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IPE
International Perspectives
in Adult Education

Rethinking adult learning and education – Asian perspectives

Uwe Gartenschlaeger (Editor)

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The reports, studies and materials published in this series aim to further the development of theory and practice in adult education. We hope that by providing access to information and a channel for communication and exchange, the series will serve to increase knowledge, deepen insights and improve cooperation in adult education at international level.

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Editorial

Adult learning and education (ALE) can look back to a long history. It was a part of ancient cultures, from China to Rome. Thinkers of all times were aware that learning should not stop at an early stage, that learning is an integral part of life. “Once you stop learning, you start dying”, the great Einstein said. In Asia, Mahatma Ghandi’s advice is still valid: “Live as if you were to die tomorrow, learn as if you were to live forever!” The 20th Century was the glorious time of the adult education movement, with campaigns eliminating illiteracy in China, the Soviet Union, Cuba, Turkey, Yugoslavia and several other countries, with social movements educating the oppressed to reflect on their situation and act to demand their rights, and with the discovery of the paradigms of Andragogy, the science of teaching adults, by Malcolm Knowles and others.

The CONFINTEA was established as a series of high level conferences in 1949, just one year after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with CONFINTEA V in Hamburg in 1997 marking a high point of recognition for the sector. In 1975, the Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) were adopted by the 38th UNESCO General Conference. Throughout the century, many countries established a diverse system of adult education delivery, based sometimes on civil society actors, sometimes on communities and sometimes on an initiative of the central government. ALE was widely recognised as an integral condition for human development, well-being and democracy.

On the eve of the 21st Century, the momentum for ALE somehow dissipated. The Millennium Development Goals focused on primary education only, and many adult educators used to talk about the Education for All (EFA) framework adopted in the World Education Framework in 2000 as “Except for Adults”. Powerful actors like the World Bank and other development banks or big bilateral donors took a negative stand towards ALE as a thing “nice to have”, however quite low on the education agenda. Many national governments, especially in the developing countries, adopted this view.

Today, adult learning and education is probably the sub-sector of any education system with the highest impact for the lowest input. Working in ALE for nearly thirty years, it strikes me how often we are able to support people to improve their life or the lives of their families, communities or social groups. The power of ALE is evident in combating illiteracy, providing

second chance education and skills for livelihood or empowering disadvantaged people to demand their rights.

All these success stories are present in Asia: You can find good examples of top-down literacy campaigns as well as grassroots movements able to mobilise the marginalised and give a voice to the disadvantaged. The history of the 20th century is full of those stories, and traveling through the vast Asian territory, you can still find these good examples, in India, China, Korea, Central Asia or Southeast Asia.

From people at the other end, we hear a lot of complaints about the low level of support to ALE by governments, the business sector or even society. Although the concept of Lifelong Learning – adopted by the World Education Forum in Incheon in 2015 and integrated into the Sustainable Development Goals – opened up a perspective beyond the formal system, many actors are still caught in a limited understanding of what education should include. Not only governments can be blamed for harbouring a limited understanding, many civil society actors and development partners foster an understanding which reduces education to education for children only.¹

This discrepancy is hard to understand and even harder to accept in a changing context, where ALE as a part of lifelong learning (LLL) is essential for the well-being of the people, the society and the planet. In Asia and elsewhere, our 21st century is confronted with the consequences of climate change, faces the widening gap between the rich and the poor, deals with new technologies like digitalisation and witnesses ageing societies. All of this calls for investment and engagement in ALE to enable our people to act in a meaningful and reflective way.

This publication offers you various insights about the changing landscape of ALE in Asia, a continent characterised by huge diversity. Some of the most developed countries are located here, like Japan, Korea or Singapore. Here, you can find some rapidly advancing economies, with China, several Southeast-Asian countries and India as outstanding examples. At the same time, some of the poorest countries and most severe conflicts are located in Asia. Two-thirds of all illiterate people live here, and many regions are strongly affected by natural disasters and the consequences of climate change. While several Asian countries have some of the youngest

1/ Maybe the most striking example is the Global Partnership on Education, designed to implement the whole LLL agenda, but advertising with a slogan like “The Global Partnership for Education supports 65+ developing countries to ensure that every child receives a quality basic education, prioritising the poorest, most vulnerable and those living in countries affected by fragility and conflict.” <https://www.globalpartnership.org/>, visited 3 August 2018.

populations globally, others are confronted with ageing societies. Regarding all these diverse developments, it is worthwhile getting a deeper look into the realities, aspirations and challenges of adult educators in Asia.

The publication starts with some reflections on concepts and frameworks shaping ALE in Asia. The second part deals with topics and approaches, and the last part focuses on specific target groups, thus drawing a line from the general to the more specific. The authors are from a variety of backgrounds, including international agencies, governments and civil society to ensure a multi-perspective view on ALE. All of them are somehow linked to the work of DVV International in Asia. Across the publication, ten juvenescence stories share diverse experiences of young people with what is referred to as ALE in a wider sense. These stories should link the analytical views of many contributions with the real life situation of the next generation, because they respond to the real need that is at the core of quality ALE.

My special thanks goes to Mrs. Anita Borkar of ASPBAE, who provided me with these wonderful stories!

I would also like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the contributors and express my hope that reading these texts will further our debate on ALE.

Uwe Gartenschlaeger



Concepts and frameworks

Why is adult learning and education neglected by governments and the global community – and what can we do to change this?

The 2017 CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Conference in the Republic of Korea culminated a review process which took stock of the achievements and challenges in the implementation of the 2009 Belém Framework for Action (BFA). The Review noted progress in some areas, notably in policy development, partnerships and in participation, but also observed several outstanding challenges, including the continued neglect and low priority accorded adult learning and education by governments and donors. This article explores the factors contributing to this continued neglect and low priority. It however argues that the global consensus on the SDGs offers opportunities to make a stronger case for enhanced policy attention to youth and adult education and learning that advocates for adult learning, which education should optimise.

In October 2017, UNESCO convened the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Conference in Suwon, Republic of Korea to offer a space to take stock of achievements and challenges in the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action (BFA), endorsed by 144 countries during CONFINTEA VI in 2009. It also offered a forum to reflect on how emergent policy agreements, notably the UNESCO Recommendation on adult learning and education (RALE), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development especially Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on education, and the 2030 Education Framework for Action, can help strengthen the impact of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) (UIL 2017).

The outcomes document of the Conference noted progress in the increase in the number of countries which have adopted ALE policies; in the new partnerships developed between ALE players at national and sub-national levels; in the growth of participation rates in ALE, albeit slow; and in the development of instruments to improve the quality of ALE (Suwon-Osan CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Statement 2017). The Mid-Term review process however outlined several outstanding challenges, pointing to the continued neglect and low priority accorded adult learning and education by governments and donors.

The Asia Pacific CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Report noted that “ALE still remains largely isolated from the mainstream efforts in the education sector” (Govinda 2017: 5). While lifelong learning is gradually emerging as the overall policy paradigm in education in most countries of the region, concretising this in governance mechanisms, curricular programmes, assessment of outcomes and monitoring frameworks is yet to materialise. Qualifications and training support for adult education professionals vary among countries in the region but a general observation has been that adult educators are often employed on temporary contractual basis or as short-term consultants. In the majority of countries, the status, conditions of employment and remuneration of adult education staff are below those of personnel in other education and training sectors. Gains in participation of adults in trainings and adult education activities have been moderate with only 56 % of Asia Pacific countries participating in the 3rd Global Report on Adult Learning (GRALE 3) reporting increases in participation. This is below the global average of 60 %.

The Asia Pacific CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Report, informs us that the Asia-Pacific Region underperforms with respect to public spending in education. Only 26 % of countries in the region spent 6 % or more of their GDP on education and the regional average stands at 4.3 % – lower than Sub-Saharan Africa where an average of 4.7 % of GDP is spent on education. Although the data on public spending on ALE specifically is sparse, reported spending indicates strong variations across countries: countries

of East Asia and New Zealand are investing in ALE at a much higher level than others in the region. The static, low level spending on ALE in some countries such as India and Pakistan, with a substantial backlog of illiteracy and a large expanding youth population, was noted as a matter of serious concern. It further observes that in some countries, ALE continues to be seen as a temporary project and may not find place in the regular national budget as a separate budget term. Across the different regions, public spending on adult education remains low with 42 % of countries participating in GRALE 3 reporting spending less than 1 % of their education budgets on ALE (UIL 2016). Civil society participants in the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review processes also noted that the SDG 4 targets related to youth and adult non-formal education are in the far fringes of consideration by global financing facilities in support of SDG 4, notably the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Education Can't Wait and the Education Commission.

What is behind this neglect?

The resource crunch for public education as a whole offers an oft-repeated reason for neglect to ALE. Public spending on education is dependent on how governments deploy their budgets (a matter of what governments prioritise) and on the size of the budget pie in the first place. Higher budgetary allocations to education may remain insufficient if the overall budget is so low to begin with. The ability of countries to generate resources domestically is thus critical to ensure quality public education. The Asia Pacific region can do more in this regard. As a whole, it has one of the world's lowest tax-to-GDP levels. In 2015, total tax revenue averaged 16.4 % of GDP across the region, compared with a developing country average of 20.2 % and a developed country average of 25.1 % (Oxfam and UN ESCAP 2017). Further, tax evasion deprives the public purse of much needed resources for social services, including education. Education advocates have strongly argued for the need to widen the tax base of countries through progressive taxation and tax justice measures – curbing tax incentives to the rich, instituting reforms for greater transparency and to stop illicit capital flight and tax dodging especially by transnational companies.

An increase in public resources and indeed in financing for public education will however not necessarily result in increased priority and funding for ALE. It is salient to therefore review as well the factors that contribute further to the exclusion of adults in public education provisioning.

In 2016, the Uppingham seminar titled, “Adult Learning and the Sustainable Development Goals”, convened academics, practitioners and researchers with UNESCO representatives in Sussex to review the spaces

for adult learning provided within the SDGs. In the background paper to the seminar, Prof. Alan Rogers referred to a dominant trend of “exclusionary prioritising” of children’s education in policy, that is, to the *exclusion* of adults. A survey was conducted by Prof. Alan Rogers to inform the background paper to the seminar, where adult education campaigners were asked about the possible reasons for this exclusion. (Rogers 2016) The responses that resonate more closely with the Asia Pacific context and practice are referred to here:

The issue of definitions: Adult education is “messy”, difficult to define and explain – and therefore loses out in policy attention. Given the wide diversity of modes of adult education in a variety of milieus, adult education has been difficult to define in universally accepted ways. Various terminologies also abound – non-formal education, popular education, complementary education, and others – each attached to its own context and history. DVV International observed that this lends to a problem of “branding” where “the lack of clarity leads to the loss of the ability to speak with one voice”. (DVV International 2017) The challenge of terminologies also extends to a challenge of identity – where some terms denote and reinforce a subordinate character of adult education; its value and meaning derived mainly from its relation to formal schooling e.g. “non-formal”, informal’, “complementary” education. Years of neglect and low funding for the sector has further relegated this “subordinate” identity to a perception of sub-standard poor quality education, low in prestige.

Difficulties in managing diversity: Adult education programmes are complex and diverse – occurring in multiple spaces of learning. Lodged primarily in Ministries of Education which are organised predominantly for formal provisioning, they thus lag behind in attention. While adult learning also features quite strongly in the work of other government agencies for example, ministries of labour, environment, health, the mechanisms to coordinate these and give visibility to ALE in these varied spheres remains underdeveloped. The Asia Pacific CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review observes that with the influence of SDG 4, framed on “lifelong learning”, countries are better appreciating the need to develop and craft lifelong learning systems. Convergence efforts across ministries and agencies of government will however take time to build, as will the shifts in attitudes and capacities erstwhile entrenched in management practices attuned to formal school systems. (Govinda 2017: 66)

Need for more evidence: It is not that there is no evidence on the value and catalysing influence of adult education to end poverty, empower women and marginalised groups, foster active citizenship, promote tolerance and peace. Many studies have demonstrated these through the years. But more is needed to challenge orthodoxies promoted by big education

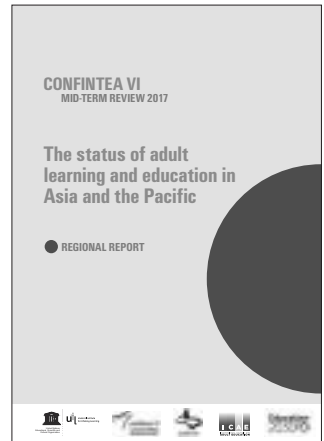
funders such as the World Bank, that, for example, had decided way back in the past that adult literacy is not a sound economic investment. Further, the mechanisms for generating the evidence on the valuable outcomes of youth and adult education programmes should be in-built and fostered more organically in the systems of public provisioning. Governments need this information to improve programme quality, and to shape good, responsive policy and financing priorities. GRALE 3 however noted that globally, while many countries collected information related to “certificates issued” and “completion rates” many fewer have tracked the *outcomes* of participation. Only 40 % reported that they collected information on employment outcomes and even a smaller proportion of 29 % collected information on social outcomes of ALE. (UIL 2016: 56) In the regime of “results-based” financing, evidence is currency and its lack thereof leads to low priority.

The political dimension: Spending on children’s education is seen to be “a vote-winner especially among parents and carers” relative to education for adults. (Rogers 2016: 10) In the Asia Pacific, the school system – being formalised and more structured – makes for easily defined and far better organised constituencies and claim-makers within it e.g. Parent Teachers Associations, teachers and students unions. Participants in and stakeholders for ALE are more dispersed, less organised, coming from less privileged backgrounds and therefore hold less political sway in decision and policy-making.

Human capital theory: The Uppingham Seminar 2016 background paper underscored that “perhaps the biggest assumption behind the prioritising of children’s education is the human capital theory – that education is an investment for the future, and therefore that it is best to invest in children with long-term potential growth rather than in adults who have already ‘used up’ part of their ‘future’”. Set further within a dominant neo-liberal approach to post-school education, adult learning is seen as the responsibility of learners themselves or their employers rather than the state. (Rogers 2016: 9) These have profoundly influenced the dominant policy discourses in education over the last few decades.

What can be done to address these?

The global consensus on the SDGs offers opportunities to make a stronger case for enhanced policy attention to youth and adult education and



learning which should be optimised. While the SDGs/SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action do not fully embrace the commitments contained in the BFA, nor fully reflect the features of the UNESCO RALE, there is certainly far more convergence on ALE among these policy frameworks than with the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

There are specific targets related to ALE in SDG 4. The Education 2030 Framework for Action advances a lifelong learning framework where the “right to education begins at birth and continues throughout life”. There are also education-related targets in other SDGs which in fact speak even more closely to youth and adult education – notably, on gender equality, decent work, responsible consumption and climate change mitigation. The SDG Global Indicator Framework sets out specific global indicators on access and participation of youth and adults in non-formal education.

Advocates for ALE should thus participate actively in the well-defined SDG-SDG 4 follow-up processes and offer greater visibility to the concerns related to ALE – pressing for the concretisation of commitments to robust policies, plans and practice. A more compelling case can perhaps be made for the value of youth and adult education in the attainment of the wider SDGs. While extensive reforms in school systems should for sure be set in place to address the most perilous issues facing humanity, the world cannot wait 3 or 4 decades until today’s children become decision-makers, and equipped to attend to the climate crisis, inequity, discrimination, conflict, poverty eradication (Benavot 2016). Capacities need to be enhanced for sound and bold decisions and actions now, not only later in the future. The work of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and its regional partners such as the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) in actively engaging the SDG High level Political Forum (HLPF) and the global and regional SDG 4 follow-up processes is a strategic move to advance youth and adult education. This should extend perhaps to making a more cogent case for *public* financing for ALE and the requirements to meet the SDG-SDG 4 ALE-related targets. Policy analysis on this and dialogue with governments, donors, GPE and other funding facilities for education should expand.

