These programs provide pre-service teachers with The National Diploma in Teaching (NDT) and a one year internship which focuses on the teacher requirements at the primary (1-5) and junior secondary (6-11) levels. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.18) The NCoEs incorporate an academic, professional and general component into their curriculum and students must follow two main subjects. These programs integrate both practical and theoretical components into the curriculum and the internship period helps to improve their effectiveness. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.20) While these programs have highlighted strengths, they have also been criticized for being underfunded, lacking modern technology and enlisting unqualified and inexperienced NIE employees to develop the curriculum and examinations. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.22)

### **In- Service Teacher Education at the Universities**

While in-service teacher education is provided by several institutions including universities, the NIE and Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), universities are not able to offer this opportunity to a large number of teachers due to the limited staff available to undertake these programs. As mentioned previously, there is a large number of untrained teachers in the school system due to the demand for teachers, but universities do not have the capacity to provide an in-service teacher education program for all who are interested and to enter, applicants must complete an exam and interview process. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.24)

## **In-Service Teacher Education at the National Institute of Education**

The NIE, one of the main providers of in-service teacher education courses in Sri Lanka, offers bachelor's, master's and postgraduate degree level courses. The BEd course is targeted to both primary and secondary school curricula with the goal of providing schools with effective graduate teachers. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.24) The program is three years long, in comparison to four years at the universities. To enter the BEd program, applicants must pass the G.C.E. (A/L), complete an initial teacher education course of two to three years and have three years of service as a teacher after the initial training. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.24) In 2013, there were 2,700 graduates from the NIE's bachelor's program, 3,000 in the postgraduate program and 200 in the master's program. While the NIE offers a variety of courses and programs, they lack the necessary amount of qualified staff to meet the demand. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.27)

## **In-Service Teacher Education at Teacher Training Colleges**

There are nine Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) in Sri Lanka that provide in-service training to non-graduate teachers and as of 2013, they offer 21 different subject specific in-service training programs. Applicants to the TTCs must first complete three years of service in schools and the number of teachers attending the TTCs greatly varies each year. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.29) While the TTCs have qualified teachers and sufficient facilities to conduct training, the inconsistent enrollment numbers prove that some years are resulting in a waste of resources. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.30)

## **Continuing Education at Teacher Centers**

As of 2016, there are 105 Teacher Centers (TCs) which provide continuing teacher education. The TCs operate in the school premises of the zones they are in and strive to keep teachers up to date, provide a meeting place for educators, serve as a resource center and offer field training opportunities. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.31) The TCs are directed by several different groups including the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education, but the Centers report having a lack of financial and administrative support. (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.32)

## **Additional Programs**

In addition to the programs described above, further training courses for primary school teachers are also offered. These programs are referred to as In-Service Training (INSET) and are run by In-Service Advisers (ISAs) of the Ministries of Education in cooperation with the National Institute of Education (NIE). These courses are conducted on site for a period of one to five days. (Herath, 2000, p.112) Teacher recruitment is a decentralized function

carried out by the provincial administration with the help of the NIE. About 260 primary teachers are involved in the INSET. Of these, about 200 are for the Sinhala population and 60 for Tamils. (Herath, 2000, p.116) The offer is prepared directly by the National Institute of Education, but is basically based on the existing primary school curricula. (Herath, 2000, p.117)

The National Report (2004) of the Ministry of Education describes the development of the education situation with a focus on the recruitment situation and the training of teachers in the 1980s and 1990s. The paper discusses how political changes have led to an improvement in teacher education and the school situation. The curriculum and an uneven distribution of teacher training institutions in Sri Lanka (many in the capital cities, few in rural regions) and the poor state of the available human and material resources for teacher education and training impaired the overall quality of school education. Due to the lack of coordination between different teacher training programs, many institutes functioned according to their own ideas. (UNESCO, 2011) The large-scale recruitment of teachers in the late 1980s led to a rapid increase in the number of teachers, which had a long-term impact on the education sector. The World Bank Report (2011) on Education in Sri Lanka states that Sri Lanka's high investment in teacher education through Colleges of Education and other teacher training programs has led to professionally trained teachers across Sri Lanka. However, a high-quality university education still needs to be implemented. The existing university facilities still need to be improved in this respect. (World Bank, 2011, p.15ff.)

