

Bridge Asia Programme

Final Report of the International Conference on Capacity-Building in Bhutanese Non-Formal Education



7th-10th November 2016 / Thimphu, Bhutan

Final Report
of the International Conference
on Capacity-Building
in Bhutanese Non-Formal Education

**Constitution of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization**

The Governments of the States Parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare:

That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;

That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war;

That the great and terrible war which has now ended was a war made possible by the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men, and by the propagation, in their place, through ignorance and prejudice, of the doctrine of the inequality of men and races;

That the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern;

That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

For these reasons, the States Parties to this Constitution, believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives;

In consequence whereof they do hereby create the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established and which its Charter proclaims.

Sustainable Development Goals

<p>1 NO POVERTY</p> 	<p>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p>	<p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p> 	<p>End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</p>
<p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p> 	<p>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p>	<p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p> 	<p>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</p>
<p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p> 	<p>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p>	<p>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p> 	<p>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</p>
<p>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p> 	<p>Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</p>	<p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> 	<p>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p>
<p>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p> 	<p>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p>	<p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p> 	<p>Reduce inequality within and among countries</p>

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

15 LIFE ON LAND



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

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Background

Objectives

Overview

Outcomes

The SDG 4 / Education 2030 Agenda and Adult Literacy

In 2015, the international community adopted a new development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNESCO, the United Nations agency specialising in education, is taking a leading role in spurring international efforts to implement SDG 4, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all,” and the associated global education agenda, Education 2030.

Despite the efforts of the international community, the world’s adult illiterate population still amounts to around 770 million people, two thirds of whom are women. This statistic shows clearly that we remain a long way from achieving SDG 4. According to UNESCO, the level of investment in adult education is currently less than 1% of most education budgets, and less than 0.5% in South and West Asia. This shows us that we need to be more proactive and make greater efforts to improve adult literacy.

The Bridge Asia Programme, Organised by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU)

KNCU’s Bridge Asia Programme aims to contribute to achieving the SDGs and the Education 2030 agenda, and to empower and build capacity for self-reliance among marginalised and vulnerable groups, particularly women, in low-income countries in Asia. It operates mainly through non-formal adult literacy programmes in the framework of lifelong learning.

KNCU believes that for individuals to exercise their rights and participate in society, local education systems and infrastructure should be adjusted through local initiatives, rather than external intervention. This is the reason why the Bridge Asia Programme is actively engaged with local literacy and life-long learning organisations, and supports their endeavours. In 2016, five literacy projects were carried out under the umbrella of the Bridge Asia Programme, in five different countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Role of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in Bhutan's Non-Formal Education

Enhancing the literacy rate in the Kingdom of Bhutan is one of the country's major goals as it aims to create a knowledge-based society. The Bhutanese government has therefore been putting sustained effort into addressing the educational needs of out-of-school youths and adults, particularly girls and women. Nevertheless, since Bhutan is a country located in rugged, mountainous terrain, rising to over 7,000 meters, in which the population is widely scattered across the steep slopes and narrow valleys, the limited accessibility to education has consistently been a major issue to be tackled. In an attempt to enhance accessibility, the Bhutanese government has established non-formal education (NFE) centres and community learning centres (CLCs) and holds national training workshops for their instructors and managers. The project operated in Bhutan as part of KNCU's Bridge Asia Programme works in collaboration with the Bhutanese government to support these activities.

Background

Objectives

Overview

Outcomes

- **To share with all key stakeholders the importance of CLCs for improving adult literacy rates and lifelong learning**
- **To exchange firsthand information on managing CLCs and NFE centres (NFECs)**
- **To enable NFE instructors and CLC managers to be professionally updated on adult learning principles**

Background

Objectives

Overview

Outcomes

- **Date:** 7-10 November, 2016
- **Venue:** Taj Tashi Hotel, Thimphu, Bhutan
- **Co-organised by:**
 - The Ministry of Education, Bhutan
 - The Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU)
- **Supported by:**
 - UNESCO Bangkok
 - National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE)
- **Participants: 75 participants**
 - NFE Board Members: 9
 - CLC Managers: 15
 - CLC Parent School Principals: 15
 - Dzongkhag Education Officers: 5
 - NFE Instructors: 24
 - International Experts/Speakers: 7

The 4-day conference comprised a plenary session, a workshop and thematic sessions. The first day, 7 November 2016 included the Opening Ceremony, a Keynote Speech, and Thematic Sessions 1 and 2. Thematic Session 1 helped the participants to gain a deeper

understanding of the concept of CLCs, while Thematic Session 2 focused on introducing the history of education in Bhutan.