It serves the cause of ALE well for its champions to build strong ties of solidarity within the education sector and outside. It is important for ALE advocates to strengthen ties with other education, human rights, tax justice movements and development activists– making visible the points of convergence with these powerful interest groups and making the case for ALE’s importance in their work. This can expand ALE’s champions and help widen buy-in for the importance of public provisioning in ALE.

In the many follow-up processes of SDG 4, governments and countries in the Asia Pacific have indicated openness and interest to set in

place lifelong learning policies, systems and programmes attentive to the provision of quality education and learning opportunities in all settings, at all levels, beginning at birth through life, through multiple pathways, partnerships and convergence. Capacities of public education systems to progress in this respect should be strengthened. Efforts by organisations such as the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and DVV International, through workshops, facilitating peer-learning, documentation of good practice and policy research are worthwhile and much needed contributions.

Efforts are also underway to strengthen the indicator framework for SDG 4, recognising that it is in the ALE-related targets of SDG 4 where the data and capacity gaps are the widest. The “investment case” for SDG 4 data promoted by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and the Technical Cooperation Group on Indicators for SDG 4-Education 2030 seeks to strengthen the database across countries to track global indicators for (among others) SDG targets 4.3, 4.4 and 4.6. While this is valuable in the wider attempt to more evenly track progress on SDG 4, it is the country-led and defined data-base building processes for ALE – responsive to specific country policy requirements and capturing the wider, more complex dimensions of ALE – which will ultimately make a difference in meeting the targets. Governments’ appeals for support in this respect should be heeded.

Civil society champions for youth and adult education should engage actively with governments and other stakeholders as ALE policies and systems are shaped. They should translate their rich practice and innovative work, especially in reaching marginalised groups, into concrete recommendations for policy actions and reforms. Through their documentation and research, they can contribute to developing a more robust data base on youth and adult education especially derived from grassroots experiences. Civil society can also help deepen the discourse on ALE – demonstrate its wider impacts and benefits. As the Asia Pacific CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Report concluded, “Youth education and ALE have to go beyond employability and foster the values of active citizenship, strengthen personal growth and secure social inclusion. They have also to imbibe values that underscore inevitability of interdependence and collaboration; concern for environmental sustainability, and the need for a new ethics combining enterprise and environmentalism, and learning to live together in a world of increased diversity and inequality.” (Govinda 2017: 74) Many civil society organisations are well-placed to advance this and infuse ALE policy debates with strong influences from the tradition of ALE for social transformation and peoples empowerment – the bedrock of its many efforts.

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Maria Helen Dabu

Opportunities for the Global Partnership for Education to support adult education towards its vision of inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) currently stands as the biggest multi-stakeholder partnership and funding mechanism supporting low and lower-middle income countries in delivering their commitments and targets for education. Upon the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), GPE has also adopted as its vision the global goal for education (Goal 4), calling for inclusive, equitable quality education and Lifelong Learning for all by 2030. As such, GPE's Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 aimed to translate this vision into actionable goals and objectives.



While much of GPE's funding to governments focused on helping deliver basic education, particularly for children and youth, further analysis of

its mandate and strategic plan provides an opportunity to push for its stronger role in supporting adult education to fulfil its overall education vision by 2030.

A review of the Global Partnership for Education Compact

The Charter of the Partnership outlined the GPE Compact, which was established in 2002, and “explicitly links increased donor support for education to recipient countries’ policy performance and accountability for results. The GPE Compact’s general principles are the foundation upon which the Board builds GPE strategic plans as well as participation and accountability policies for GPE members.”

The GPE Compact provides for mutual accountability to deliver the following:

- a) Developing country partners commit to:
 - Develop and implement an evidence-based education sector plan (comprehensive or transitional), including a multi-year costed implementation plan of good quality that is embedded in the country’s national development strategy through broad-based consultation.
 - Provide strong and increased domestic financial support to education.
 - Demonstrate results on key performance indicators.

- b) Donors, multilateral agencies, civil society organisations, private foundations and the private sector commit to:
 - Increase support to government education sector plans, including through technical and financial support.
 - Assist in mobilising resources and aligning them with the priorities of developing country partners.
 - Harmonise procedures and utilise country systems as much as possible.

GPE’s Charter also recognised that it is underpinned by principles set out in the March 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and globally reaffirmed in the Accra Agenda for Action adopted by the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008.

Its guiding principles affirmed, among others, education as a human right and an enabler of other rights, and committed to accelerate progress toward its strategic plan by promoting:



GPE Board Meeting 2018

Source: Helen Dabu

- a) Further development effectiveness and more efficient aid for education.
- b) Sound sector policies in education.
- c) Adequate and sustainable domestic financing for education.
- d) Sustained increases in aid for education.
- e) Increased accountability for sector results.

Given that GPE aims to support systemic reforms in education not only at the national level but also at the global level, its policy, programmatic and financing actions impact all learners – children, youth and adults.

The need for equal attention to adult literacy and education

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimates that there are around 758 million adult illiterates in the world. This staggering number of adult illiterates ultimately contribute to their generation's lost opportunities and untapped potential, and further exacerbate economic divides within our society.

Compounding this situation is the millions of out-of-school children and youth, 263 million of them based on the estimate of UIS in 2016, who will likely remain illiterate as they transition into adulthood unless significant efforts are made by governments to break this cycle.

GPE has a crucial role to play and can use its considerable convening power to rally support in financing the full education agenda, including adult education, to demonstrate its commitment and responsibility to deliver on the agreements made in the SDGs and SDG 4.

There are opportunities available within its current framework to be attentive to youth and adult literacy and education. But more can certainly be done.

Where Global Partnership for Education has already started supporting adult education

While GPE's country-level financing has largely targeted getting children to school in poorest countries with high numbers of out-of-school children and low school completion rates, its grant also covers funding for education sector planning processes.

Strategically supporting the development of strong and credible education sector plans presents an opportunity for GPE to ensure that governments are able to deliver on their commitments to SDG 4. They require that a National Education Sector Plan (NESP) to be supported by GPE grants reflect country contexts, address education gaps and weaknesses, improve education equity and quality, and with financing analysis and commitments.

The NESP has offered useful guidance to all education stakeholders on the areas needing support for developing country partners of GPE. Therefore if an NESP identifies adult literacy and education as a priority, this should also attract financing support from GPE.

To briefly illustrate this point, in the Timor-Leste (East Timor) NESP upon which GPE provided an implementation grant for the period 2012-2015 to strengthen the capacity and systems of the Ministry of Education, adult literacy and education were identified as priorities (page 116 of Timor-Leste NESP 2011-2030 under Priority Program Five: Recurrent Education). The country recognised that a large number of their population have been left out of the formal education system. It also emphasised that recurrent education for this segment of the population is not only about providing basic literacy but it should also “bridge the gap in adult education by providing access to basic and secondary education for adults, and offering the same diplomas and certificates.” (National Education Sector Plan)

Analysing the Timor-Leste NESP, one can also see how the high number of school-age children who drop out from school – even just in the first and second grade (and only half of them enter third grade) – is linked to a high illiteracy rate in the youth and adult population. The NESP also mentioned that one of the factors of the high drop out rate among school-age children, in addition to lack of access and poverty, is the “low education level of the families themselves.”

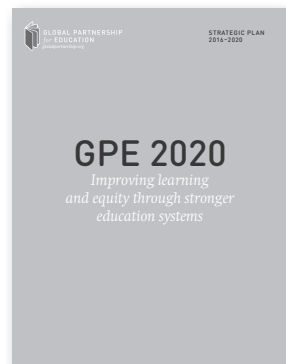
Apart from supporting education sector planning, GPE has also focused on education of women and girls to drive its equity agenda further

and this is another area where it has indirectly supported adult education by using its voice to call for women's education.

In addition, GPE has also supported the advocacy work of broad-based civil society since 2009, especially through the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF), which enabled education campaign coalitions to pursue advocacy work and campaigns to hold governments to account to deliver on their commitments to education for children, youth and adults.

The CSEF initiative supported CSOs' advocacy work to highlight gaps and weaknesses in education by bringing these issues to and providing recommendations in various education policy consultative mechanisms at national (such as local education groups), regional, and global levels.

As a result of GPE's funding to CSEF, a significant number of education coalitions were able to, and continue to, set specific policy and programmatic targets, as demanded by their respective country contexts. Many, in addition to advocating for children and youth education, have scaled up advocating for stronger adult education policies and greater public financing for the same. They have called for strengthening community learning centres, for greater attention to women's education, and strengthening lifelong learning frameworks in education policies and systems at the national level to allow for multiple pathways to learning.



Where the partnership can and should do more on adult education

Under its Strategy 2020, GPE emphasised that its financing will focus on “basic education, defined as pre-primary, primary, lower secondary education and second-chance learning opportunities. Where equitable learning outcomes are well advanced at basic education levels, it may be appropriate for GPE to provide additional investments in early childhood care or upper secondary education.” (GPE Strategic Plan)

This financing articulation in GPE's Strategy 2020 stopped short of committing to support financing for adult education, which has been an advocacy point for the civil society constituency in GPE.

In a recent blog published by the GPE Secretariat on its website in celebration of the International Literacy Day for 2018 (GPE Tackling), GPE staff Ramya Vivekanandan and Talia de Chaisemartin highlighted GPE's support for adult literacy when they shared that:

“GPE is an active member of the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML), coordinated by the UIS. A GAML task force, chaired by the OECD and UNESCO’s Institute for Lifelong Learning, focuses on SDG target 4.6, which focuses on youth and adult literacy and numeracy.

Various international measurements focus on functional literacy and numeracy in the youth and adult population (e.g. PIAAC, LAMP, STEP), but there are technical challenges to measure it. There’s no agreed definition of what “fixed level of proficiency” means as the indicator notes, and existing measurements don’t capture the skills of the population with low literacy. As a member of GAML, GPE is contributing to discussions to address these challenges.”

But CSOs have been pushing and will continue to push GPE to go beyond contributing to discussions on adult literacy and education. This is simply not enough for the vision GPE has set to achieve.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and its members, especially the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), have consistently argued the case for the inclusion of adult literacy and education in financing commitments by governments, GPE, and the donor community in general.

Ahead of GPE’s Financing Conference in Dakar in February 2018, 250 members of civil society from over 30 countries, led by GCE, adopted a joint statement on education financing and the role of civil society in advocacy calling on GPE and its members to, among other things, fund SDG 4 fully and effectively, ensuring that children, youth and adults, especially the most marginalised, around the world can receive quality public education.

The CSO Statement emphasised that unless there is a radical shift in financing for education that targets the most marginalised, the bold ambitions of the SDG agenda, and in particular of the SDG 4/Education 2030 agenda, will continue to be at least 50 years off track.

It particularly called on GPE to strengthen its support for the full SDG 4 agenda/Education 2030, including youth and adult literacy and education.

In October last year, the global community of adult education practitioners, policy advocates, civil society, academicians, researchers, and national government representatives from 144 member states of UNESCO gathered in Suwon City, South Korea to review the progress of the achievements and challenges, since the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) and they endorsed a draft outcomes document, the “Suwon-Osan CONFINTEA VI Mid-term Review Statement, The Power of adult learning and education – a Vision towards 2030” which called for the “Education Commission, the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait, and other development partners as well as national and sub-national governments to restore attention to and provide adequate funding to adult literacy.”

Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Romana Claudia Ximenes, Action for Change Foundation, Timor Leste

My name is Romana Claudia Ximenes, I was born in Baucau, Timor-Leste on November 7, 1995, live in Dili, and I am a qualified trainer at Action for Change Foundation (ACF) Training Center.

I have graduated with Bachelor Degree in 2017 at the National University in Timor-Leste, studied at the Education Faculty and the department of Biology. After I graduated with my university degree I could not find a job within two years because of the labour market demands are high throughout the country.

Therefore, I just attended the course at Action for Change Foundation Training Center in Dili where I learned office administration and basic finance to complete my personal skills and enable me to apply for the decent jobs where these experiences are required to fulfill the employer's requirements.

As a young woman, I am personally very interested to work in the office so that I can just do whatever is needed to improve more my experience as an office worker. Finally, I was the person who was chosen by Action for Change itself among those other graduates from my classmates to be contracted by Action for Change Foundation as a trainer for other fellow young people who come to attend the course, and now I consider that the non-formal education and training is important and valuable for me to get this job because only formal education does not fully guarantee the future of young people.

Lastly, I will continue to stay with my existing work as a trainer at Action for Change Foundation to help more young people, especially young girls like me to have access to learning opportunities so that they also have skills to compete with others and they may not stay behind in education.



Source: Action for Change Foundation



GPE Financing Replenishment

Source: Helen Dabu

Mid-point to GPE's Strategy 2020 implementation and coming from a successful Financing Conference, this presents another opportunity for CSOs and adult education advocates to increase pressure on GPE, the donor community and governments to fully deliver SDG 4, fulfil their roles and commitments in adult education as called for in the Belém Framework for Action, and contribute in reversing the systemic impact of failing to attend to adult literacy and education.

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Shrinking civil society spaces: Implications for adult learning and education

Civil society organisations (CSOs) played a significant role in crafting and mainstreaming the global agenda on Education 2030 and the sustainable development goals. They are on the front line, working with local communities to address, among other things, inequality in education, poverty eradication, environment degradation, and empowering people to take actions. They are present in hard to reach areas, where government social services are inadequate or absent. They are key stakeholders in making sustainable development a reality.

The actions of governments to curtail civil society are, therefore, alarming. The shrinking of democratic spaces is not only rhetoric being used by civil society to demand participation; it is real. The abilities of CSOs to mobilise people, act collectively, undertake programmes and engage in lobbying and advocacy have been restricted even in countries where democratic systems are in place. The CIVICUS Monitor reported in 2016 that “more than three billion people live in countries where the rights to protest, organise and speak out are currently being violated.” (CIVICUS 2018)

In its initial rating of 104 countries, the CIVICUS Monitor reported that in Asia, civic space is:

- Closed in Iran, North Korea and Vietnam
- Repressed in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Pakistan and Thailand
- Obstructed in Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kazakhstan and Philippines
- Narrowed in Australia and Japan
- Open in None

Governments are using legal tools – threats and harassment of activists, restrictions on foreign funding – to shut down civil society space (Mendelson 2014). The International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) reported that since 2015, over 64 laws enacted by governments impose restrictions on NGO registration, operation, and fundraising (International Centre for Non-Profit Law 2016). Its report revealed five common constraints used by states to narrow space for civil society to operate and cited examples from Asia:

- the proposal and adoption of restrictive CSO laws – Cambodia’s 2015 Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (LANGO);
- the proposal and adoption of anti-protest laws – in Thailand, the military government charged fourteen student activists who held a peaceful pro-democracy protest at Bangkok’s Democracy Monument in June 2015 with sedition;
- the closure, de-registration and expulsion of CSOs – in India, the environmental organisation Greenpeace India has repeatedly had its registration canceled and its access to foreign funds and domestic bank accounts blocked by the Ministry of Home Affairs;
- the adoption and manipulation of counterterrorism laws and policies;
- and,

- the adoption of laws and policies that restrict access to resources, notably including foreign funding and affiliations – in Bangladesh, the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulations Act 2014 (FDRA) will (if passed) strengthen the government’s already tight grip over foreign organisations and foreign donations to the nonprofit sector.¹

CIVICUS called it a crisis in democracy. In its State of Civil Society Report 2017, it reported that “political shifts have happened even in countries long considered to be consolidated democracies where the arguments for constitutional democracy, with room for dissent and space for civil society, were long thought won. ... Populist strongmen have increased their grip in countries such as Hungary, India, the Philippines, Russia and Turkey.”

