

## Center for Educational Research and Development

### National Think Tank for Educational Research and Innovation

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*This work is based on the text of the Think Tank strategic framework developed in 2022-2023 at the CRDP in collaboration with the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) as part of the “Apprendre” program subsidized by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD).*

## 1- Reasons for Creating the Think Tank

Creating the National Think Tank for Educational Research and Innovation within the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) aims at optimizing the CERD's national research role which is deemed as one of its core duties according to the Decree of its establishment (article 4 of Decree No. 2356), especially since its Research Bureau lacks educational researchers.

## 2- What is the Think Tank?

The Think Tank is a network of educational research experts working to generate innovative educational ideas and strategies.

Its main activity is to guide, select and implement national priority educational research. Subsequently, it will suggest practical recommendations to the MEHE based on the results of this research. The latter shall provide support for the CERD in renovating general educational policies and foresee their transformations to promote educational development in Lebanon. It is directly linked to the President of the CERD.

## 3- General Objectives

- Promote the national role of the CERD in education research by rehabilitating the role of the research office.
- Implement research findings in the development of educational policies aimed at improving the quality of the teaching-learning process.
- Meet the needs of national educational policies regarding vital educational issues, as well as innovative policies, by guiding, supporting and implementing research activities.
- Stimulate interaction with educational policymakers, as well as establishing educational networks with relevant institutions in the field of education research and intersecting domains.
- Activate links between different educational researchers at the local and international levels to create a dynamic network of partner researchers.

#### 4- Procedural Objectives

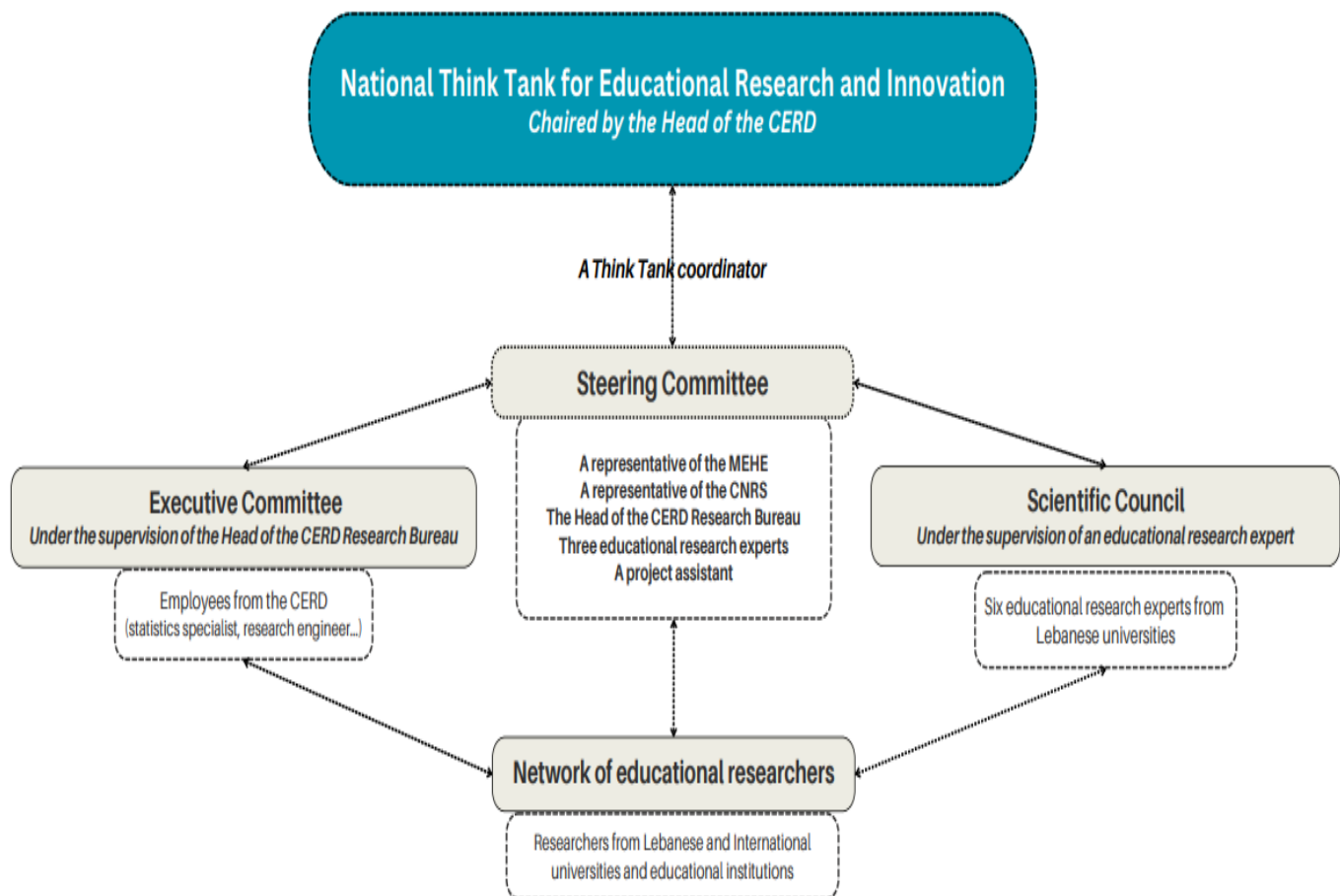
- Determine research priorities for the educational community in Lebanon after reviewing research periodically and preparing a literature review in education.
- Seek funding sources for priority research.
- Encourage researchers from universities and educational institutions to participate in priority research.
- Monitor the implementation of selected research.
- Train the educational staff at the CERD and equip them with research skills.
- Translate the results of the conducted research into practical recommendations to be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