Thematic Session 3 was held on the second day of the conference, 8 November 2016, and focused on the sharing of case studies by the international speakers. In the afternoon, field trips to two CLCs were organised.

The whole of the third day, 9 November 2016, was taken up by a workshop session. An orientation session was conducted in the morning, followed by a participation session in the afternoon.

A presentation on the outcomes of the conference took place on the final day of the conference, 10 November 2016. In addition, the participants were given an opportunity to share their views on the conference.

Background

Objectives

Overview

Outcomes

- **A clear understanding by various stakeholders on the role of CLCs in improving adult literacy**
- **Increased governmental and stakeholder support for the adult literacy programme**
- **Improved efficiency in handling and management of the NFE centres and CLCs**

**Opening
Ceremony**

Day1: 07 Nov. 2016

Day2: 08 Nov. 2016

Day3: 09 Nov. 2016

Day4: 10 Nov. 2016

Closing
Ceremony

Opening Ceremony

Opening remarks, congratulatory remarks and a vote of thanks were given during the opening ceremony, which approximately 90 participants attended. In order to celebrate the holding of the conference, and wish for its success, a Bhutanese ritual chant and ceremony were performed by two Bhutanese monks before the opening remarks, with the participation of special guests, including the Minister and the Secretary from the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Bhutan (MOE).

Opening Remarks

Speaker: Mr. Hyunsoo Park

Assistant Secretary-General, Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Mr. Park began by expressing his appreciation, on the behalf of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, to all speakers and participants, and to the MOE. He then spoke about UNESCO's leading role in working towards the achievement of Education for All, saying that UNESCO had placed special emphasis on ensuring literacy, lifelong learning and education for girls and women. He noted, however, that despite the combined efforts of UNESCO and its member states, the world's illiterate population is still around 770 million people, two thirds of whom are women.

He stated that it was in this context that KNCU launched the Bridge Asia Programme, a cooperative scheme under which KNCU and the MOE

have been working together since 2015 to promote Bhutanese people's right to literacy. He noted that KNCU and the MOE had decided to hold the conference to address the need for training among NFE instructors and CLC managers.

Mr. Park expressed his hope that the conference would enable CLC managers and NFE instructors to acquire the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles effectively, helping to boost morale at Bhutan's CLCs and NFEs, and improve the efficiency of the adult literacy programmes run at these centres.

Congratulatory Remarks

Speaker: Sherig Lyonpo H.E. Mr. Norbu Wangchuk

Minister of Education of Bhutan

The Minister opened his speech by emphasising the importance of education, quoting His Majesty the King of Bhutan as saying that education is an empowering social equaliser, facilitating self-discovery and the realisation of peoples' full potential, and it is needed for Bhutan's journey towards progress and modernisation.

The Minister stated his agreement with this view, asserting that, thanks to education, the world is a far better place now than in earlier times, with remarkable improvements in peoples' lives through increases in income, a reduction in poverty, longer life expectancy, and new technologies. He noted, however, that there were still issues to address, including ongoing high rates of illiteracy, particularly among women, and the number of out-of-school children, who would face difficulties

**Opening
Ceremony**

Day1: 07 Nov. 2016

Day2: 08 Nov. 2016

Day3: 09 Nov. 2016

Day4: 10 Nov. 2016

Closing
Ceremony

in the future. He emphasised that 1 out of every 7 people in the world still have not received a minimum basic literacy education, showing that there is still a lot of work to be done, but that the conference would contribute to this work.

At the end of his speech the Minister mentioned Bhutan's philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), a central pillar of policy in the country. He stated that Bhutan always seeks to make education an integral part of GNH, on the basis of the belief that people can be happier if all needs, including physical needs, social needs, spiritual needs, and emotional needs, are met together in a holistic and harmonious way. He noted that GNH is seen as more crucial than Gross Domestic Product in Bhutan, and that therefore, education, as one of the main pillars of GNH, should be valued highly and promoted by everybody.

Vote of Thanks

Speaker: Ms. Aum Kesang Choden Dorji

Director, Department of Adult and Higher Education, Ministry of Education of Bhutan

Ms. Dorji began by thanking the organisers for arranging the conference and the participants for taking the time to participate. She then gave a brief overview of the history of Bhutanese NFE, saying that, since the establishment of the first NFECs in the early 1990s, the number of such centres has grown consistently, and has now reached 663, spread all over Bhutan. She noted that among the 7000 learners at these centres, 5000 learners are women, showing that the NFECs

make a valuable contribution to meeting the basic educational needs of women. She went on to say that in the year 2000, the Government of Bhutan also established 12 CLCs, in order to improve access to education further, and noted in particular the success of two CLCs in Thimpu, which have been supported by KNCU. She ended her presentation by expressing her hope that the conference would prove to be a valuable experience for all involved.