The spaces for meaningful participation of CSOs are also challenged on international platforms. In the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), where the progress of the global agenda on sustainable development goals (SDGs) is reviewed, the Member States report on the progress of the SDGs through the Voluntary National Review (VNR). There is very little space provided for CSOs to comment. Most CSO comments on “no one left behind” were not integrated in the official VNR. During the 2017 HLPF, a few Member States, such as Indonesia, did not entertain questions from CSOs. In all the HLPFs, very few CSOs were given an opportunity to present their positions and were given only 1-2 minutes to speak.

Even in the education sector Member States are wary of CSOs pointing out the gaps in education, especially the work that needs to be done to reach out to the marginalised groups pushed out of education. This is despite the fact that many NGOs and voluntary organisations are collaborating with the government in providing education services to vulnerable groups and promoting education reforms to strengthen the public education system.

Implications for adult learning and education

Decreased funding for CSOs implementing transformative ALE

The adult education programmes of CSOs are diverse. They cater to the different needs of the disenfranchised communities, such as migrants, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, out of school youth, poor women, state-

^{1/} The FDRA was passed in 2016.

less people and vulnerable communities. What ties all these programmes together is transformative education that aims at empowering people and facilitating their participation in economic, social and political spheres.

Policies to monitor activities and funding of CSOs put a strain on NGOs that are working on adult education that aims at developing people's capacities to question, challenge and transform the structures that underlie poverty, gender discrimination and inequity in society. For example, in India it was noted that of the 20,000 NGOs whose Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licenses have been canceled, "several of them are involved in rights-based advocacy work, especially working in the domain of human rights." (First Post 2016)

Mitigation: aligning adult education with measurable results

The closing of space has also affected donors and philanthropic foundations. According to the Ariadne 2016 Forecast: "So far, the C. S. Mott and MacArthur foundations have curtailed programmes in Russia, and OSF has been declared an 'undesirable organisation' by the Russian Prosecutor-General's office. Ariadne participants expect other countries to copy Russia's moves and to ban or restrict the activities of other funders that they don't like." To address the situation, a number of foundations have started taking on a role as "Instrumental or Interventionist: Clear about project intent and impact – funding is aligned with strategy". We have already seen a number of foundations, including Ford Foundation move towards the instrumental, interventionist model. Ariadne forecasters expect a number of others to follow."

With this development in funding, it is expected that CSOs will align their adult education programmes to what is measurable. For example, the impact of parents' education on the performance of children in school or the focus on adult education for livelihoods. While these are important adult education interventions, they are limited. "The focus on measuring what matters to policy, rather than what matters to people, reflects the incremental incorporation of adult education provision into the state's social, educational and economic policy objectives – particularly the latter." (Crowther 2018). This will be detrimental to the mission of adult education that aims to raise awareness on human rights, citizenship, environment, gender equality, social cohesion and justice.

Slowdown on demanding the right to education of adults

It is the civil society that has relentlessly argued for the right to education of youth and adults – whether by formal, non-formal or informal means.

It is also the civil society that pushes governments to undertake programmes that reach out to youth and adults who have been systematically denied education and never went to or never finished school. It also emphasised the role of community learning centres, collaboration with communities and the participation of learners and teachers/educators as key factors in promoting relevant, quality education and lifelong learning for all.

With the shrinking of spaces for CSOs, the strong lobby for adult learning and education, as well as the right to education of youth and adults will be neglected. There is a danger that governments will do business as usual in SDG 4 as they focus on formal education institutions – schools, TVET centres, universities – where the marginalised sectors are absent. The Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2017 of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific reported that the Asia Pacific region is on target to achieve SDG 4. It stated that “quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all should be achieved by 2030, if existing momentum is maintained.” Even in South and Southwest Asia, it reported that SDG 4 will be achieved. This complacency and rosy picture in education by governments have time and again been challenged by CSOs. They argued for validation of nationally aggregated data at the local level where inequality in education is stark, where millions of youth and adults remain illiterate and without access to quality education. Thus, CSOs continue to also push for increasing budgets to adult education because of these realities. Where will these voices be with the shrinking spaces?

Assertion and re-thinking

With the developments that constrict civil society, the adult education community will be affected both in its community education provision and advocacy. Along with the other sectors in civil society, it should assert that civil society participation is a right!

Using the SDG 4 platform at the Asia Pacific level, ASPBAE proposed a set of protocols for inviting national civil society organisations into the Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030. Previously, the seats for national CSOs in this platform were negotiated with the Member States and with UNESCO Bangkok every year. The protocol was approved in 2018 and implemented in the 4th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 held in July 2018. Education coalitions are also working on institutionalising CSO participation in education policy platforms and decision-making at the national and local levels.

Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Sita Gurung (pseudoname), National Campaign for Education, Nepal

I am Sita Gurung (Pseudo name), a resident of Gangajamuna Rural Municipality, Baseri, Dhading district. Belonging to a Gurung clan in the inner village, attaining school was a dream and it remained the same; I never got an opportunity to be in a school. I am a mother of three children who I have sent to school.

My house was damaged by the earthquake of 2015. Life was difficult for us to sustain. One day I got to know about the adult learning and lifelong learning from the programme that NCE Nepal and its member Organisation Aasaman Nepal had conducted after the earthquake. It was aimed on helping the marginalised and disaster affected children to attain the school. Going there, I got to know that safe and secure education is an inevitable part of life and is utmost necessary. I convinced my family and sent all my three children to the school.

I expressed my keen interest to support for children to get back to schools and provide literacy skills to the aged women during this two days programme. I learned how to count the numbers and how to convince the parents of the children to send their child to school. The NCE Nepal and Aasaman Nepal team made me head of the Aunty Group, this group aimed to convince those families who do not have head of the family in



Mrs. Sita Gurung (sitting in the chair), monitoring the record kept by her friends regarding the number of children enrolled in the school after the earthquake.

Source: National Campaign for Education



Mrs. Sita (the second from the left), joining the school enrollment campaign

Source: National Campaign for Education

their home (i.e. father of the family) to attend education. Slowly, I was able to keep record of how many new students got enrolled into schools as well as learned how to deal with the parents.

After this, with the consensus of the community and school management I was taken as a chairperson in SMC (School Management Committee). My husband and whole family was surprised to know me as chair of SMC. I slowly started taking the responsibilities of the school and also taking some knowledge regarding how to read and write at the lunch breaks or free time of teacher at school.

Being an introvert (in the beginning) was giving me obstacles to cope with the work responsibilities handed to me. But gradually I overcame those difficulties with the help of activities that local level organisation had. I also joined the adult literacy classes of the government.

Now, at the age of 44, currently I am the chairperson of Baseri Road construction working for the betterment of people of Baseri. Through all these years I've been enhancing and motivating myself. The devastating earthquake brought this major change in my life. Though I learned about basic literacy skills when I was 41 years old, I know how a particular situation is to be handled. Now, I am a member of microfinance institution. I take loan from it, invest it in the vegetable farming and provide interest to it. Nowadays, I actively participate in the school enrollment campaigns, adult education, as well as taking the children to school as retaining them with quality. Finally, long after I knew the significance of education: as education is knowledge and knowledge is the ultimate power. My children are also proud of me and encourage me to study more.

At the High Level Political Forum HLPF, the SDG platform, the education sector can build solidarity with other sectors to challenge the shrinking or even closing of CSO spaces. The momentum has already started to build. The Asia Development Alliance reported that “in the 2017 HLPF more than 2400 CSO representatives from across the globe reiterated the fact of greater demand to engage with UN sustainable development goals and their continued role as one of the important drivers of change along with other pillars of development.”

Beyond the SDGs, CSOs have also taken note of the important role of the UN Human Rights Council to strongly call attention to the repression and intimidation of civil society. The Report of the UN Secretary General in the Human Rights Council Thirty-third session, 16 August 2016 said:

“An earlier HRC resolution (12/2) expressed its concern at the continued reports of intimidation and reprisals against individuals and groups who seek to cooperate or have cooperated with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights and its deep concern at the seriousness of reported reprisals. The Council condemned all acts of intimidation or reprisal by Governments and non-State actors. As of June 2016, eight out of the ten human rights treaty bodies had adopted the Guidelines against Intimidation or Reprisals.”

CSOs are re-thinking their approach and perspectives. While spaces are constricted at the national level, some CSOs have employed strategies at the local level, at times collaborating with progressive local government officials. Some have stepped up the use of social media in their political work (although some countries have been arresting activists challenging governments in their social media accounts).

Finally, Jim Crowther’s “The Contradictions of Populism: Reasserting Adult Education for Democracy” provides a re-framing of populism to help adult education advocates and practitioners to address the crisis in democracy. Drawing lessons from the Scottish yes/no referendum on independence from the UK, Crowther stated that the “crises of democracy and adult education can be turned towards generating productive synergies which adult educators need to develop. Further, he said “reasserting adult education for democracy creates an opportunity to reinvigorate adult education and to reinvigorate democracy.” This surely is a challenging but necessary path.

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Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Tho Tran Quang, VAEFA, Vietnam

Why adult education? What is the difference between the formal education that I had attended – for 19 years from elementary to college – with adult education? Those are the questions in my mind when I think of adult education.

After graduating from Tianjin university of Traditional Chinese Medicine in 2016, my parents and friends thought that I would be a doctor. But what I am doing now, under the view of my family and most of my friends, is an “unusual job”: a LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) social activist.



Source: VAEFA

There are many challenges in the work I'm doing now. The knowledge I gained from my formal education is not that helpful. My schools and text books do not teach me about the problems that the LGBT communities are facing and how to solve them. As a gay myself, I have struggled to learn about myself and overcome the many problems during my school time. After graduating from university,

I have gained much of experience and skills through my volunteer work for blood donation activities, for the Vietnam Association for Education for All (VAEFA) and Hanoi Queer – a group of LGBT youngsters.

I've realised that not all young people can do the job they love and have the opportunity to realise their true potential. Making a career decision is always difficult, especially with the pressure of using what you have been educated in your university, family's expectations and other intangible difficulties.

For myself, I really value my past two year experiences working as a development volunteers and activist. I've gained more confident with my own decisions, became mature. I've learned to look at social issues using multi-dimensional lens. And I understand that young people need to be more determined with their career path to be able to grow and to be happy.

Recognition, validation and accreditation in adult learning and education – Lessons learned from the Korean case

The importance of Korean adult education policies related to recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) recognising the results of non-formal and informal learning is increasing greatly. RVA policies in Korea have been made to link various individual learning experiences to credit recognition and degree acquisition at higher educational institutions centring on the Academic Credit Bank and Bachelor's Degree Examination for Self-Education systems. Recently, based on NCS and the Korean Qualification Framework (KQF), individual learning results are slowly becoming recognised on the evaluation criteria and those results are used in education, training, and job activities. While such a trend has achieved the establishment of a nation-wide lifelong learning strategy and the formation of legal and institutional bases, it still has limits in promoting government-led policy, as regards building governance with various interested parties.

Introduction

Eduard Lindeman, who is called a father of adult education, claimed that adult education is a part of daily life, hence, human experiences are the richest sources of learning. Therefore, he considered adult education as part of daily life, which was not limited in the place of formal education such as the school classrooms (Lindeman, 1926). This has been accepted in the concept of adult learning and education (ALE) today. ALE is defined as “all forms of education and learning” assuring that all adults can participate in his or her social and labour activities (UNESCO, 2015: 2). “All forms of education and learning” here is understood to include not only education from formal educational institutions but also non-formal and informal learning. An essential property of ALE is to cover all types of learning beyond formal education.

On the other hand, the recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of non-formal and informal learning means making all the learning experiences visible and putting value on the full range of competences that individuals have obtained in various contexts and through various means in different phases of their lives (UIL, 2012: 8). Considering the concept of ALE to cover non-formal and informal learning, the RVA of the outcomes of learning is the approach that applies the most fundamental characteristics of ALE.

RVA has emerged as the critical issue in discussions in international organisations related to ALE. UNESCO developed the “UNESCO Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning” for member states to practice RVA more actively. Recently, the importance of the RVA of the learning outcomes was reaffirmed by the Recommendation of Adult Learning and Education (UNESCO, 2015). Implementation of the UNESCO Guidelines was strongly recommended at the CONFINTEA VI Mid-term Review meeting held in Suwon, the Republic of Korea in 2017, and the development of the governance among ministries, local government, and stakeholders was emphasised to recognise and facilitate not only the RVA system and qualifications of each country but also the outcomes from the regions (UIL, 2017).

Before international organisations advocate the importance of the RVA system, there are countries, including the Republic of Korea, that already operate the RVA systems for prior learning experiences. There is quite clear evidence that RVA-related policies have produced positive social benefits, such as providing educational opportunities to the disadvantaged, an increase in employability, improvement of human resource management of companies, and promotion of the exchange of learning and skills acquired in different places, such as the home, workplace, and educational institutions (Lee, 2015). Therefore, more and more countries have shown an interest in introducing the RVA systems to their ALE policy.



Korean National Commission for UNESCO Bridge Asia Partners Training Workshop

Source: Sunok Jo

Given this, this paper aims to review the progress of the development of the RVA systems in Korea, diagnose the challenges to promoting them, and discuss the lessons learned that can support other countries considering the introduction of the RVA systems.

Recognition, validation and accreditation in the Republic of Korea

The concept of the RVA of learning outcomes in Korea is not significantly different from the concept suggested by international organisations. In the discussion of RVA, it is described as the process of assigning values to all the outcomes of learning, regardless of its type, including self-study, training from institutions, volunteering in the community, on-the-job practices, and even living experiences (Lee, Um & Lee, 2013). It emphasises that the individual capabilities recognised, validated and accredited should be acknowledged as the objective indices to be utilised in the further education, employment and career development of learners (Na, Oh & Shin, 2016).

One of the notable characteristics of RVA in the Republic of Korea is that it pays significant attention to learning outcomes at the level of higher education. Therefore, the main issues for RVA are to develop evaluation and recognition systems for prior learning experiences and to align the university degree system with other qualification systems (Na, Oh & Shin, 2016; Lee, 2018).

Why does recognition, validation and accreditation gain attention in the Republic of Korea?

In the middle of unprecedented social changes considered to be the 4th Industrial Revolution, new types of skills, knowledge and attitudes are necessary. The question raised is whether the educational system in Korea can provide proper opportunities for learners to meet these changes. The answer is that the current education system shows limitations in guaranteeing that learners achieve new levels of competency for the future. Even more serious is that educational disparity regarding age, gender, education and income level has become worse. One of the reasons is Korea's unique perspective that places an absolute value on school education compared to learning in society outside school.

As a result, there is a need to create a flexible learning system in which learners can develop their competencies when and where they want. This has been referred to as the transformation of a value system from a school-based society to a competence-based society that considers learners' achievement earned through experience in society worthy enough. In the midst of this, the ALE policy in Korea places a priority on RVA of the outcomes of learning.

In fact, the participation rates in ALE of the Korean adults reveal a general trend that more and more adults are involved in non-formal learning. The participation rate in ALE in 2017 was 34.4 %. Out of this percentage, the participation rate of non-formal learning was 33.4 %, while that of formal education was only 1.9 % (MOE and KEDI, 2017). This represents a high portion of non-formal learning participation among Korean adults compared to an average formal education participation rate in OECD countries of 11 % (OECD, 2017).

This trend shows that it will cause a decrease in the motivation and confidence of individual learners who participate in ALE and contribute to the low utilisation of human resources in the whole society if society does not accept the value of out-of-school learning experiences due to an outdated traditional culture.

How are the RVA systems developed and operated?