The figure below shows the training opportunities for teacher education and the relationships between the programs and institutions.



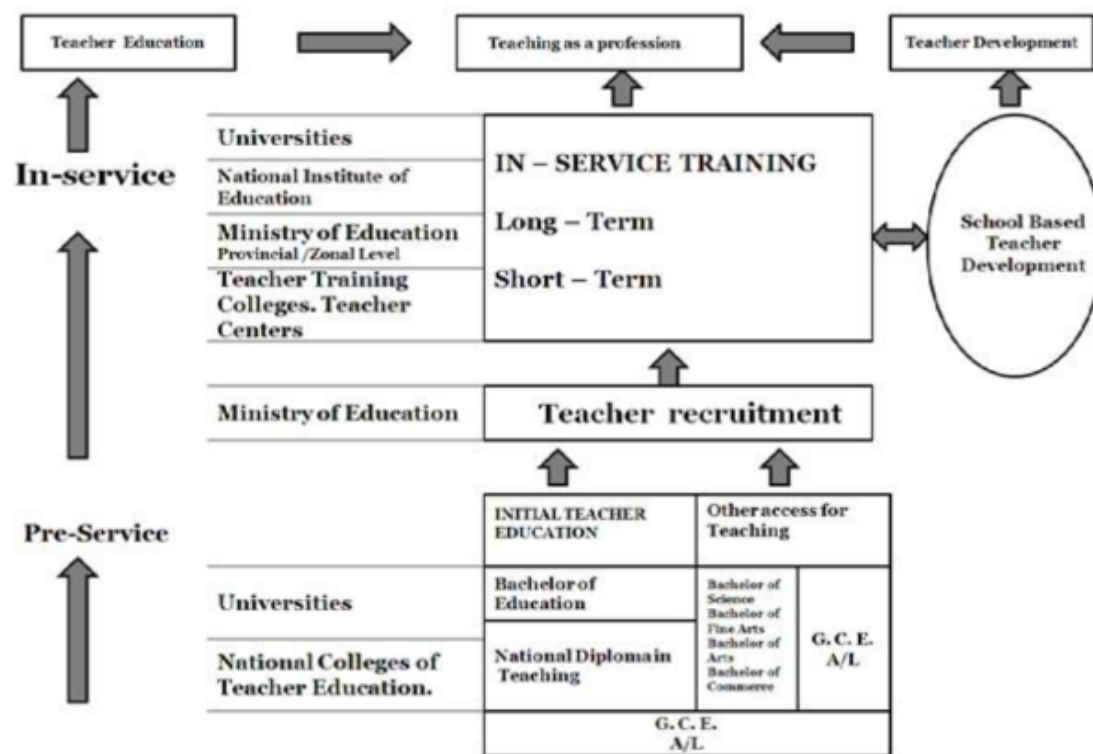


Figure 3: Teacher training system in Sri Lanka (Sethunga et al., 2016, p.12 )

## Stakeholder Analysis

The Sri Lankan Ministry has a department responsible for higher education in the country. However, this department is only directly responsible for two universities and one university institute. Instead, administrative tasks in the higher education sector are delegated to the UGC (University Grants Commission). The UGC serves a total of 15 public universities and 18 higher education institutions. (World Data on Education, 2011) The UGC is a commission whose official tasks are to strategically plan and coordinate higher education, allocate funding to the various higher education institutions, ensure that academic standards are met and regulate admission and admission requirements as well as the administration of higher education students. It is also responsible for quality assurance at both public and private universities. (World Data on Education, 2011) The Ministry of Higher Education, along with the UGC, engages in policy making and strategizing in higher education. Individual universities are also administered by other institutions: The "General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University" falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of Vocational Education and Training and the Ministry of Competence Development and Vocational Training operate the University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC) and the

Ocean University of Sri Lanka respectively. The Aquinas College of Higher Studies is registered with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission of Sri Lanka. (WES, 2017)

- National Institute of Education (NIE)
- Colleges of Education and Teacher Colleges
- Ministry of Education
- Universities

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