Proceedings



Bhutanese ritual chant and ceremony being performed by the Minister and the Secretary from the Ministry of Education.



Opening remarks by Mr. Hyunsoo Park, Assistant Secretary-General at the Korean National Commission for UNESCO



Congratulatory remarks by the Minister of Education



Vote of thanks by Ms. Aum Kesang Choden Dorji , Director of the Department of Adult and Higher Education, Ministry of Education



Attendees listening to speeches



Group photo of attendees

Opening
Ceremony

Day 1: 7 November 2016

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Keynote Speech

The Contribution of Adult Literacy to Achieving SDG 4 – the Education 2030 Agenda

Speaker: Dr. Gwang-Jo Kim

Director of UNESCO Bangkok

Moderator: Mr. Karma Yeshey

Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Bhutan

This session focused on major trends and changes in the delivery of education in Asia and the Pacific region, including what needs to be done to further promote NFE and lifelong learning in the region.

Dr. Gwang-Jo Kim, the Director of UNESCO Bangkok, began his speech with a review of trends and changes impacting education in Asia and the Pacific region. On the positive side, he noted factors such as the relative ease of access to education, and the region's remarkable economic growth compared with that of other parts of the world, which has led to most countries in the region reaching middle income country status. On the other hand, he noted the existence of negative trends, such as the issue of worsening inequality, in particular the decline in the agriculture sector, and the fact that skills learned through education do not match the skills needed in vocational fields.

He then provided an overview of suggested solutions for these issues,

emphasising quality of education as the key factor. He said that to promote quality education in the context of the SDGs, UNESCO has encouraged all countries, both developing and developed, to participate and cooperate together to develop systems at the policy, curriculum and programme levels, to build regional capacity development and networks, and to enable programme implementation at country level. At the end of his speech, he also mentioned that obtaining and managing data, and effective use of ICT, are crucial to the promotion of non-formal education and lifelong learning in this era.

Keynote Speech Q&A:

A Q&A session was then held to give participants from the floor an opportunity to put questions to the speaker. The session was moderated by Mr. Karma Yeshey. Highlights from the Q&A are given below.

Q1_floor:

Why is there currently a downward trend in access to primary education in South America?

A_Dr. Kim:

The outlook for primary enrolment in Latin America actually looks good, due to political will at all levels. The current downturn in the primary enrolment rate may be a result of the downturn in the economy, and also because many of the enrolled students have already graduated and reached certificate level.

Q2_Mr. Karma Yeshey:

Bhutan is still struggling to make huge progress in terms of adult literacy, despite our efforts. How are other countries able to make impressive progress in this area?

A_Dr. Kim:

We need to go for a “parallel approach”, involving both basic literacy and at the same time promoting innovative skills. We must also bring in the private sector through incentives such as tax to help raise the adult literacy rate further.

Q3_floor:

For transformative change in education we need to focus on collaboration rather than competition. Can we not capitalise on the best practices from each other?

A_Dr. Kim:

Education is not just for making people or nations competitive. For example, we need to work collaboratively on climate change. Collaboration and cooperation must be emphasised, and learning to live together must be stressed. ASEAN countries collaborating in settling historical narratives is one example, since history can be a source of conflict. Bhutan is well positioned to promote collaboration and cooperation through the concept of GNH.

Q4_floor:

What are some of the challenges that you see in implementing NFE programmes and what can be done to address these?

A_Dr. Kim:

Not enough support has been given to adult literacy, whereas primary education has received strong support. Another challenge is the capacity of those who work in NFE. Many teachers are not well qualified. There are fewer in-service programmes for them. In this respect, we can learn from South Korea's "can do" spirit in education.



Participant asking a question to the keynote speaker



Dr. Gwang-Jo Kim, Director of UNESCO Bangkok, delivering his keynote speech

Thematic Session 1:

The Role of CLCs in Promoting Literacy for Out of School Youth and Adults in the Framework of Lifelong Learning

Presenter: Dr. Manzoor Ahmed

Professor, BRAC University (Bangladesh)

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, a professor at BRAC University in Bangladesh, has served for over two decades in different positions within UNICEF and various research and advisory positions in the education field. During this session, he gave an overview of the role of CLCs in terms of promoting literacy and building a framework for lifelong learning.

He noted that, while literacy rates appear to be relatively high in the Asia and Pacific region, the actual rates are often lower than shown in government data because people with relatively low literacy levels are considered to be literate in the government figures. He emphasised that literacy still has a long way to go and that lifelong learning should be employed to support the improvement of literacy.