Since the 2000s, the importance of the RVA of the outcomes of learning has been stressed in the ALE policies in Korea. The development of the national qualification system (Korean Qualifications Framework: KQF) was initiated upon the amendment of the Framework Act on Qualifications. Governmental initiatives, such as the "Support Project for Universities'

Lifelong Education System” and the “Project to support high school students who expand their education opportunities later after they find a job” by the Ministry of Education (MOE), created a momentum to actualise the RVA systems in Korea. The Higher Education Act was amended to include on-the-job experiences in the scope of the Grade Point Average (GPA) of universities (Jung, 2013; Na, Oh & Shin, 2016).

However, before that time, similar systems of RVA had been operated, such as the Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS) and Bachelor’s Degree Examination for Self-Education System (BDES). ACBS is the most typical RVA system in Korea. It is a system to recognise a variety of types of learning achieved inside and outside of formal educational institutions and grant academic credits. Learners can earn an associate’s or bachelor’s degree if they accumulate the credits upon the standards required for the degree acquirement (NILE, 2018).

Based on the Act on Recognition of Credits, etc., the ACBS has continued to expansively include the range of recognisable learning experiences by recognising learners’ achievements. As a result, there are six categories of the sources of credits in the ACBS. Learners can acquire credits by:

1. taking accredited courses from non-formal education and vocational training institutions accredited by the MOE;
2. completing curriculum at accredited universities and colleges;
3. taking part-time classes or extension programmes at accredited universities and colleges, including cyber colleges;
4. acquiring national and private certificates approved by the MOE;
5. passing the BDES or completing required courses to substitute the exams;
6. possessing skills or completing training to acquire the skills of Important Intangible Cultural Properties.

By recognising these different types of credit resources, the ACBS plays a vital role of connecting various learning systems.

Furthermore, the credits acknowledged by the ACBS can be used for license acquisition. If a person acquires a certain level of credits in a related subject from the ACBS, he or she is eligible to apply for the judicial examination, certified public accountant test, and national technology qualification test. If one acquires a bachelor’s degree through the ACBS, it is also possible to acquire licenses, including family health specialist, nursing teacher (class 2), social worker (class 2), barber and hairdresser (class 2), and librarian (class 2), depending on the majors.

On the other hand, the BDES is a typical case of recognising, validating and accrediting the outcomes of informal learning. The BDES is a system that enables learners to earn a bachelor's degree from the minister of the MOE through passing a 4-step exam, without attending regular courses provided by formal or non-formal educational institutions. At present, the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) organises the tests and it operates 10 degrees in 11 major subjects. As of 2017, 28,988 learners have applied for the bachelor's degree from the BDES, and 19,621 learners have taken degrees since 1992 when the system was initiated (MOE & NILE, 2018).

Using the RVA system in Korea for the acquisition of licenses is another example. The Human Resources Development Service of Korea that manages the national and private qualification examinations operates an exam exemption system for those who are prize winners in various skill contests, those with foreign licenses, and those with practical experience when they apply for national technical licenses. In addition, training outcomes can be recognised as “a qualification within the company” by the review of the chairperson of the Human Resources Development Service of Korea (Na, Oh & Shin, 2016).

Efforts to develop better RVA systems in Korea

After consideration of the short history of RVA in Korea, the general evaluation is that the RVA system is not being operated systemically yet (Lee, 2013; Lee, 2015). The analysis shows that the reasons are: first, difficulty in the development of a consensus among institutions on the introduction of RVA and its application; second, in objectifying a variety of learning outcomes of the learners, including employment experience; third, an ambiguity of standards with which to apply RVA; and fourth, social perception to put a high value on the graduation certificates from the official educational institutions (Lee, Um & Lee, 2013).

However, as the importance of RVA is emphasised more and more as the society changes, diverse political efforts have been attempted to implement RVA more actively in the Korean ALE policy. In order to provide the possible ramifications for other countries which are interested in the development of RVA, this article will conclude by reviewing strategies within the RVA recommendation by UNESCO and provide the ramifications of the Korean cases that may influence other countries.

The most distinctive strength out of the strategies used in Korea may be the first one, “the establishment of RVA as a key component of a national lifelong learning strategy” (UIL, 2012). UNESCO recommended creat-



Academic Credit Bank System ceremony

Source: Sunok Jo

ing the national lifelong learning strategy to develop national references or standards to enable the realisation of RVA, and to develop equivalences among various learning outcomes based on it (UIL, 2012). The main strategy of national lifelong learning in Korea is the “National Lifelong Learning Promotion Plan”. MOE initiates the development of the national plan for lifelong learning every 5 years based on Article 5 in the Lifelong Education Act. To date, four basic plans have been established, and the policies on national lifelong learning will be performed based on the 4th basic plan from 2018 to 2022.

The RVA related policies have been included four times in the basic plans. Supporting recognition of various types of learning as credits using the ACBS and the BDES and the systemic management of personal histories for education and career development through a “Lifelong Learning Account System” have been suggested in the national plans. Particularly, the 4th plan suggested recognising individuals’ cumulative learning history through credits aligned with the Korean national competency system and supported acquiring a variety of licenses to allow this (MOE, 2018).

To implement the RVA policies suggested so far, it is important to secure the validity and consistency of evaluation with certain levels of

achievement standards to make various learning outcomes compatible. To achieve this, Korea has developed the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), defined as “a system that enables educational achievement qualifications, in-the-field experiences, and training results to be mutually connected” (MOE, 2017). The Korean NQF (KQF) organises three sub-domains with levels from 1 to 8 – such as knowledge, skill, autonomy and responsibility – that are required for performing a job. (Chung & Choi, 2016).

As seen in the definition of NQF, the stakeholders who participated in its development agreed that systematisation should cover the kinds of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are required in the workplace. Efforts to analyse and systematise such attributes as demanded from the real world, not in schools, led to the development of national competency standards (NCS). The NCS development project provides the knowledge, skills, and competencies required at various levels for specific jobs by industries. Up to now, a total of 986 NCS standards have been developed (MOEL, 2018).

UNESCO recommended the elaboration of the processes that identify, document, assess, validate, and accredit the outcomes of learning. This is the second strategy, “the development of an RVA system accessible to all” (UIL, 2012). In Korea, most RVA-related policies are implemented based on a legal foundation. For the ACBS, the Act on Recognition of Credits, etc., was legislated based on the standards of overall management, curriculum operation, and credit recognition. The specific regulations and guidelines were issued for credit recognition, curriculum development, and other details on the operation of the ACBS. The institutionalisation of the policy implementation process helps those in charge of the ACBS to operate the system more effectively, as they understand their roles and duties clearly. In addition, it enables the ACBS learners’ achievements to be recognised more reliably and trusted in society. On the other hand, it is criticised as reducing the flexibility of the ACBS to change its institutions according to social change (MOE & NILE, 2018), so it is important to have a balanced view in developing the regulations related to the RVA.

It is necessary to develop “a coordinated national structure involving all stakeholders” that is the fourth strategy suggested by UNESCO (UIL, 2012). As mentioned, the RVA of the outcomes of learning is not an issue limited to the education sector, but involves other sectors, including industry, enterprises, social partners, and voluntary organisations (UIL, 2012). It is essential to develop a coordinated structure within which stakeholders can exchange and build consensus in terms of designing and implementing the RVA system. In Korea, the importance of different stakeholders’ participation and commitment to the successful operation of the RVA systems is well known. Therefore, the MOE and the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MOEL) are collaborating on the development of the NCS

and the NQF, in order to establish governance that governments, training institutions and companies can be involved in. However, the RVA-related policies in Korea show the limitation that private sector players, such as training institutions and companies, do not actively participate in the development and operation of policies, as there are not enough benefits to attract them. It remains a significant task for the RVA of the outcomes of learning to change its process from a government-led model to the participatory one.

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Suwithida Charungkattikul

Strategies for developing a lifelong learning society

Experiences from Thailand

Today's world may be characterised as the dawn of the learning society where knowledge is considered as a country's most valued asset and primary source of power. In the increasingly intense competition among the international community, Thailand has been respected as advancing the concept of transforming communities, cities and regions into learning societies engaged in a sustainable development strategy that promotes the unending learning of individuals – the smallest unit of society. It is emphasising the balance between the economy, society, natural resources and environment and is transforming the Thai people into knowledge citizens and knowledge workers. This article presents ten learning society development strategies toward enhancing a sustainable lifelong learning development.

Learning society development strategies

The learning society approach aims to balance economic, social, natural and environmental aspects, social responsibility, and resources of society; additionally, the learning society and andragogy may help in transforming the people into knowledge citizens and knowledge workers (Charungkaitikul & Henschke, 2014; Wildemeersch et al., 2000). The learning society development strategies are designed to develop a community engaged in single or multiple matters simultaneously. The strategies involve preservation, nourishment, rehabilitation, protection, promotion, assistance, development, distribution and instillation through formal, non-formal, and informal learning, information technology, learning resources, local wisdoms and knowledge that allow members of society to generate new knowledge and a proper knowledge management system, to exchange the said knowledge with members of the same and other communities, as well as to make the best life decisions possible.

Charungkaitikul (2011) provided an in-depth study detailing the results of the development of a learning society. The study revealed the five essential elements for enhancing sustainable lifelong learning development:

1. Components of a learning society;
2. Principles for the development of a learning society;
3. Steps in the development process of a learning society;
4. Ten strategies for the development of a learning society; and
5. Key success factors for developing a learning society.

All components comprise details which can be put into practice (Charungkaitikul, 2011). In this context it is important to recognise that the individual learning communities/cities/towns all operate in their own locally appropriate ways.

Therefore, to develop an extensive lifelong learning society and create new ways of managing lifelong support relationships with the learners, the ten strategies enabling the community to effectively survive in the knowledge-based economic environment are critical:

- Strategy 1: Development of lifelong learners;
- Strategy 2: Development of learning resources;
- Strategy 3: Development of knowledge and wisdom;
- Strategy 4: Development of appropriate community/city design;
- Strategy 5: Development of learning community and organisation;

Strategy 6: Development of knowledge management;
Strategy 7: Development of a learning climate and knowledge-sharing culture;
Strategy 8: Development of process improvement;
Strategy 9: Development of infrastructure and learning facilities; and
Strategy 10: Development of network competencies.

The following text will reflect on the implementation of these elements in the Thai context.

The processes to put the learning society development strategies into practice

The heart of a learning society is the commitment of all members to all the elements of a learning society (Charungkaittikul, 2011). Creating a sustainable learning society is to create a learning mindset of people and a learning environment that allows them to decide what to learn, respect for people's goals and desires, and offer the hope for individuals to shape their own learning. Su (2010) described that "When people are respected as the ultimate decision-makers and their choices and preferences for learning are fully respected, the learning society is then understood as a foundation for people to use to develop themselves and flourish." (p. 22).

To develop a learning society it is necessary to take into account the notion that education and learning are important mechanisms to develop people and society. People's learning, lifestyles and occupations should be harmoniously integrated. A community should act as a learning base or learning centre where local resources are effectively utilised. All community members should be able to participate in each work procedure, starting from designing and making decisions related to public activities. All parties in society should be supported in reaching their full potentials. Meanwhile, an environment that facilitates learning should also be built. All these activities can strengthen the community while paving a strong base for a future sustainable learning society. The processes to develop a learning society are as follows.

1. Specify the objectives for development of a learning society

A community should specify its policies or directions for development of a learning society that should cover plans and guidelines to be followed by all parties in the community. The plans can be both for short and long terms. The policies should be clarified so that all people gain clear under-

standing of such policies and become more interested in participating in the learning society development policies.

2. Identify responsible organisations or working committees

Village committees or Sub-district Administrative Organisations (SAO) possess sufficient potentials to initiate learning development activities in a community, supported by other partnership networks such as nearby Offices of Non-formal and Informal Promotion Education. The committees that consist of representatives of various groups in the community can be set up in order to directly oversee the community development projects based on the specified strategies. In light of this, the potentials of personnel in charge of community development should also be enhanced.

3. Seek cooperation from relevant partnership networks

A community should analyse the potentials of partnership networks and also seek additional cooperation from relevant organisations in the community such as local organisations, state and private organisations, business operators, local people with wisdom, and people's representatives. The cooperation should be based on the partnership principle in which people cooperate to plan, work, and gain the results to bring benefits to the community.

4. Proceed with and manage learning society development projects

The working networks follow the partnership principle in order to make the planning, proceed with the work plans and see the results. All people should be allowed to take part in all processes to develop a learning society. They should express their opinions concerning the community's problems, offer some suggestions for the areas that need improvement and follow up the performance.

To organise lifelong learning activities, the relevant parties should follow some diversified and flexible principles. The knowledge contents obtained from learning activities should accord with the people's ways of living, such as daily life, occupations, and the ways to take care of themselves and their families. In addition, the knowledge should be exchanged and shared and the people can easily access the learning resources while continuing to engage in learning activities.

5. Evaluate the results for future improvement

A community and all partnership networks should join hands to follow up and evaluate projects and activities. Meetings should be regularly arranged through community stages where work results can be presented. In addition to the community stages, the presentations can also be done through

other channels such as radio, community journals, etc., in order to raise understanding among all groups of people. The presentations of the work results are also expected to attract the people's attention and raise their interests in participation. In addition, the partnership networks should discuss problems with the people and ask for suggestions for future improvements. The community should summarise the results of each project and put them into proper and systematic document forms with easy access for future research, reference or knowledge exchanges with other communities. This can be an important knowledge source for the community and can be generally explored by interested people in the future.

To successfully transform a society into one which is learning, all state and private organisations and the public should join forces to set visions, goals and targets for lifelong learning management and learning society development. They should adjust their development strategies in favour of human resource development and promote the transmission of technologies both within organisations and between organisations. They should also support research and development projects aimed at enhancing the people's and organisations' efficiency. In addition, they should come up with directions for learning society development in the future and for preservation of valuable human resources. Finally, they ought to also utilise human resources in the most effective and appropriate manner.

To effectively promote lifelong learning it is necessary that non-formal and informal education is reformed and emphasised at least equally with formal education, both in terms of working procedures and financial support. Further, responsible agencies may have to be transformed from operators to supporters. In other words, local agencies and the public should take key roles in developing lifelong learning in a community. They should help enhance the people's potentials and basic knowledge necessary for proceeding with lifelong learning development projects. Meanwhile, they should also join forces with the people and provide necessary resources for lifelong learning in order to ensure that all Thai people are granted equal learning opportunities and that the quality of their lives is enhanced in a desirable way for Thai society (Office of Non-formal and Informal Education Promotion, 2011; Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017; and Ninlamot, 2018).

Thai society development should be geared to the development of a learning society that should act as a major mechanism for the government's economic and social development. The people should be granted lifelong learning opportunities while all parts of society are given the right to take part in the lifelong learning management. The country's education will be managed in favour of the people's lives and society in order to meet

the people's needs and accord with the conditions of target groups. Finally, education will be perfectly integrated with the way of life in Thai society.

Developing a learning society is neither quick nor simple (Ergazakis et al., 2004). It is ongoing and dynamic. The following must be emphasised: the analysis of the current situation, formulation of a clear and definite learning society plan, vision, and strategy, implementation of the knowledge-based development and lifelong learning programmes and activities, and evaluation of the results of the successful processes in developing learning communities in Thailand depend on the participation of key actors, groups, and individuals in the communities. Things relevant to several successful learning cities and communities in planning for future learning societies and communities: it is important to develop a lifelong learning system, formation of a virtuous circle system for individual development, local economic development, social cohesion, policies aimed at partnership, participation and performance, learning liaison related to local innovative projects, development of models incorporating local characteristics and vision, improvement and expansion of learning community driving structure, construction of a monitoring and evaluation system, cooperative and collaborative relationships, action involving networks, strategies for the future, support for innovation, and adequate infrastructure to support the movement (Carrillo, 2006; Choi, 2003; McCullough et al., 2003).