#### 5- Outcomes

- Create a network of renowned local and international researchers.
- Establish a base of education research at the CERD.
- Select priority research for execution.
- Conduct priority research at the national level.
- Formulate practical recommendations for decision-makers based on research results.
- Create an interactive platform for the Think Tank on the CERD website.

## 6- Structure and Organization

### - Functional Organizational Structure



**Functional Organizational Chart of the Think Tank**

- Description of the tasks of the Steering Committee, the Scientific Council and the Executive Committee

### The Steering Committee

The steering committee is chaired by the President of the CERD. It consists of a group of experts in educational research, organized as follows: a Think Tank coordinator, a representative of the MEHE, a representative of the National Council for Scientific Research, the Head of the Research Bureau at the CERD, in addition to three educational research experts and a Think Tank assistant.

The Minister of Education and Higher Education appoints two education research experts as representatives who convey the Ministry's strategic needs, submit the Think Tank's research recommendations to the minister, and work towards their adoption.

The President of the CERD appoints an expert in educational research as the Think Tank coordinator, along with three educational research experts and a project assistant.

In parallel, the Secretary General of the National Council for Scientific Research appoints a research expert to represent them.

The term of the Steering Committee members is limited to two years, renewable once.

### Tasks of the steering committee

- Determine research priorities in education based on the requests of MEHE, CERD, and suggestions from the Think Tank's scientific council.
- Specify the selection criteria for education researchers/experts and the quality standards guiding the selection of research projects to be implemented.
- Making decisions to conduct research based on the research projects' compliance with established quality standards and the availability of the required funds.
- Seek donors to fund selected research.
- Suggest a cooperation charter with the universities and educational institutions that will be partners in conducting research.
- Select local and international educational researchers to participate in the research to be conducted.
- Oversee the implementation of selected research.
- Propose the Think Tank's budget.

The Think Tank coordinator ensures the coordination of this network between the Steering Committee and the Executive Committees and the Scientific Council, and submits a quarterly report on the Think Tank's activities to the President of the CERD in collaboration with the steering committee members.

The Think Tank assistant will be responsible for following tasks:

- Following up on all files related to the work of the Think Tank with the S2R2 program staff at the CERD.
- Managing and saving files.
- Organizing meetings.
- Writing minutes of the Steering Committee meetings.
- Managing logistics related to conferences and workshops in collaboration with CERD employees.
- Disseminating information about the Think Tank's work on a large scale.
- Following up on work on the interactive platform to be built.

### The Scientific Council

The Scientific Council is an independent body composed of researchers with a PhD and researchers who are active in publishing.

At the initial stage, the Council will include experts in educational research representing Lebanese universities that participated in the development of the Think Tank's strategic framework in cooperation with the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie* last year, namely: American University of Beirut, Lebanese University, Saint Joseph University, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Notre Dame University-Louaize, Lebanese American University and University of Balamand.

Subsequently, other Lebanese universities will join the Scientific Council, provided that the total number of its members does not exceed six researchers.

The procedures for appointing the educational research experts are left to the discretion of the universities after the Steering Committee has established a clear list of selection criteria; Appointments are set for a period of two years, renewable once.

The Scientific Council shall be supervised by an educational research expert, chosen by the Scientific Council to ensure the link between the Scientific Council and the Steering Committee.

### Tasks of the Scientific Council

The tasks of the Scientific Council are summarized as follows:

- Suggesting carrying out priority research based on a literature review in coordination with the network of educational researchers.
- Supervising the scientific foundations (including the methodology) of the research projects to be executed.
- Suggesting names of local and international educational researchers who will participate in the research to be conducted.

## Network of Educational Research Experts

The network includes local and international educational research experts, from universities and educational research institutions in Lebanon and abroad.

Local and international universities and educational research institutions, as well as the Scientific Council, shall take part in suggesting names of researchers according to criteria established by the Steering Committee.