In this context, he stated that Bhutan is in a good position to promote literacy, as it already has 721 NFECs and because GNH, which is the main constitutive pillar of policy making in Bhutan, already overlaps with the SDGs. He said that, based on these facts, he sees a bright future for Bhutanese lifelong learning.

He concluded his presentation by suggesting ways to further promote literacy. He said that NFECs and CLCs should be hubs, providing programmes with sufficient links to people's daily lives and livelihoods,

and that the network of NFECs and CLCs, imbued with the spirit of GNH, could make the vision of lifelong learning in a learning society a reality.

Thematic Session 1:
Panel Discussion

Moderator: Mr. Tshewang Tandin

Director General, Royal Institute of Management,
Department of Adult and Higher Education

Panellists:

Mr. Thinley Dorji, Chief District Education Officer (DEO), Sarpang

Mr. Saha Dev Rai, Teacher, Lingmithang Primary School

Mr. Kinzang Thinley, Principal, Zilnon Namgyelling Primary School

Mr. Rinchen Gyeltshen, Chief DEO, Samdrup Jongkar

During the panel discussion for Thematic Session 1, each panellist gave a presentation on a topic related to the theme of this session. Most spoke about CLCs since they were stakeholders in CLCs.

Mr. Thinley Dorji stated the importance of CLCs in enhancing literacy and self-learning. He showed interview videos of three learners who had attended a CLC, including one in which the interviewee said that she could now make clothes for her family with the sewing skills she had acquired at the CLC.

Mr. Saha Dev Rai noted that CLCs empower communities through life skills and livelihood education programmes, and introduced the vocational education programme conducted by Lingmithang CLC. He

said that some of the learners who had completed the course had even gone on to run their own tailoring courses in their houses in order to earn a living.

Mr. Kinzang Thinley introduced the Zilnon CLC, of which he is the Principal. He said that all the learners at this CLC were women, and that they were motivated and enthusiastic learners. As an example of the success of the programmes at this CLC, he said that Kezang Dema, a graduate of the CLC's NFE programme, had been elected as a community leader in Kuzhugchen, the village she is from.

Mr. Rinchen Gyeltshen talked mainly about the sustainability of CLCs. He said that high quality programmes that attract learners, community ownership, and the engagement of NGOs and government were all important factors in ensuring the sustainability of CLCs, additionally mentioning that adopting good practices from other countries, suitably adapted to local conditions, was another good way to promote sustainability.



Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Professor at BRAC University (Bangladesh), giving a presentation on the role of CLCs.



Moderator Mr. Tshewang Tandin taking questions from the floor

Thematic Session 2:

**Education in Bhutan -
The Role of Adult Education in Bhutanese Society**

**Presentation 1:
Education in Bhutan**

Presenter: Mr. Jigme Zangpo

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of Bhutan

Mr. Jigme Zangpo, the current Speaker of the National Assembly of Bhutan, started his career as a primary school teacher in 1970, later serving as Deputy Project Director in the Department of Education in Thimphu and in other roles related to education, before becoming a politician. As a living witness to the development of Bhutanese education, he gave a brief presentation on the history of education in Bhutan.

He started his presentation by quoting His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, saying “I’m a proud product of Bhutanese schools”, emphasising the pride that Bhutanese people take in their education.

He noted that, historically, Bhutanese Kings have all contributed to education in Bhutan, but that modern education achieved a particular breakthrough during the reign of the third King, with the establishment of schools and a nationwide drive to enrol students.

He stated that education has seen gradual and impressive development in Bhutan but that it needs to be moved forward. He encouraged the participants to work harder to achieve this, and stated that Bhutan now needs to align its education to 21st century demand and focus today's education on skills development.

Below is a summary of the Q&A session following the presentation.

Q_floor:

What kind of education is suggested for our future?

A_Mr. Zangpo:

Jobs are not guaranteed these days, and 'good' is not enough anymore; we need to be excellent. In the age of technology and the global village, it is important to build the right curriculum to learn about technology.

Presentation 2:

Non-Formal Education in Bhutan

Presenter: Mr. Jagar Dorji

Former Eminent Member of the National Council

From 1970 to 2000, Mr. Jager Dorji worked at the Ministry of Education and at the Royal University of Bhutan, as a teacher, lecturer and head of the school curriculum, and as director of two colleges of education. During this session, he explained the role of adult education in Bhutanese society.

He stated that non-formal education has made a huge difference in Bhutanese society, increasing the literacy rate from 45% in 1995 to 55% in 2015, with the number of basic literacy centres increasing from 5 to 721 during that period. He also said that the most important impact of NFE on Bhutanese society was its ability to give learners dignity, confidence and a sense of fulfilment as they acquire the skills of reading and writing.