Hence, it is necessary that an organisation or mechanism is set forth to link all systems in the country, for example the economy, culture, society, law, etc., so that the learning society can be developed in systematic ways. When one considers the enhancement of a lifelong learning society in Thailand, there are three main suggestions:

1. Improvement of the quality and standard of education amongst Thai people. The improvement should be made in all areas, including learners, educational development, learning resources, environment, curriculum, and professional systems. All of these should be improved under effective education management.
2. Quality learning and knowledge opportunities among Thai people should be enhanced. All people, regardless of gender and age, should be granted opportunities to access lifelong learning channels during their lifetime.
3. Participation of all involved parties: All parties in society should be encouraged to participate in education management that lays emphasis on human development.

Thai people of the new generation are expected to learn by themselves as well as develop positive reading habits. On top of that, they should also

always be eager to learn and be able to communicate effectively with their fellow citizens.

Conclusion

The challenges of globalisation have not as yet had the same influence on all countries, and the countermeasures for these challenges differ as well. Thus the focus for learning society development will differ according to the challenges faced by that nation and its local communities. Considering the future for a lifelong learning society in Thailand, it is clear that it is necessary for the country to examine contexts and develop the appropriate planning and implementation of a lifelong learning society. Thus there are both old and new challenges which need to be addressed, particularly with regard to changing demographics, social infrastructure, economic development, environment and technologies, and maintaining a sense of community in a society that is increasingly becoming more individualistic.

Developing a learning society is a whole-society endeavour and demands full participation from all sectors in order to implement learning society development measures based on results. Further studies should focus on (1) the implementation of the learning society developmental processes in various communities; (2) more investigation on the responsibility and involvement of the networks; and, (3) employing mixed methods and various strategies to look for more fundamental and true data.

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The role of adult learning and education in the context of the widening gap between the rich and the poor

While overall economic growth seems to continue worldwide, the disparities not only in income, but also in education, health and other sectors, are growing as well. Using Cambodia as an example, this article highlights country-specific roots of poverty, including a lack of land ownership, corruption, religious belief and a lack of quality education. Reflecting on the situation of adult learning and education in Cambodia, it eventually gives suggestions for a way forward by re-thinking how adult learning and education (ALE) is currently perceived and implemented.

Introduction

The gap between the rich and the poor has been continuously growing within and among countries. According to Credit Suisse, the wealthiest 1 % of the population now own 50.1 % of all household wealth in the world, while the majority (70 %) of the population merely own 2.7 % (2017).

Although quality education has been identified as one of the main tools in eradicating poverty and inequality, governments and decision makers still focus on the formal education system, mostly prioritising primary education. By doing so, they leave out those who are the most affected by poverty.

Poverty and wealth in Cambodia

While the overall economic growth of the country seems to continue, the disparities not only in income, but therefore also in education, health and other regards, seem to grow as well. According to World Bank statistics, the percentage of Cambodians living under the national poverty line more than halved and fell from 53 % in 2004 to 13.15 % in 2014 (2018). However, around 4.5 million people remain near-poor, i.e. living on less than \$2.30 per day per person. According to Neak Samsen, Poverty Analyst of the World Bank in Cambodia, “the loss of just 1,200 riel (about \$0.30) per day in income would throw an estimated three million Cambodians back into poverty, doubling the poverty rate to 40 %” (World Bank 2014). At the same time, there are similar developments as in the rest of the world; the top 10 % of the population in terms of wealth distribution have had an increase of 90 % in their earnings, while the lowest 10 % have only seen 40 % (Kumar & Boret 2014: 15).

The gap between the rich and the poor becomes particularly evident in the country’s capital, Phnom Penh. Here, the streets are filled with a selection of the world’s most expensive cars parking in front of luxury apartment buildings or shopping malls that have been constructed by migrant workers from other provinces that work for only \$75 a month. These workers have left their homes and families looking for every opportunity to support them. One of the reasons why they are coming to the cities lies in (lack of) land ownership.

Land ownership

In Cambodia, the distribution of land started out in a very equal manner. During the Khmer Rouge regime, people had no choice but to work on



Rattanakari: rural village where DVV International works with the Kavet ethnic group

Source: Vanna Peou

state-owned land in exchange for two meals a day. Even after the regime fell there was no private land ownership until the government distributed it based on household size in 1989. However, shortly afterwards an informal market arose and by the mid-2000s Cambodia had one of the most unequal distributions of landholdings in the region (CDRI 2013: 42-44). Now, although the number of migrant workers increases each day, 90% of the poor still live in rural areas and 66% of them depend on agriculture. The problem is that 10% are landless and a high number of them do not hold an official land title (World Bank 2015). This makes them vulnerable to land grabbing and stops them from making investments to increase land productivity and therefore also their livelihoods. It also brings up another problem: corruption.

Corruption

“Through social connections or simply greater capacity to pay bribes, wealthier rural households find it easier to navigate governance structures which are more often than not characterised by limited resources, profes-



Daily life in Cambodia: transport of merchandises

Source: Vanna Peou

sional capacity, transparency and accountability.” (Kumar & Boret 2014: 18). This is of course not only true for the rural, but also for all households in the urban areas and hinders Cambodians in terms of education, healthcare, access to high paying jobs, opening up or keeping a business running. Furthermore, high individual debts, social inequality and discrimination also work in favour of this system. Unfortunately, the wealthy do not seem as interested in fighting corruption, since they are the ones that benefit from it the most.

Religious belief

Now, some people might be wondering why disappointment and anger in the population is not as high as it could be.

Part of the reason is religious belief. Cambodia is a predominantly Buddhist country. People believe that their current life is linked to the mistakes of their past and therefore have no say in the kind of situation they are in (*karma*). Often people have internalised this thinking so much that they believe there is no chance for them to get out of poverty because this is the kind of life they deserve.

Lack of quality education

A continuous challenge, also connected to what has been mentioned above, is a lack of quality education. For example, sufficient literacy skills and civic education could help in acquiring secure contracts and land titles, and religious education could help in critically examining religious belief and superstition. During the Khmer Rouge regime, many of the high-

ly-skilled workers and academics of the country were murdered and the majority of Cambodians were only trained as farmers. While the primary school enrolment rate has been rising in recent years, the secondary or higher education enrolment remains much lower. Nowadays, most members of the workforce have not finished their primary education at all or have only a primary education. Although the tourism and garment industries have brought international investments and some economic development, low education and skills have led to high exploitation of workers and a continuously growing gap between the rich and the poor.

The role of adult learning and education

There is no official definition of adult learning and education (ALE) in Cambodia. However, any programmes that could fall under this term are being implemented by the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. In 2002, the Policy on Non-Formal Education defined that the sector includes: 1) literacy and vocational skills training, 2) continuing education, including post literacy, equivalency, and quality of life improvement, 3) income generation, 4) family education, 5) re-entry programmes, and 6) curriculum and textbook development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have certainly brought attention to the concept of lifelong learning and have highlighted the need for such opportunities and a corresponding policy in the country. Unfortunately, a lack of understanding of what this concept means also brought confusion that sometimes made lifelong learning and non-formal education seem like one and the same. It is important that the Cambodian (and all other) government(s), as well as different stakeholders, understand that ALE is simply a part of Non-formal Education, which is itself a part of the lifelong learning concept. Moreover, non-formal education is not just any part of the concept, it happens to be the biggest part of it, and needs to have its own policy instead of being “upgraded” into a lifelong learning policy.

As mentioned earlier, the primary school enrolment rate in Cambodia has increased significantly, however, the number of students dropping out after primary school still remains high as many families simply cannot afford to send their children to school any longer. In 2015, the labour force participation rate, i.e. the percentage of people above the age of 15 that are currently working, was 82.7 % (ILOSTAT). This means, that while the children and future generations are slowly getting access to higher quality education and a chance to improve their livelihood through this, the main

part of the population is not receiving sufficient support in this matter. Kumar and Boret actually found that the improvements in the social sector, including education, have only had significant impact on income for the top 10 percent of the wealthiest individuals in Cambodia (2014: 14).

These numbers are not very surprising if one looks at the financial budget that is given to the DNFE for its programmes. Although the actual figures have risen over the years, the percentage that it receives is still merely 0.8 % of the overall education budget. It is impossible to offer quality non-formal education opportunities to such a large number of people with an insufficient budget that, in addition, mostly focusses on adult and youth literacy.

The way forward

While growing up, children have dreams about becoming superheroes, saving the world, or simply having a never-ending amount of ice cream. Then, once adulthood, or as some people may call it “real life” hits, they forget all about those dreams. Most likely, their education paths have been anything but participatory. Instead of being taught to think critically and find creative solutions for problems, the education system has been teaching them to consume opinions and imitate the actions of others. Adults have to be reminded that they do still have the capacity to reshape their own life by imagining alternatives and new possibilities. They might just need a little push. And this is where adult learning and education comes in. ALE is more than just literacy and re-entry programmes. In order to be able to move forward at all, it is necessary that people actually see its high potential in fostering a sustainable and equitable development of Cambodian society.

Until today, most people work every day of the week in order to make a living for their family. ALE can be able to reach these people with flexible and accessible offers that are based on individual demands. And yes, literacy classes for factory workers are building a good foundation to do so, but it has to go beyond that. While literacy can help factory workers in securing working contracts or farmers in obtaining title to their land, it will still not be able to help them with the corruption and exploitation they meet on the way.

First: There have to be more ways to bring people together. This does not mean bringing politicians from each district or province together at one table, but to actually have a diverse group of people discussing their interests and problems to ensure that everyone is heard. If the policies and actions do not reach the people they are meant to support and if these



Road conditions in a rural province in Cambodia

Source: Vanna Peou

policies and actions don't take people's daily lives into account, they will not be successful. Community Learning Centres (CLCs) could be places for a citizenship education that encourages people to engage in political issues and stand up for their rights.

Second: Poverty reduction cannot be implemented through education alone, therefore it is important for the government to consistently expand their knowledge and human resource capacities to find innovative solutions in offering support to those who need it the most. Furthermore, a completely effective non-formal education system has to be built in Cambodia in the first place. There are 350 CLCs around the country, but the majority of these are not functioning well due to insufficient and unpredictable technical and financial support, and many people have never even heard of such a centre. CLCs are at the heart of the community, so they are able to respond to the local needs at a low cost. Possibly, the Lifelong Learning Policy which is coming could play an important role in unleashing this potential.

Third: In order to shape religious beliefs there has to be close cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, the Ministry of Cult and Religion and monasteries all over the country. Monks have been respected teachers in Cambodia for centuries and their guidance is extremely valued. In collaboration, the understanding of *karma* can be shaped to one that does not only explain our current life as a result of our own past actions, but also of our present ones.

Fourth: In the globalised world we live in today, it does not only lie in the hands of Cambodia alone to reduce these gaps. ALE programmes in countries that use Cambodia as a production site need to make sure to address issues of fair-trade, sustainability, and health of workers and provide information about the conditions the clothes were made in that people are wearing. After all, it is a well known economic principle that demand determines supply. Furthermore, international donors in particular should maybe rethink the requirement of having their logo on every item that has been financially supported by their money. How are people going to work independently even after the project ends when they are constantly reminded that they were not able to do this on their own?

Cambodia still has a long way to go in order to set up an effective and well functioning ALE/NFE system that is able to offer the learning opportunities needed to fight poverty and inequality. However, the latest progress and developments have been promising and brought more attention to the sector. After all, in the end it is not enough to just rethink adult learning and education itself. One must also rethink the concepts that work around it: equality, development, accessibility, and sustainability.

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Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia



Pakoulee Xaiyaxang, Laos

My name is Pakoulee Xaiyaxang. I am a Hmong woman who originally came from the countryside. When I was young, I observed some people who could communicate with foreigners; I felt that was wonderful, and I started having the dream that one day I would be like them. Thus, I tried to study harder even though my family did not have enough money to support me to go to school, but my father still went out to borrow money for us to study. Moreover, other people looked down on my family. Yet, my parents always reminded me that “whatever unacceptable words they said to us today, it will be the most valuable present

for us in the future and education is the most essential key to succeed.”

Hmong people are an ethnic group in Laos. Among Hmong people, there are problems with gender equality; parents always support boys more than girls, for example regarding their education, and many other things. As we also have our own language, it was quite hard for me to become good at Lao as my second language and English as my third language. Especially Lao pronunciation was a challenge for me, and other, rich students looked down on me. Still, I finished my studies at the National University of Laos, Faculty of Science, Department of Computer Science in 2012, and also at the Faculty of Education, Department of English Teaching in 2014. I learned a lot from my studies at university, but still I could not speak English with foreigners.

At the end of 2012, I received a scholarship to study at Science of Life Studies (SOLS 24/7) in Cambodia for a year. This school supports women with limited opportunities to education. If men want to attend the school they have to bring a girl or a woman with them. The programme SOLS 24/7 enabled me to speak English, taught me how to motivate myself and support others, and I learned the distinction between hard skills and soft skills. I particularly enjoyed getting to know another culture in Cambodia, seeing new places, and learning how the other participants develop themselves and their countries.

Subsequently, I got the chance to volunteer for the Viv Ncau(VN) Association which helps Hmong women from the countryside to come and study in the city. I have also volunteered for the Huam Jai Asasakmak Association which supports young Lao people to find work experience placements or get the chance to volunteer in an office.

Finally, I started working with DVV International Laos as a project manager’s assistant. I support organising workshops on adult education, lifelong learning and other topics with our partners. Through all these different experiences, I can now work with Lao people and foreigners. I am now also able to communicate with foreigners in front of others and have achieved my dream from when I was young.

*Source:
DVV International*



Topics and approaches

Changing “have to” to “want to” through lifelong learning

The era of artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain, and industry 4.0

How many of us realise our potential through continuous development of our unique competencies and passions? While appreciating that the current education system – which was modelled after a factory production system – has provided millions of people with learning opportunities, the system is currently neither equity-based nor successful enough to break social strata reproduction. Academic and cognitive performances of students are clearly dependent on the socio-economic status of their family. Due to rapid technological advancement, many of us wonder if we will have jobs in the next 5 or 10 years. And an interesting fact is that all around the world most of us are not engaged in or enjoying our jobs. Soon, we will be able to use artificial intelligence (AI) and big data to understand more about who we are, what passions and curiosity we have, what unique competencies we have, when we have our highest concentration and productivity, and when we are happy or emotionally out of control. This information and data is very important for us to continue lifelong learning (LLL) towards its various purposes. In the near future most of us will have a virtual personal assistant to help us grow intellectually, emotionally, and physically. In addition, we will have more chances to meet with people who have similar passions and expertise due to efficient matchings made by an AI system which is based on our personal data. We will be connected with people in order to enjoy learning and engaging in actions which accord with our life objectives and what we regard as our mission. Through blockchain technologies, our identities will be secured and resources will smoothly flow without many layers and omissions. Collaboration with each other will become much easier.

What do we mean by a lifelong learner?

Let's start by asking ourselves a question: "Am I a lifelong learner?" If the answer is Yes, how would you prove it in a simple and convincing way that even a 12 year-old child can understand? In fact, this question is how – whenever the opportunity arises – my presentations begin. Interestingly enough, getting a clear response from an audience is rare, even when the room is full of experts and officials who promote lifelong learning. It seems that people might be good at discussing lifelong learning for others but not so good at analysing whether or not we are lifelong learners ourselves. Or, it might be possible that people believe that university degrees are evidence of our lifelong learning. My personal view is that degrees are something that you earned and paid for in the past. Of course I also realise that people are not exactly in agreement about of the definition of "learning".