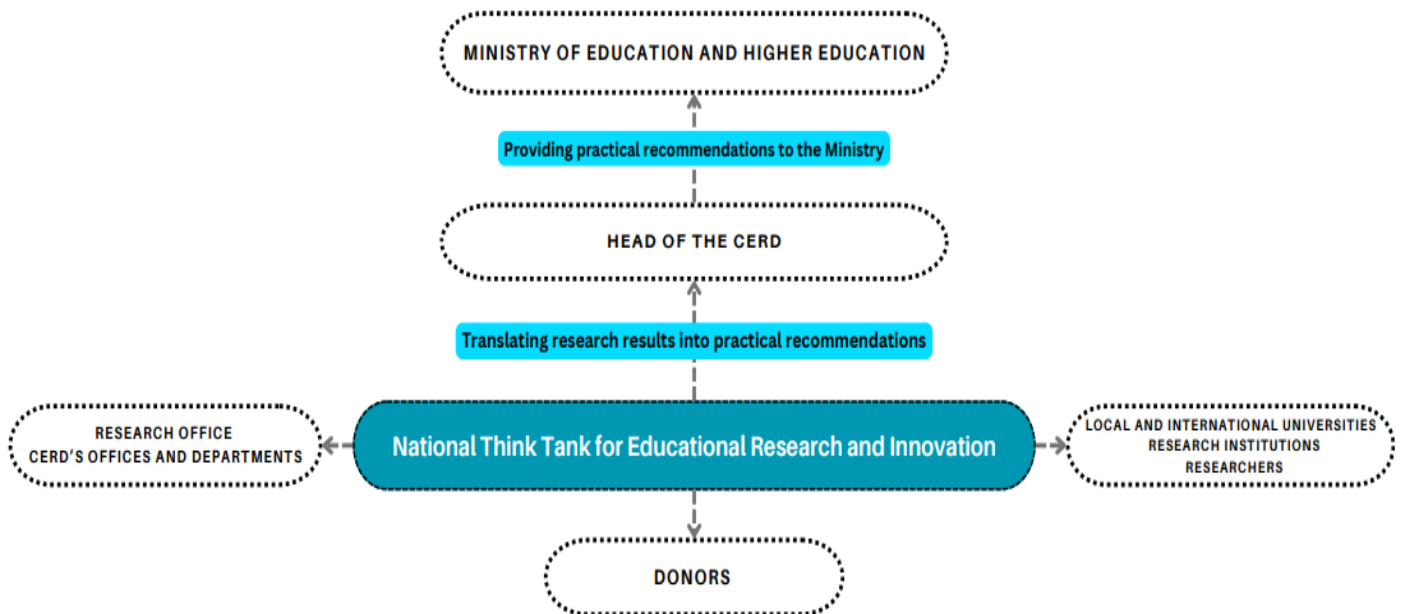
The Think Tank's Steering Committee selects the final list of educational researchers who will execute the selected research projects in coordination with the Scientific Council.

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of CERD employees designated by the President of the CERD as needed, and if necessary, external members, to execute research projects and carry out work related to the Think Tank.

The Head of the Research Bureau at the CERD supervises the activities of the Executive Committee, follow up of the implementation of field research and pursues publishing completed research.

## Organizing Think Tank's Relations with Stakeholders



### ***Think Tank's relations with stakeholders' chart***

- Characteristics of these relations

#### Relations with the President of the CERD

The Think Tank's Steering Committee is accountable to the President of the CERD, and commits to carrying out research recommended by the President based on the needs of the educational community. Moreover, the committee will periodically inform the President of the work progress and submits quarterly reports.

#### Relations with the MEHE

The Steering Committee submits practical recommendations, based on research findings, to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education through the President of CERD.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education conveys its research needs through its representatives within the Think Tank's Steering Committee, so they can be considered in defining priority research.

#### Relations with the CERD Departments and Bureaus

The relations with the CERD Departments and Bureaus are characterized by complementarity and mutual cooperation.

The Think Tank helps in conducting research that meets the needs of the CERD Departments and Bureaus. It also enables them to benefit from the network of researchers and the research database it will create.

#### Relations with local and international universities and research institutions

The Think Tank's Steering Committee, on the basis of exchange and reciprocity, suggests a partnership and cooperation charter with universities and public or private research institutions in Lebanon and/or around the world, to cooperate with local and international researchers, develop joint research projects and exchange expertise.



Relations with donors

The Think Tank's Steering Committee suggests to conclude cooperation agreements with public or private, local and/or international donors, with the aim of accepting contributions, assistance or donations for educational research projects.

## 7- Funding Sources

The World Bank's S2R2 Program currently provides the necessary funding for the Think Tank's work, for a duration of about one year. New funding sources will also be sought to ensure the Think Tank's operational continuity in the future. Donors from Lebanon and abroad will be approached to fund research. Calls for research proposals will be launched at the national level.

## 8- Think Tank's Activities

The Think Tank can offer the following activities:

- Hold conferences, panel discussions and seminars on priority research topics.
- Organize workshops to train the educational staff of CERD and empower them with research skills.
- Issue a periodic newsletter about its activities and publish it via the designated platform on the CERD website.