He mentioned the challenges currently faced by Bhutanese non-formal education, such as the learner drop-out rate, and limitations in terms of the motivation and capacity of instructors and the management of learning centres. Lastly, he stated that financial support and coordination among stakeholders need to be enhanced, in order to overcome these challenges and ensure that NFE's contributions can be sustained in the years ahead.

Below are the major points from the Q&A session following the presentation.

Q_floor:

What are the three most important challenges currently in NFE? What solutions do you suggest for these?

A_Mr. Dorji:

- Capacity-building for instructors, to make them better teachers.
- A better curriculum: having a skill-based curriculum is very important. Examples of subjects would be waste management, climate change, nutrition and others.
- Allocation of adequate resources: good education costs more. Without resource support it is questionable whether success can be achieved.

Thematic Session 2:
Panel Discussion

Moderator: Mr. Baburam Sherpa

Chief Program Officer, SSD, Department of School Education

Panellists:

Mr. Chenko Tshering,

Principal of Yoezerling Higher Secondary School (HSS)

Mr. Tshering Dorji, Principal of Rinchen HSS, Thimthrom

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Professor, BRAC University

The panel discussion for Thematic Session 2 featured two panellists from Bhutan, and one panellist from Bangladesh, who had also given a presentation during Thematic Session 1. The Bhutanese panellists gave presentations on education in Bhutan, then all the panellists took questions from the floor.

Mr. Chenko Tshering spoke briefly about the history of Bhutanese education, affirming that Bhutanese society has seen remarkable development along with the gradual development of its education system. However, he said that in this era of rapid global change, Bhutan needs to invent its own way to educate people to become globally and locally competent.

Mr. Tshering Dorji's presentation focused on the path that Bhutanese society should follow in education. He said that universal basic education is important and that Bhutanese society should become a society capable of learning and transforming. He emphasised, however, that while making these changes, spirituality needs to be

also considered in order to avoid people feeling that there has been a rupture in society.

The following is a summary of the interactive question and answer session between the panellists and the audience.

Q1_floor:

We have flexibility in teaching and learning times and in the coverage of syllabi in NFE and CLC programmes yet there is still a high drop-out rate. How do we address this high drop-out rate?

A_Dr. Manzoor Ahmed:

It is not an isolated problem, applicable only to Bhutan. We need to redesign NFE programmes. We need to make the programmes better and the content more responsive. A tracer study could be conducted which would give us better guidance.

Q2_floor:

What kind of education would be appropriate for the 21st century?

A_Mr. Tshering:

- Education that is globally competent and culturally grounded, and at the same time capable of producing emotionally intelligent students.
- We must give up on a factory model and focus on an 'agricultural' model in order to produce organic citizens.

Q3_floor:

In your opinion what has been the most remarkable achievement of education thus far?

A_Mr. Tshering Dorji:

It is the proper leadership provided by our beloved Kings and, in this respect, we Bhutanese are very lucky.



Mr. Jigme Zangpo, Speaker of the National Assembly of Bhutan, giving a presentation on the history of Bhutanese education.



Mr. Jagar Dorji, Former Eminent Member of the National Council talking about the role of Bhutanese non-formal education

Opening
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Closing
Ceremony

Day 2: 8 November 2016

Thematic Session 3 focused on the presentation of good practices in the Asian context and provided an opportunity to explore further action to promote lifelong learning for youth and adults. During the session, seasoned practitioners contributed their experience on key themes.

Thematic Session 3

Presentation 1

Indian Case Study:

Promoting Lifelong Learning through Functional Literacy Centres

CLC Practices in Asia

Presenter: Mr. Ashok Singh

Director of Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra (India)

Mr. Ashok Singh, director of Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra, an Indian NGO, gave a presentation on the literacy project his organisation has conducted. He stated that the literacy education project supported women excluded from education, such as Muslim and Scheduled Caste women, providing basic literacy education, life skills education and vocational training. It was a distinctive feature of the project, he said, that tutors were selected from among the women of the same background as learners, so that the tutors could become role models

for other women.

Based on his experience, he suggested sustainability strategies that could be applied to other literacy projects, such as linkages with government-run programmes, linkages with income generation activities and periodic follow up.

Presentation 2

Thai Case Study:

CLC Management in Thailand

Presenter: Dr. Wilekha Leesuwat

Director of Chiangrai Provincial Office of Non-formal and Informal Education (Thailand)

Dr. Wilekha Leesuwat shared her experience in the field of literacy education and non-formal education in Thailand, as Director of Chiangrai Office of Non-formal and Informal Education. She focused on how CLCs are managed in Thailand and suggested some ideas for managing and sustaining CLCs more efficiently.