Inconvenient aspects of the current education system

"The goal of education is to enable individuals to continue their education" (John Dewey)

As life expectancy continually increases, especially for the Japanese people, statistically speaking, 50 % of children who were born after 2007 will live up to the age of 107¹. If one is currently under 50 years of age, that person should be ready to reach 100. Our current systems, especially the education system, were not designed for our longer lives. Early childhood education and K-12 (primary, secondary and high school education) are provided for us in the early years of life and academic performance depends heavily on the socio-economic status² of the family one is born into. In Asia, only 27 % of students go on to higher education³. Most of the



Source:
www.istockphoto.com/th/stock-photos

1/ *Gratton, L & Scott, A. (2016): The 100-Year Life: Living and Working in an Age of Longevity: Bloomsbury Information*

2/ *OECD (2013): PISA 2012 Results – Excellence through Equity, Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed: OECD*

3/ *UNESCO Institute of Statistics Database (2016)*

governments in the region spend more than 95 % of their public budget on K-12 and higher education. According to research by UNICEF, in low-income countries⁴ 47 % of the public education budget is spent on the top 10 % of better-educated students. One could say that these unbalanced socio-economic structures have been partly kept in place because of the current education system.

According to Credit Swiss, the richest 1 % of people in the Asia Pacific region own 41.2 % of the wealth⁵. Given this very unbalanced economic structure, how can education break the cycle of social and economic strata reproduction? Although Japan is regarded as one of the PISA higher achiever nations, 72.5 % of Japanese teenagers think they are useless and hopeless. In the US, 44 million people are 1.5 trillion dollars in debt because of the student loans they took out in order to complete their higher education. On average, each of them owes USD 38,000. In Japan, one out of three people who got student loans go bankrupt. They suffer both mentally and financially from the loan for decades. To make matters worse, the degree that they are paying for might not even be relevant for their job. Again in the US, only 27 % of college graduates have a job which is related to their major. Most students are not sure what they want to do, nor what their unique competencies are, or what their passion is when they graduate from these expensive universities.

Low engagement and motivation in the workplace

In 2012 an interesting worldwide study⁶ was conducted to check on how engaged workers are at the workplace. It discovered that only 13 % of employees are engaged, 63 % of them are not engaged, and 24 % are actively disengaged. (Being *engaged* was defined as having commitment, passion, involvement, enthusiasm, and focused effort.) Another interesting study showed that 70 % of workers don't regularly have time for creative or strategic thinking, 66 % are not able to focus on one thing at a time, 60 % don't have the opportunity to do what they enjoy most, and 50 % find neither meaning and significance nor a connection to the company's mission. All in all, the key message from these



Source: www.istockphoto.com/th/stock-photos

4/ UNICEF (2015): Investment Case for Education and Equity, New York: UNICEF

5/ Credit Suisse (2017): Global Wealth Report 2017, Zurich: Credit Suisse AG

6/ Gallup (2012): State of the Global Workplace – 142 countries surveyed in 2011-2012, US, Gallup Press

studies shows that 70-80 % of workers are not engaged in the work and/or are working without creativity, joy, focus, and a sense of significance and mission.

Are we simply busy with too many things that we “have to do” for our survival in the workplace? If one were to count the number of colleagues (including oneself) who are really engaged in what they are doing in the organisation, would the number be close to the results of these studies? From my experience in various organisations and workplaces, the answer is Yes! One should also not forget the possible effects and impact on mental and physical health after working like that for 40 years. According to Dr. Hideto Tomabuchi, a well-known cognitive scientist and psychologist in Japan⁷, continuously just doing work that we “have to do” for a long time will negatively damage our efficacy, confidence, and self-esteem.

Jobs to be replaced by artificial intelligence and machines

For the past 5 years, we have been reading and hearing about how AI and machines will take our jobs away. In 2013, Dr. Carl Benedikt Frey and Dr. Michael Osborne at Oxford University announced “According to our estimates around 47 % of the total US employment is in the high risk category. We refer to these as jobs at risk – i.e. jobs we expect could be automated relatively soon, perhaps over the next decade or two.”⁸ It is not only true

about US employment, but also true about employment in Asia. A similar study was conducted by the World Bank, which said that 77 % of the employment in China, 69 % in India, and 72 % in Thailand will be replaced by automation. It is already happening today. One can observe these obvious changes easily. For example, I use a robot cleaner, a robot advisor for my personal financial management, and a



Source: www.softbankrobotics.com/emea/en

7/ Tomabeche, H. (2018): Wake Your Brain Up by Deleting Trashes in Your Head, Tokyo: Cognitive Research Labs

8/ Benedikt, F. & Osborne, A. (2013): The title is not all caps: The Future of Employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?, Oxford

smartphone AI speaking assistant. Also, I watch video content recommended by the YouTube AI, read posts recommended by the Facebook AI, buy things recommended by the Amazon AI. When I was in Japan last summer, I found (still) clumsy robots working at many stores. The robot is called “pepper” and can be hired for USD 500 per month. At my office we have been making an AI chatbot prototype that can provide one with SDG-related statistics for the past few decades and answer questions about lifelong learning, adult education, community learning centres, etc. The chatbot will work on our website or on your messenger as your friend or assistant. I am afraid that I soon might be replaced in my current position by this chatbot.

All these changes happened in the last 5 years. What will we see in the next few decades? The core question that I have been asking myself is: If we want to keep our jobs, but still work as described above, without engagement, passion and focus, will this not create special situations where humans are no longer of value? Are we actually supposed to compete with AI? Are AI and other forms of automation taking our jobs away from us? Or are they actually emancipating us from dull work without creativity, focus, joy, passion, etc? Dr. Ken Mogi, a Japanese brain scientist, categorised the core competencies of AI and humans⁹:

Strong Competencies of AI	Strong Competencies of Human Being
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculations • Memory • Development of documents • Search and analysis of data • Operations and management in general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Creativity and ideas • Innovations • Questions • Intuition and sense • Physicality • Motivation and ambition

Lifelong learning, growth mindset, the 10,000-hour rule and our element

For the last 5 years in psychology, education and human development “growth mindset” has been a buzz term. I strongly believe growth mindset is fundamental to the support of lifelong learning. Dr. Carol S. Dweck, a Professor of Psychology at Stanford University, defined and advocates growth mindset¹⁰. According to her, “In a growth mindset, people believe

⁹/ Mogi, K. (2015): Brain that competes with AI, Tokyo: Nihonjitsugyo Publication

¹⁰/Dweck, C. (2006): Mindset The New Psychology of Success: Robinson



Source: iStock.com

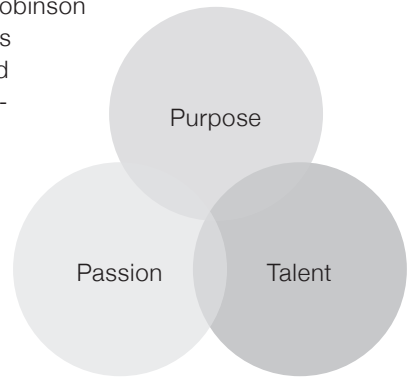
that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.” She also defined the opposite type of mindset as a fixed mindset. She wrote “In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing it. They also believe that talent alone creates success – without effort”.

I think our mindsets are created through many factors, like family, culture, status, friends, etc. I wonder which mindset the current education system promotes? My continuous fear is that low performance in the so-called “academic standards” might deprive many young people of self-confidence and make them obtain a completely fixed mindset. As I mentioned above, low performance at school has less to do with talent and intelligence and more to do with socio-economic status.

Another piece of important information that I would like to share and could encourage us to learn lifelong is the 10,000-hour rule. Prof. Anders Ericsson,¹¹ an expert on experts, studied how some people constantly improve themselves in order to become the premier expert in their field and remain so for several decades. He described what they do as “deliberate practice” that continues for 10,000 hours and is the key for anyone who wants to become a top expert. What he means by deliberate practice is not being afraid to step out of the comfort zone and try to do something challenging which will generate good feedback from other recognised experts. Effective effort and continuous dedication will change us, regardless of our age, gender, social background, etc. By the way, one must mention here that most of the people in OECD countries spend 12,000 hours in 12 years of basic education. If we look at sports, music, and the arts, we find outstanding teenagers or youth in their early 20s with tip-top expertise and global skills. In my view, they are good examples of lifelong learners with growth mindsets who continuously made effective efforts to improve themselves with good targets or clear purposes. When I look back on my 12 years of basic education, I wonder for what percent of the 12,000 hours was I really engaged in learning.

^{11/} Ericsson, A. (2016): *Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise*: Eamon Dolan/ Mariner

Last but not least, for the past decade Sir Ken Robinson has been one of the most influential educationists and is also the expert to study about experts and successful professionals. And he has been advocating that we find our “element”¹². According to him, our element is the area in which we can find “self-fulfilment through the convergence of natural talents and personal passions.” Successful experts and professionals are able to excel beyond the average because they know their element. Lifelong learners need to find their own element and go further by uniting their talents with passion and purpose.



In my view, these three theories are connected and are fundamental for lifelong learning. If a person has a very fixed mindset, never believes in continuous efforts, never knows their passion, unique competencies and talents, can we expect her/him to constantly grow mentally, physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and professionally?

Possible effective use of artificial intelligence, big data and blockchain for lifelong learning

Perhaps one of the best uses of advanced technologies for lifelong learning could be to find out more about our inner “self”. Specifically, AI using big data will be able to facilitate our understanding of our true interests, passions, unique competencies, special skills, as well as our own intelligence. In fact, tech companies already know us better than we know ourselves.

For instance, I am connected to the Internet for 10 hours per day. Out of those 10 hours, I work on my computer for 8 hours and my mobile phone for 2 hours. I search, read, watch, talk, download, upload, type and post for 10 hours. I am creating a vast amount of data every day and it is being gathered and stored by tech companies. One can be scared, but this is the reality.

If used as a virtual personal assistant, the system can give you proper advice and suggestions for things to read, to watch, and people to meet.

¹²/*Robinson, K. (2009): The Element – How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything: Penguin Books; and <http://sirkenrobinson.com/finding-your-element/>*

It is up to you to follow these suggestions or to ignore them. The virtual personal assistant will measure your attention and engagement in your reading, viewing, listening, and playing. It will tell you when you have the best concentration and the strongest focus during the day, as well as the area in which you are really interested and what you are curious about. If you like, the virtual personal assistant can be your language teacher, give you questions to answer, listen to your pronunciation, edit and modify your writing, or make comments on your presentation. By looking at your health data, heartbeat, body temperature, facial expression, and body movement, the virtual assistant will advise you to drink a glass of water, to calm down, drive safely, sleep more, take exercise, or call an ambulance in a personal emergency situation.

Another important use of advanced technology will be to effectively connect people who have similar passions and curiosity. As mentioned above, the virtual assistant could introduce you to potential teachers in your neighbourhood for you to learn yoga, football, arts, music, coding, communication – whatever you like. Furthermore, it could get you connected with 5 experts, or people passionate about gender equality, in order to generate social change. We used to depend on serendipity to meet the right people, the wonderful people with the same interests and concerns we have, but that won't be the case in the future.

One of the best books I read in 2018 is “Lifelong Kindergarten: Cultivating Creativity through Projects, Passion, Peers, and Play”¹³, written by Dr. Mitchel Resnick, head of the Media Arts and Sciences academic programme at the MIT Media Lab. All my professional and personal life experience has led me to agree wholeheartedly with the 4Ps that he advocates for effective and creative learning. We learn best from actions related to real life, from passions and interests, from friends, and from a lot of joy and having an open mind. Advanced technologies will help us to learn lifelong through “Projects, Passion, Peers, and Play”. I have no doubt that if we can continuously learn in this way we will contribute positively to the economy, society, to family, friends, people we work with, the nation and the world. Importantly, that could be the font of the true happiness we enjoy in life. According to an 80-year Harvard study¹⁴, our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health and our brain. Mr. Robert Waldinger, director of the study and

¹³/*Resnick, M.(2017): Lifelong Kindergarten – Cultivating Creativity through Projects, Passion, Peers, and Play, Massachusetts: The MIT Press*

¹⁴/*Waldinger, R. J. et al. (2017): Harvard Study of Adult Development (2016), Boston: The Harvard Gazett*

a professor of psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School, says “Loneliness kills. It’s as powerful as smoking or alcoholism.”

We should be able to use advanced technologies to facilitate our lifelong learning because lifelong learning is never just an extension of school education, with rigid standards and periodic examinations. Lifelong learning is a quest, with passion and clear purposes. It is more effective when learners are connected through similar passions, interests and joys. It is my belief that connected learners not only enjoy learning and improving themselves but also create positive change for the prosperity, peaceful co-existence and happiness of all human beings.

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Non-formal education for rural transformation

Across the world, and more particularly in the developing countries, vast changes are engulfing the rural areas. Traditional economic, social and cultural patterns are giving way to the onslaught of urbanisation. This encounter generates the concept of rural transformation that envisions pro-active and positive processes of development in the rural space. Education acts as a major instrument to realise transformation. Apart from formal schooling, a large part of educational services delivered to the rural community fall within the rubric of non-formal education (NFE). Several practices taken in Asian countries have proved the non-formal pattern a valuable contributor to rural transformation.

What is education for rural transformation?

We're now in a stage of transformation. In 2018, the United Nations (UN) declared that 55 % of the world's population was urban, which means that fewer people reside in rural areas. While data aggregated worldwide adds up to a higher level of urbanisation, some developing countries/regions fall far behind in the size and shape of their socio-economic development. Africa and Asia remain mostly rural, with 43 % and 50 % of their respective populations living in urban areas (UN 2018: 1).

One of the explanations given by the UN to why many millennium development goals (MDGs) could not be fully achieved is that a large number of the rural people in the developing world remain deprived educationally, missing the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills to develop their capabilities and expand their choices in life (Wang et al.: 57). A potential solution to the challenges of deprivation is to turn the urbanised transition of rural areas into self-initiated transformation and empower the rural population throughout this process.

A legitimate question posed would be why the emphasis is on “transformation” and how it is different from the commonly used term “rural development”. In this article, rural transformation does not denote a new concept of societal change. Nor does it represent a radical departure from the core ideas of rural development concerned with improving the well-being of rural people. It is used advisedly to convey a vision of pro-active and positive process of change and development of rural communities in the context of national and global changes (INRULED: 18). The expected outcome of rural transformation aims at improving rural people's livelihoods in an inclusive and sustainable manner. A transformed rural community is expected to have all or some of the following features:

1. An institutionalised system established to encompass the socio-economic, cultural and capacity-building (both life skills and work skills) aspects of community development.
2. A bottom-up approach adopted to alter the passive nature prevailing in the rural space, to effect a fundamental change economically, socially and intellectually, and to allow greater self-development and ownership for the villagers.
3. The values of ecological civilisation fostered to facilitate the endogenous development of a green village that pursues sustainable livelihood opportunities.
4. Awareness raised via a lifelong learning pattern to eliminate gender disparities, to empower vulnerable groups, to fight poverty in all forms

and dimensions, and to fully recognise the potential of indigenous knowledge and culture.

5. Resources from all sources and at all levels mobilised to diversify rural-urban linkages and to increase productivity connected with both agricultural and off-farm activities.

In “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” adopted in 2015 by Heads of State and Government at a special UN summit, the fourth goal among the 17 proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is set to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. To keep to the path of a broader rural transformation agenda, education in all forms and at various levels plays a major part in imparting the appropriate knowledge, know-how, skills and competences required in the rural context. Without the provision of quality education, the agenda loses a strong support to ensure an individual’s and community’s access to dynamic transformation. That is why it’s suggested that educational policies and targeted programmes must adapt to the characteristics of the rural environment and respond to the needs and interests of the rural population across different age groups.