Dr. Leesuwat began by explaining how the Thai education system favours non-formal education, supporting non-formal and informal education through the legal and policy framework. As evidence of this government support, she said that there are currently 10,438 CLCs in Thailand, offering learning opportunities and acting as platforms for the exchange of experiences and community empowerment.

She stressed that Thai CLCs undertake a variety of activities, including basic education, vocational skills development, life skill development, and social and community development, which she said was valued highly. She said that this variety was one of the keys to the quality of CLCs and she recommend that Bhutan also offer a good variety of programmes and activities at their CLCs.

She ended her presentation by concluding that external support is necessary for CLCs at the initial stage, but that self-sustaining management is essential in the long run, and that the co-operation, contribution and commitment of the local community, particularly in terms of a sense of ownership, are key to sustaining a CLC.

Presentation 3

Korean Case Study:

Community Learning Centres in the Republic of Korea

Presenter: Dr. Heon Joo Suh

Director at the Office of Public Relations and International Affairs,
National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE)

Dr. Suh gave an introduction to the historical and conceptual background of CLCs in Korea, in his capacity as a director at NILE, an organisation aiming to build a creative learning society in the Republic of Korea. He also described the function and characteristics of various types of Korean CLCs.

He started his presentation by saying that Korea had a long tradition

of community-based lifelong learning activities, which has contributed to the remarkable development of society and the economy in Korea. He also noted the important role that CLCs have played in resolving the issues of illiteracy and absolute poverty.

In the Korean context, he said, the term CLC refers to all types of lifelong learning institutions, including those operated at the local level, which are usually called Lifelong Learning Centres. He said that these centres operate different types of programmes and are regularly evaluated to maintain the quality of their management. He also mentioned that, since Korea already has a literacy rate of nearly 100%, literacy programmes are usually applicable only to seniors. At the end of his presentation he presented some examples of best practice from Korea's CLCs. One of the best practices he mentioned was the Lifelong Learning Infrastructure Networking in Namyangju, Gyeonggi Province. This is a unique lifelong learning system only for Namyangju citizens that allows them to access lifelong learning programmes easily from anywhere in their region.

Thematic Session 3: **Panel Discussion**

Moderator: Mr. Tshewang Tandin

Director General of the Royal Institute of Management

Panellists:

Mr. Ashok Singh

Dr. Wilekha Leesuan

Dr. Heon Joo Suh

Mr. Sherub Jamtsho, Deputy Chief DEO, Zhemgang

Mr. Dorji Pasang, Chief DEO, Pema Gatshel

The panel discussion for Thematic Session 3 began with brief presentations from the two Bhutanese panellists. After their presentations, all the panellists took questions from the floor.

Mr. Sherub Jamtsho gave an introduction to CLCs in the Bhutanese context, in his capacity as a District Education Officer. He stated his hope that Bhutan will achieve 100% adult literacy by 2020 and said that the broadening of programmes at CLCs will make a great contribution towards this goal.

Mr. Dorji Pasang gave a presentation about Dungmin CLC in the district that he supervises. He stated that the CLC was established in 2003, and that it currently conducts various programmes related to learners' livelihoods, for example a tailoring class aimed at teaching learners to make different types of clothes and decorations. He also said that the CLC lends books to learners.

Q1_floor:

How can we motivate illiterate senior citizens to join NFECs and CLCs?

A_Mr. Singh:

It is important to create a conducive learning environment for senior citizens. Only then can we facilitate their empowerment and help them participate in society.

A_Dr. Suh:

1.5 inter-generational programmes can be helpful, as grandparents can play with their grandchildren. It is also important to educate the husbands of women learners and the husbands' parents about the importance of learning.

Q2_floor:

How can learners at CLCs be included in the formal education system?

A_Mr. Singh:

There have been government schemes to include some learners within the formal education system. However on a wider basis, this remains a big challenge.

Q3_floor:

How can we address cultural and religious barriers to learning?

A_Dr. Suh:

When focusing on women learners, educating their husbands and husbands' families about the importance of learning is crucial.

Q4_floor:

What should the duration of each activity be?

A_Mr. Singh:

As the programmes are not government programmes, the duration is not fixed. Their purpose is to make the learners functionally literate, so the duration should be long enough to achieve this.

Q5_floor:

What strategies do we need in order to increase women's happiness with their lives?

A_Mr. Singh:

There are still cultural issues that affect women's ability to benefit from education even though there are schemes and laws intended to facilitate this. As a result, special programmes or centres need to be developed for women.

A_Dr. Suh:

Awareness needs to be raised about the importance of woman's happiness and rights. The government and CLCs should let people know through examples about how educating women can contribute to society, and give examples of good practices.

A_Mr. Pasang:

CLC programmes have helped increase women's happiness through giving them access to literacy, vocational and life skill education.

Q6_floor:

Do we currently provide CLC managers with good training to build their capacities? If not, how should we move forward?

A_Mr. Gyeltshen:

We need to provide capacity-building to enable managers to provide better literacy and vocational classes to learners. We also need to raise their salary.

Q7_floor:

What strategies exist to narrow the gap between rural and urban learners?

A_Mr. Tandin:

We need to make the CLCs part of the mainstream education system.

A_Dr. Suh:

Holding workshops for specific targets (e.g. teachers, managers and learners) separately is one possible strategy. I also suggest exploring the possibilities of ICT, such as smart phones.

A_Mr. Singh:

Traditional teaching methods can still be very helpful. Exposure visits and building learners' credibility in society can help to influence women too.

A_Mr. Gyeltshen:

Capacity-building activities should be carried out on an annual basis. In addition, the NFE programme should make as much use as possible of ICT. NFE and CLC committees in the field also need to be more active.



Panellists listening to questions from participants



Participant giving comments on the panellists' presentations

Field Visit

Field Visits to Community Learning Centres in Thimphu City

On the afternoon of the second day of the conference, all participants took part in field visits to two CLCs in Thimphu City. These visits gave local instructors an opportunity to see the differences in how other CLCs are operated, and gave international participants the chance to learn more about the CLCs in Bhutan. During the field visits, Mr. Hyunsoo Park, an Assistant Secretary-General at the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, delivered a computer and a printer to each CLC. These items of equipment had been donated to the two CLCs by the Ministry of Education of Bhutan, with support from KNCU.



Community Learning Centre (CLC) learners practising how to operate a sewing machine



Participants being given a tour of a CLC

Opening
Ceremony

Day1: 07 Nov. 2016

Day2: 08 Nov. 2016

Day3: 09 Nov. 2016

Day4: 10 Nov. 2016

Closing
Ceremony

Day 3: 9 November 2016

The Workshop Session, held on the third day of the conference, comprised two separate parts, an orientation session held in the morning, and a participation session held in the afternoon. Both sessions were led by Dr. Eunkyung Chun. During the orientation session, Dr. Chun focused on introducing theoretical ideas related to adult learning, by sharing the principles of adult learning and teaching methodologies. Conversely, the participation session focused on putting these theories into practice, with participants working in groups to make their own lesson plan with Dr. Chun's support.

Workshop Session

Adult Learning Principles and Teaching Methodologies

Presenter: Dr. Eunkyung Chun

Professor, Digital Seoul Culture Arts University

Orientation

During the orientation session, Dr. Chun gave a lecture on adult learning principles and teaching methodologies. She introduced the concepts of andragogy as teaching strategies suitable for use with adult learners, and recommended that instructors use andragogy when teaching adult learners. She then introduced some principles of adult

learning. She stressed that adult learners will only learn when they want to learn and when they feel the importance of learning. She also said that they are more likely to learn by doing, and that they learn best in an informal situation. Lastly she emphasised that adult learners are usually influenced by their experiences when they learn, and that instructors need to consider this when they teach adults learners.

Participation

During the participation session, Dr. Chun briefly explained how to develop a lesson plan for NFE instructors and CLC managers, and then gave participants time to make their own lesson plan. The participants were divided into 7 groups, each with 7-8 members. Each group then developed their lesson plan on a large sheet of paper. Dr. Chun underlined the importance of outlining learning objectives, using different strategies based on learners' needs, and incorporating checks to confirm the understanding of learners. At the end of the session, the leader of each group spoke about the lesson plan they had developed based on Dr. Chun's lecture.



Participant speaking about the lesson plan developed by her group



Participants working together to develop a lesson plan



Dr. Eunkyung Chun assisting participants with their group work

Opening
Ceremony

Day1: 07 Nov. 2016

Day2: 08 Nov. 2016

Day3: 09 Nov. 2016

Day4: 10 Nov. 2016

Closing
Ceremony

Closing

Speaker: Ms. Aum Kesang Choden Dorji

Director, Department of Adult and Higher Education,
Ministry of Education of Bhutan

Ms. Dorji started her presentation by expressing her appreciation to KNCU, NILE, UNESCO Bangkok and other participants for bringing the conference to Bhutan. She said that she was very satisfied with how conference had gone, stating that it had been a great opportunity for field workers and MOE staff to gather together, share their thoughts, and narrow any gaps in their viewpoints and understanding. She also mentioned that the conference had been a first step in allowing those working in the field and at the headquarters of the MOE to find ways to cooperate more closely and effectively.