A field investigation in a local village, Southwest China

© China-UK Southwest Basic Education Project

Indeed, what contributions can education make to the transformation of a rural resident? It refers to increasing learning opportunities for the rural people of all ages to enjoy the conditions sustained by continuous learning and skills development that can guarantee a dignified life. With regard to where one is positioned in the ladder of learning, it would mean different things to different people. For a professional farmer, it may mean acquisition of farming and farm management techniques. The farmer is then more likely to use the new technology and create multiple income streams. For a non-literate, it may mean functional literacy strengthened through a series of learning programmes that can help her/him increase awareness, capacities, confidence and participation in development. For a semi-literate rural woman, who has been “pushed out” at the primary education stage, it may mean learning a new skill that would enable her to enhance the level of living of her family, or attending a short-term course on gender equity which would give her enough confidence to speak out against injustice (INRULED: 60-61). The above examples reveal that education is not solely related to knowledge and skills themselves. It can be used as a convenient instrument to assist villagers with the development of positive attitudes towards self-esteem and self-awareness.

Why non-formal education matters in rural transformation?

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” (Nelson Mandela), while the provision of quality education for all is an acute challenge in rural areas of less and least developed countries. What’s more, the demand-driven learning need nowadays varies from one group of individuals to another. Therefore, a more holistic view of education is needed to fight for rural development (Atchoarena & Gasperini: 29). It is accepted that development and transformation enjoy good relations with a continuum of formal, non-formal and informal education. Generally speaking, the learning provision involves the entire gamut of educational services, including (a) early childhood care and development, (b) quality primary education for all children, (c) secondary and post-secondary education, (d) second chance basic education for adolescents and youth, (e) literacy and continuing education programmes for youth and adults, (f) vocational skills development, and (g) knowledge and skills to improve one’s quality of life.

With the exception of schooling, a large part of contributions made to the rural community fall within the rubric of non-formal education. Compared to formal education, the multiplicity of forms and the multifaceted approaches, the flexibility and the inclusiveness are the major assets that promote the adaptation of NFE programmes to various rural contexts. In

short, non-formal education is conceived as a substitute or parallel system towards the rigidly-organised programmes of the regular school system (Atchoarena & Sedel: 65-66; and Hoppers: 35).

Experiences of non-formal education for rural transformation: an Asian perspective

In a very real sense, NFE serves as the safety net for those who could not benefit from the formal education programmes, or as the vehicle for lifelong learning when adults can no longer access the formal education cycle. Flexible approaches and adaption of the curriculum content to the local environment and the actual needs would be highly appreciated. In general, the non-formal programmes can be divided into two categories: (a) non-formal education for pre-school and out-of-school children and adolescents; and (b) literacy and continuing education for youth and adults (INRULED: 62-67).

a) Non-formal education for pre-school and out-of-school children and adolescents

It is recognised that holistic early childhood education makes a positive impact on long-term educational outcomes for young children. It is a foundational step for a transformative society to inspire enthusiasm for learning and stop illiteracy at the source. Compared to urban areas, those living in the disadvantaged rural space do not have sufficient access rights to receiving formal early childhood care and development (ECCE). Thus these unreached areas need non-formal education programmes to complement this part. In the meantime, the advancement of ECCE can prepare the child for primary schooling and strengthen family-based learning.

- Against the background of political instability in Afghanistan, Save the Children¹ has been working with the Ministry of Education and the local communities to establish community-based ECCE centres since 2003. Informal evaluation reveals that children who have attended the programme are more confident, disciplined and cooperative than other children. In addition to the activities for children aged 3-6 years, learning opportunities are also available for parents to discuss topics such as health, child protection and education decision-making in their community (Rao & Sun: 43).

1/ <https://afghanistan.savethechildren.net/what-we-do/education>



A glimpse at the activity delivered in Afghanistan

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Concerning universal primary education, rural communities encounter several persistent barriers, such as low enrolment and a fairly high level of drop-outs. In some extreme cases, low family income and the need for children to participate in livelihood-generating activities directly interferes with a child's schooling. Therefore, the demand for a cost-effective, second chance opportunity for those who fall out of the formal education cycle is a crying need. Many initiatives created as a bridge to re-integrate out-of-school children and adolescents into mainstream schools are in place in Asia.

- In India, the Pehchan project² offers two- to three-year courses at the primary level to rural adolescent girls between the ages of 9 and 14. Subsequently these girls are assisted to join the mainstream school system at the appropriate grade level. In terms of teaching forces, this project recruits women who have passed their 12th grade of schooling as teachers and provides them with pre-service training.
- In Myanmar³, non-formal education can be a lifeline to adolescents working at an early age in a township. A specific programme has been

2/ <https://educationinnovations.org/program/pehchan-project>

3/ <https://bangkok.unesco.org/index.php/content/everyone-has-right-education%C2%A0myanmar-non-formal-education-photo-essay>



*Students attending the non-formal middle school education programme in Hlaing Thar Yar, Myanmar
©Hyunjeong Lee*

designed by UNESCO to support non-formal primary education for those out-of-school children. Upon completion of the programme, the learners can either transfer to a formal lower secondary school or continue their study at the township's non-formal middle school education centre, which is supported by UNESCO as well.

b) Literacy and continuing education for youth and adults

Adult education is a large portion of non-formal education and covers multi-dimensional needs. In the rural context, the literacy and continuing education programmes designed for rural transformation must be more than literacy in the narrow sense of the term. They must go beyond that in order to capture functional literacy skills by helping individuals develop their full capacities, live and work in dignity, make informed decisions and continue learning practices. It is in this broader spectrum that literacy and continuing education can work as powerful interventions.

In addition, the opening up of the world economies and the dynamics of rural-urban interaction have unleashed fast-paced socio-economic changes. This phenomenon calls for recognising the significance of skills development to identify the actual concerns and priorities of a transforming rural space. Here the term “skills” cuts across numerous boundaries

involving technical competencies, productivity, innovation, communication, teamwork and interpersonal behaviour. For instance, the skills development programmes need to help rural people understand the “what” and the “how” of production and the marketing of goods and services.

Bangladesh concentrates on the special relevance between literacy and income-generation for disadvantaged people in rural areas. During the period of 2001-2013, around two million neo-literates have been provided with literacy and skills training supported by the country’s National Plan of Action (Lee & Kim: 15). Another example from Bangladesh is an innovative activity entitled the BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) Adolescent Development Programme. The course content includes social issues (e.g. dowry, child marriage, gender and child rights, and abuse), sexual and reproductive health issues, livelihood training, and individual and community development (Manzoor: 32).

In response to its rapid social and economic transformation, a nationwide initiative in rural China has been implemented since the 1990s to mobilise human, financial and material resources from different sectors, including agriculture, science, technology and education. As the demand for rural goods and services continues to grow, the integration of these sectors is to keep rural people informed of recent market trends and encourage them to use modern technologies and innovation in production processes through specific training courses. This integration also ensures expanded access to commercial opportunities in modern supply chains (Wang et al.: 216-217).



Improving microfinance services through technology

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Rethinking the prevailing pattern of non-formal education for rural transformation

The institutional mechanism for the formal cycle is usually well-established, while the components categorised as non-formal education exist unevenly. Now that the non-formal programmes are fairly widespread and attract more and more support in the rural space, a priority question posed is how to adjust the present pattern and make it conducive to taking further, sustainable action. There are several noteworthy bottlenecks in rural transformation:

1. Organisational and administrative issues are often underestimated. There is inadequate attention to set up a decentralised structure for planning, management, monitoring and evaluation.
2. The lack of sustainability is the result of insufficient mobilisation of local resources and knowledge, untapped potential of scaling up the programme, and inability to keep the stakeholders maintaining the momentum.
3. The development of curriculum materials and pedagogy as well as the capacity-building for teachers/trainers, coordinators and other relevant stakeholders easily sink into oblivion in the non-formal education cycle.

To overcome the aforementioned challenges, the following aspects could be considered:

Decentralisation

Irrespective of where the initiative comes from, decentralised control of programmes brings about genuine sharing of responsibilities and devolution of financial and administrative authority to local levels. There also has to be a bottom-up planning and management process through which rural communities can express themselves and ensure that the decisions made by public and/or private agencies are coordinated with their views.

- To strengthen ownership of the rural community in Malaysia, the Village Vision Movement has been created in line with the national Rural Development Policy to promote the villagers' self-reliance in the process of planning, implementing and evaluating community development projects with minimal intervention from the authorities. It is the community who takes charge of building a more developed, attractive and profitable village (UNESCO Bangkok: 9; and Samah et al.: 137-138).

Sustainability

Agriculture and the rural non-farm sector associated with a community's local resources would engage the rural people with their native land and shed light on intangible cultural heritage as enabler for a wider diversity of economic activities.

- In Bhutan, a pilot project has been carried out within a UNESCO/UNDP/ UNIDO creative industries programme to unlock the potential of traditional textiles. It is encouraging to see that new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities are created mainly for women in rural areas, while the community is benefited from additional income from tourism. All the positive results have led to the current expansion of the initiative to cover traditional food as well as wood-working and other crafts (UNIDO: 7).

Appropriate support services

Except for the strategies devised by the government and the financial and material resources provided by multi-stakeholders, an effective support structure should also emphasise the functions performed by the content-oriented learning materials and the capacity-building of relevant stakeholders during the implementation process.

- The Women's Economic Empowerment and Literacy Programme⁴ in Nepal is organised by the NGO World Education, which aims to develop a savings and credit programme for women in the country's rural areas. Learning materials for programme participants and training materials used with the facilitators are developed in collaboration with learners, other NGOs and government agencies.
- JICA's project of Rural Development Plan for Supporting Poverty Alleviation in Indonesia discovered that expanding the capacity of local administrative officers could improve the performance of government administration, promote a strong relationship between villages and the government, and increase community participation (JICA: 203).

In summary, the non-formal programme is an integral part of education provision in the rural space to complement the unfulfilled needs left behind by the formal system. Many initiatives are implemented in Asia to offer alternative learning opportunities for children and adolescents who could not avail themselves of a general education, to empower the disadvantaged youth and adults, improve living conditions of the villagers, and overall to promote the social environment. These previous practices have shared their inspiration on how to take further steps to reach the aspiration of an effective rural transformation. It is time now to move from words to action.

4/ <http://www.unesco.org/education/partners/cco/English/Educdev.htm>



Training local leaders in Bhutan

© UNDP Bhutan

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Parichart Yenjai

Community learning centres in the 21st century – The Thai case

All major activities of non-formal education in Thailand are organised in community learning centres (CLCs) by CLC teachers. The world is changing and becoming more digitalised, so the role of the CLCs has changed in terms of method and content. Smartphones and the Internet take an important role in non-formal education in the present era.

The role of community learning centres

Community learning centres are the smallest unit to provide non-formal and informal education to the communities in Thailand. CLCs are an educational establishment under the supervision of the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE). While there are schools in the formal system, there are CLCs in the non-formal. Before going into detail about CLCs, we should understand the system of non-formal education in Thailand.

The Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE) under the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education is the key organisation responsible for providing, promoting and supporting non-formal and informal education in the framework of lifelong learning for the huge number (50 million) of out-of-school people. The major target group of ONIE is the workforce between 15 and 59 years of age. To be able to implement this work, ONIE is organised nationwide into 16 divisions/centres at the central level, 77 provincial ONIE (one per province), 928 district NFE centres (one per district) and, down at the sub-district level, at least one CLC as a lifelong learning hub for the community. Currently, there are 9,525 CLCs all over the country.

CLCs in Thailand have 4 basic roles: information centre, opportunity centre, learning centre and community centre. They develop community databases and publicise useful information from state agencies. CLCs have to work with local network partners to design and organise learning activities. Their main role for education is to organise non-formal and



Learning how to use a smart phone

Source: Patrichart Yenjai

informal education activities. Finally, CLCs still serve as a place for community activities. Now ONIE has assigned more roles to the CLCs, including the important role of a Community Digital Centre (CDC).

Activities in CLCs can be divided into three groups: non-formal education, continuing education, and informal education.

- **In non-formal education**, the centre offers a literacy programme, a basic non-formal education programme (equivalent to grade 1-12) in the form of self-learning, weekend classes, and a distance education programme.
- For **continuing education** the centre offers a vocational training programme and an education for life skills development programme. The latter is based on the needs of the community.
- In the context of **informal education** the CLC offers a book corner, an ASEAN corner, radio and television educational media with CDs and a manual. Internet and free wifi are also available. There is also a corner for local heritage or local wisdom demonstrations.



This 70 years-old lady can send now messages via line application Source: Patrchart Yenjai

Community learning centres and digital learning

The Royal Thai Government has launched the Thailand 4.0 policy which emphasises information and communication technologies and innovation, and the world has changed to be more digital, so ONIE has to implement more digital activities into the normal education activities. There is some data that we take into consideration in order to provide more digital literacy. The new 2018 Global Digital reports from We Are Social¹ and Hootsuite² reveal the following about the digital world in Thailand:

1. The number of Internet users is 57 million, from a total Thai population of 69.11 million.
2. The number of mobile phone account users is 93.61 million, which is more than the total population.

1/ We Are Social Ltd. is a digital agency registered in England and Wales.

2/ Hootsuite is a social media management platform. The system's user interface takes the form of a dashboard and supports social network integrations for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+ and YouTube.

3. Active social media users are 51 million.
4. 98 % of Thai people use a mobile phone, 71 % of which are smartphones.
5. Average daily time spent using the Internet via any device is 9 hours 38 minutes.
6. Most active social media platforms are Facebook, YouTube and the LINE³ application.

This means that most Thai people have a mobile phone. Some have more than one device. Moreover, Thai people love to chat and take a lot of photos via smartphone and post them on Facebook or the LINE (<https://line.me/en/>) application.

Community learning centres as community digital centres

From all this data, we can begin to find out how to use CLCs as a learning resource for the digital world. The appropriate CLCs will be selected to act as a community digital centre (CDC) to create opportunities for people's access to various kinds of information through the Internet. It will also have the ability to develop skills and build the capacities of people in search of information for jobs, in doing online business for income generation, in daily living, in quality of life improvement, etc.

As a first step, ONIE sought working partnerships by signing a memorandum with the Ministry of Digital Economy Society (MDES) and Total Access Communication Public Company Limited (or DTAC) for running the CDC project. MDES provides some budget for logistics, a cable line and some computers. DTAC supports technical staff in training. ONIE trains the trainers at different levels, the regional and provincial level, district level and sub-district or CLC level. 7,424 CLCs (one per sub-district) have been selected to be CDCs as well. These centres will organise at least three different kinds of courses, each for 15 participants and 12 hours per course. The contents vary. For example: how to use digital technology safely; how to use a smartphone for life and society; how to use applications and websites; and, How to advertise a product; or, how to do online marketing.

3/ LINE is a freeware app for instant communications on electronic devices such as smartphones, tablet computers, and personal computers. LINE users exchange texts, images, video and audio, and conduct free VoIP conversations and video conferences. The service is operated by Line Corporation, a Japanese subsidiary of the South Korean Internet search giant Naver Corporation.



Learning how to use a smart phone

Source: Patrichart Yenjai

Some topics are very simple but very useful for the villagers. Everything is free of charge, so the community is happy. After the training, the older people won't feel lonely anymore since they will enjoy talking with friends and family members who live far away through Facebook and the LINE application. The homemakers group can earn more money by selling products online. The farmers can search for the prices of agricultural products, or check the weather through the Internet. The young people will enjoy learning new things and surfing the Internet. All of them will have a better quality of life. However, some of the problems we face are technical, for instance a weak Internet signal in some areas and mobile phones that cannot support complicated applications for the learners.