As she herself had also served as an educator in the field for a long time, she ended her speech by giving useful advice to NFEC instructors and CLC managers, saying that instructors should become learners too, always seeking to learn new things and inspiring their learners with the knowledge they have. She said that, in order to do this, it was crucial for instructors to utilise new technologies and to keep themselves motivated.

NFE and CLCs have been recognised as important methods for promoting lifelong learning and a knowledge-based society in Bhutan. For example, the immense contribution made by these systems to the enhancement of adult literacy in Bhutan was recognised when Bhutan's non-formal education system received the prestigious Confucius Prize for Literacy in 2012.

CLCs serve an important role in ensuring that government education services reach people in remote communities. However, as most practices in Bhutan's NFEs and CLCs are home-grown, and those providing the services at these centres often have limited experience, NFE instructors and CLC managers continue to face a variety of challenges on a daily basis. The conference was organised to help address these challenges, so that Bhutan's CLCs and NFEs can function as effectively as possible in their role as local venues for communities, adults, and out-of-school youths to engage in all forms of learning.

The International Conference on Capacity Building in Non Formal Education in Bhutan provided a unique opportunity for global debate, sharing of knowledge, and the showcasing of new ideas and strategies on a range of themes and issues relating to non-formal education. This section outlines the key ideas and recommendations derived from the various sessions that took place during the conference.

Key issues and suggested ideas

Below are the key thematic issues and ideas that were actively discussed through a combination of plenary sessions, thematic presentations and debates.

Issue 1: **Creation of an enabling policy environment for non-formal education in order to enhance CLCs/NFECs**

- 1** Develop comprehensive, inclusive and integrated policies for promoting lifelong learning;
- 2** Partner with relevant stakeholders and use local resources and expertise;
- 3** Strengthen roles and responsibilities within the Non Formal and Continuing Education Division to encourage lifelong learning in Bhutan;
- 4** Carry out a tracer study to assess and upscale the NFE programmes in Bhutan; and
- 5** Share effective policies and practices with the general public on a regular basis.

Issue 2: **Ensuring and enhancing the quality of NFE programmes in CLCs/NFECs**

- 6** Collect and analyse appropriately disaggregated data in a timely, reliable, and valid manner to ensure effective policy and programme implementation;

7 Establish quality assurance mechanisms and programme monitoring and evaluation as integral components of non-formal education programmes;

8 Work towards capacity-building of NFE instructors and CLC facilitators on a regular basis through measures such as (1) providing capacity-building courses on the principles of adult learning to improve instructors' professional skills and knowledge; and (2) enhancing their capacity to customise the current lesson plan format to suit the needs of learners;

9 Enable learners to accumulate learning, experience and qualifications through measures such as providing exposure visits for learners and instructors to other areas of the country, and grooming learners as community change leaders;

10 Recognise, validate and accredit non-formal education programmes conducted at CLCs and NFECs as having equivalent value to formal education programmes, in order to promote flexible and seamless learning pathways between formal and non-formal education and training;

11 Explore the possibilities of supporting pilot CLCs in terms of finance, personnel management and other ways;

- 12** Diversify the NFE programme to incorporate CLCs in places such as hospitals, military camps and other populous areas, and introduce 1.5/ inter-generational programmes at CLCs/ NFECs, to promote access and broad participation.

Recommendations

Following the conference's rigorous debates and discussions on a wide range of issues, including those discussed above, the participants agreed on the recommendations set out below, for presentation to the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

"In recognition of the importance of providing quality, inclusive and equitable education opportunities to the people of Bhutan, the participants in the International Conference on Capacity-Building in Bhutanese Non-Formal Education would like to recommend that the Ministry of Education consider the following when planning and implementing NFE programmes and activities:

- 1** Linking CLCs and NFECs at the district level to develop an integrated CLC and NFE programme that promotes lifelong learning, allowing CLCs to function as effectively as possible in their roles as focal resource centres for non-formal education in each district;

2 Initiating scale-up pilot projects in two selected CLCs in preparation for replication in other districts in Bhutan;

3 Carrying out a tracer study to assess and upscale the NFE programme in Bhutan and publishing best practices on a periodic basis; and

4 Strengthening roles and responsibilities within the Non Formal and Continuing Education Division to encourage lifelong learning.”

Final Report of the International Conference on Capacity-Building in Bhutanese Non-Formal Education

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26 Myeongdong-gil (UNESCO Road), Jung-gu, Seoul 04536, Korea
Tel. (82-2) 6958-4120
Fax. (82-2) 6958-4251
Email. bridge.asia@unesco.or.kr
Website: www.unesco.or.kr

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