Digital technology also makes the learning in non-formal education easier. Provincial ONIE has developed applications for learners so they can load their relevant learning contents at anytime, anywhere. Learners study by themselves through their smartphone, starting from reading online textbooks, then doing exercises and quizzes after each chapter. They also study supplementary media in each subject, such as PowerPoint, video or YouTube and do the quiz. Learners then have more skills in using technology and the smartphone for acquiring and searching for new knowledge and their grade point averages increase. Learners also get more responsibility and discipline in learning. On the other hand, teachers can check all activities of the learners, as well as analyse and evaluate the outcome in the online classroom.

New methods – New contents

In our basic non-formal education programme, a requirement is that adult learners attend the group meeting once a week at the CLC. But because of their work schedule or the difficulty in travelling in remote areas, some learners cannot join the class. A LINE chat group can solve this problem. Teachers and learners can discuss lessons in a LINE group. CLC teachers can make a short video clip to explain the difficult topic. The learners can view that video clip and understand that content as much as possible. Social networks have an influence in all areas and so activities in CLCs have been changed in terms of method and content. However the local community still comes to learn at the CLCs even though they can seek information via smartphone. In the CLCs there is not only free wifi, free Internet, computers, books, lots of other media, but there are also teachers and friends available to discuss and help each other in various topics.

Regarding income generation, ONIE has been assigned by the government to help low income people to earn more money. CLCs provide many short vocational courses and support the learners in online marketing. Learners are taught not only how to produce the goods but also how to take a good photo, how to set up a LINE group or Facebook group for selling that product, and some of the regulations regarding digital e-commerce. For the second stage of the memorandum with MDES, DTAC and Ministry of Commerce (MOC), ONIE will provide a space in the CLCs which are also CDCs so that they can be showrooms for online products from the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the village.

As in the past, the CLCs will still support every need of the community – with enhanced technology, only the method will change.

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Vocational skills for youth and adults: Ideas on how to reshape the skills agenda in lifelong learning

Formal technical and vocational education (TVET) and non-formal skills trainings are important ways to improve the livelihood of marginalised people. However, in many cases the two sectors are not well interconnected, losing scarce resources and denying the target groups education offers which are in high demand. The article explores the spaces of vocational skills trainings in lifelong learning and suggests some approaches on how to find synergies and improve cooperation. This includes the establishment of network structures as well as the more effective use of resources for a variety of purposes.

Introduction

The relationship between non-formal education (NFE) and the technical and vocational education (TVET) sector is not always easy to understand and is full of tensions and misapprehensions. From the point of view of many TVET experts, NFE can be widely neglected, as it does not lead in most cases to a “real” profession with the high level of competences and skills demanded on the formal labour market. For them, NFE appears to be an unstructured and uncoordinated attempt at a low professional level, with questionable impact.

NFE advocates, from their end, blame the formal TVET sector for being focused exclusively on the needs of the economy (labour market), neglecting the aspirations and needs of the people. They challenge the – in their perception – narrow concept of skills, competencies and knowledge used in TVET and argue for concepts which include, for example, life skills, emancipatory competencies or even basic education.

Being a youth and adult educator myself, I share many of the concerns of my colleagues. However, it seems to me that there are some things worth reflecting on:

- NFE and adult education starts with the perceived needs of the learners. Many needs assessments show that (vocational) skills are very high on their agenda – understanding that these skills are quite instrumental as a tool to improve their income and provide access to the formal and informal labour market. We have to respect that demand and offer the activities the people want.
- Many of the concepts discussed in youth and adult education are reflected in TVET as well. That is especially true for the idea of life skills or soft skills, including such key competencies as creativity, decision-making or working in a team. Innovative learning methods are another example for a concept high on the agenda in both sectors. Sometimes, not always, it seems to be more a wording issue than a substantial antagonism.
- On the other hand, governments and donor agencies invest substantial amounts in formal TVET, in the case of many developing countries with very limited success, reaching between only 1 % or 10 % of the intended target group, while the majority is left behind with no access to skills training. This is especially true for economies with a high percentage of informal economy, like in Southeast Asia, where it reaches up to 70 %.¹

1/ For this argument see: http://www.bocaed.de/media/Richard_Walther_Education_skills_development_and_the_informal_sector.pdf and <http://www.unesco.org/education/TVET2012/parallel-sessions-day1/3/R-Walther.pdf>

Building on these reflections, this article will try to identify some issues for cooperation and improved networking between the world of TVET and NFE in Asia.

Technical and vocational education, non-formal education and lifelong learning

For global leaders, the link between lifelong learning, NFE and TVET is obvious. By adopting the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, one of the targets for SDG 4 (education) deals with this issue:

“By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”. (Target 4.4)

The target clearly formulates the task for a modern vocational education system: To provide skills trainings to youth and adults of all ages. Obviously, this is possible only in a lifelong learning framework, including various forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

In the context of the skills development agenda, the objective of “Leaving no one behind”² encourages all actors to reflect on the following issues:

- How can we make sure that skills training and vocational education can reach to the marginalised?
- How can we make sure that the learning opportunities provided cater for the needs of the economy AND improve the livelihood of the marginalised?
- How can we use the limited resources most effectively?

There are some good reasons to think that these questions could hardly be answered without taking into consideration the potential of non-formal skills development:

- Still more than half of the Asian population live in rural settings³ with difficult or no access to formal TVET. At the same time, many of them are amongst the poorest parts of the population.
- Although dropout rates in primary and lower secondary education decreased, there is still a huge quality issue in many countries, concerning

2/ “Ensuring that no one is left behind” was the theme of the 2016 UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

3/ <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/asia-population/>

the levels of literacy, numeracy and life skills. The completion of lower secondary education remains a challenge, especially for girls in South and Southeast Asia.⁴ In many countries, it remains a challenge to reach the last 5-10 % and make sure they are able to attend school.

- In many countries, social barriers and traditions prevent young people from completing formal education. Additionally, formal TVET suffers from bad reputation and prejudices.

One might think that this situation leads to a wider recognition and support for non-formal skills trainings, as they prove to be the most cost-effective and efficient tool to reach these target groups and offer them the skills and competencies the formal system fails to provide for various reasons. However, what can be recognised is a kind of situation where investment in NFE for skills is marginal and sporadic, both from government and development partners. In most countries, only sporadic services can be offered, the majority of the people in need cannot be reached. One further consequence is a lack of evidence for the impact of these measures due to the low number of activities implemented and evaluated.

Diversity and fragmentation of skills trainings in NFE

One characteristic of the non-formal skill trainings is the diversity of actors and modes of delivery. The case of Lao PDR, a small country of mainland Southeast Asia with a not very diverse set of institutions might illustrate this case. At least the following institutions are contributing substantially:

- The Department for non-formal education of the MoES has a skills section, responsible for delivering activities through the NFE system.
- The integrated vocational education schools (IVETS) in the system of Department for technical and vocational education of the MoES are designated to deliver formal and non-formal TVET.
- The vocational skill centres of the Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare offer non-formal skills trainings for youth and adults to integrate them into the labour market.
- The vocational training centres of the Lao Youth Union offer short-term trainings to various target groups, especially young people, using curricula and textbooks from a number of partner countries and Lao PDR.

4/ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.CMPT.LO.ZS>



Training of trainers in Laos: Group work

Source: Uwe Gartenschlaeger

- The Lao Women Union is offering vocational skills trainings in their training centres as well, focusing on girls and young women mainly.
- Many ministries offer trainings and courses related to their subject, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism.
- Additionally, several associations and projects include skills trainings into their activities, e.g. the Lao Disabled Women Development Centre is continuously offering opportunities for disabled women to acquaint them with skills for income generation.

This diversity is promising and adequate for the non-formal education sector. Unlike the formal system, NFE sub-sectors in most countries globally are characterised by this diversity. The reason is that NFE starts with and caters for the needs of the target groups very directly. And as these needs are diverse, the response should be as well. However, the diversity bears the risk of fragmentation. Without some kind of coordination and support, the actors are at risk of neglecting resources already available, denying possibilities for certification of skills, bridging to other parts of the education system and using funds ineffectively.

Topics and challenges

The further development will depend on the ability of the actors to take effective action regarding the following issues:

Needs assessment and orientation on target groups

As stated earlier, the success of all forms of NFE depends mainly on the ability of the actors to meet the needs of the target groups. Unlike most forms of formal education, this means primarily to be well informed and respect the perceived needs of the youth and adult learners, as NFE is a voluntary exercise – in most cases you cannot force anybody to participate. This requires ongoing efforts to assess the needs of the direct beneficiaries and foster the dialogue with actors on the labour market. In case needs for specific qualifications are requested from enterprises, efforts should be undertaken to communicate the usefulness of the respected trainings to the target group.

This task can and should be implemented in two ways: Top-down by establishing a permanent mechanism for needs assessment, and bottom-up by enabling the providers to implement needs assessments on the spot.

Recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) and Guidance

The concept of lifelong learning is based on the idea that learning is a continuum and the ways of learning are manifold: Formal, non-formal and informal. That is specifically true for the skills sector. Most of the skills are appropriated through learning by doing, through everyday learning in our working and private environment (informal). Especially many SMEs, agricultural and handicraft trades are built around these traditional forms of learning.

To value these competencies and skills requires a sufficient system of recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA), where skills can be tested and certified, if required. It needs guidance services to support the participants in identifying their educational needs and offer them avenues to receive these skills. In many cases, people working in agriculture and workshops have a sufficient level of practical skills, but require some additional numeracy and financial skills or basic management knowledge.

NFE Centres of various kinds can be instrumental in providing RVA services.

Training of teachers and managers

In many countries, the pre- and in-service training systems differ a lot from formal TVET and the non-formal sector. While formal TVET teachers and

Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Patria “May-i” Maluping-Vibora, E-Net Philippines

Since I was young, I've always believed that education is the key to success, that is why I pursued to finish my education (until tertiary), yet I failed because of the circumstances that happened in my life. I got pregnant at a young age and married the man I really don't like. I would still have wanted to finish my studies even after I got pregnant and had my baby, but then my husband left us and I was left on my own to take care of my child.

I got active in a youth organisation, the Youth for Nationalism and Democracy (YND). I became an organiser for YND. The organisations' principles and what I continuously learn being a part of YND, has changed my views on many things – like formal schooling is not the only vehicle to get an education and that there are alternative pathways that can teach you and mould you as a person.

When our organisation became a partner of ENet Philippines in the Youth Action Research (YAR) Project, I participated in the project. I was the team leader for our area in Quezon City where the YAR for Urban was conducted. While doing the project, I came across young women and men in my own community who share the same background and circumstance – stricken by poverty, young parents, solo parents, not able to finish formal schooling but still holding on to a dream of having an education. Most of the young women and men who freely shared their stories for the YAR are solo parents. YND thought of organising them. We consulted these young solo parents regularly and with them, we planned for the formation of a Solo Parent Organisation in our community in Bagbag. We conducted education among ourselves on our rights as solo parents as provided under the Solo Parent Act. We found out that many of the provisions in the law are not being implemented, we found out that we have rights as solo parents – pursuing these became the basis of our plan of action and activities. Until now, we are active in our community and we continue to hold seminars for our members while we continue to recruit new members. We believe that information and education is key for our empowerment.

Presently, we are pursuing to have a center “Arugaan” for our young children while we pursue alternative education and livelihood. We know that challenges and barriers continue to exist so while we continue to consolidate our organisation, we also partner with government, especially the local government and non-governmental organisations among others, to help us in our plans. We are doing a lot of education work, through the help and guidance of YND, not only on solo parent issues but also on other issues in our society which affect our lives and communities. We have been empowered. Truly, education is the key.



Source: E-Net Philippines

managers can rely on a state-run (higher) education system, the offers for NFE staff are limited and sporadic. NFE modules are missing in teacher training, although many of these teachers will be the providers for NFE skills trainings as well.

Suggestions for improvement

Diversity and networking, not unification

Many of the topics mentioned above require a focus on improving the coordination and cooperation between the different actors. As it would not be advisable or even barely possible to unify the diversity and restrict the number of actors, it might be useful to look into the potentials of networking and joint action. At least that is the lesson learned from many countries where similar efforts proved to be successful. To mention just one example, Vietnam chose this pathway in developing an integrated concept for a Learning Society, bringing together all actors.⁵

This includes the establishment of an entity (formal or informal) responsible for networking and connecting the actors in formal and NFE skills trainings. The task of this body can include:

- Regular needs assessments on NFE skills services;
- Developing and promoting a decent RVA system;
- Offer regular sharing and learning meetings of the different stakeholders involved;
- Facilitation of exchange of resources (textbooks, curricula) between the institutions.

The establishment of a new entity is always a challenging and demanding task. It should be explored if the function can be integrated into the work of an existing body where major stakeholders, like relevant ministries, civil society, TVET institutions and enterprises are already linked. Whatever is decided, it should be ensured that the networking body is open for all stakeholders and (more difficult) perceived by them as a supporting and useful tool.

^{5/} <http://uil.unesco.org/document/vietnam-framework-building-learning-society-period-2012-2020-issued-2013>.

Sharing of resources: Equipment, material, funds

It is a common understanding that human resources as well as equipment, premises and funds are limited. In many cases, this hampers the provision of non-formal skills trainings substantially. Stakeholders should reflect on a creative use of the existing resources and pilot these ideas. One option can be to open TVET and IVET schools for NFE activities in the evening, on weekends and during the vacations. In many cases, these are the periods when adult learners are able to attend activities. Another possibility might be to use the resources of private workshops. TVET teachers as well as trainers can be sent to villages, CLCs or NFE centres – just to mention a third idea that sounds promising.

Trainings and support for teachers and managers across sectors and actors

What is missing is the infusion of some elements of NFE into the pre- and in-service trainings for TVET teachers, as they will and should be the ones to deliver the NFE skills trainings as well. Additionally, directors and managing staff should be trained on subjects specific for NFE, like needs assessment, network building and fundraising.

Clarification of terminology

Another topic is the need for clarification of terminology: Many of the key concepts, e.g. lifelong learning, RVA, learner centred approach, adult learning and education (ALE) remain unclear to many actors in TVET, whereas some of their terminology remains alien to the NFE people. Approaches regarding this issue should be chosen according to the national context: In some cases, greatly linked to the fact that many of the concepts in TVET are taken from an international debate, a glossary on NFE and TVET might be a useful initiative. In other countries, it is more an issue of developing concepts and terminology separately for each sub-system of the education sector. In this case, dialogue formats might help.

Include NFE into the projects of development partners

Since many development projects in the TVET sector aim at poverty reduction and reach out to the most marginalised groups of the population, NFE skills provision is considered a tool which can offer these groups needs-oriented trainings. This requires that the projects include NFE in their project design and recognise the entities responsible for this sector as partners for exchange and implementation.



Training of trainers: Men in action, Laos

Source Uwe Gartenschlaeger

Clear commitment from government, including budget needed

A substantial boost of NFE skills training provision requires an increase in financing NFE by governments as well. The current funding in many countries of only 1 % within the education budget cannot lead to substantial action and does not allow NFE to provide the desired impact. It will keep NFE in the shadows and doesn't enable it to even develop sustainable concepts and models.

Conclusion

One task of education is to improve the livelihood of the people and make sure all of them have a fair chance to live their lives in dignity. In a world characterised by sophisticated division of labour, specialisation and rapid changes, more and more depends on the ability to gain skills and competencies through education. Many governments and agencies recognise this and invest in TVET. However, the potentials of non-formal TVET are widely neglected, and mainly the marginalised are paying the price for this.

We can identify a number of ways to improve this situation; however, going in this direction needs flexibility, openness and leadership.

Fumiko Noguchi

The concept of education for sustainable development in adult learning and education

The presence of adult learning and education (ALE) is meagre and adult educators are alienated and excluded in the field of education for sustainable development (ESD), despite their important role for social change. This silence is created by the “common understanding of ESD”, which narrows ESD to formal education and schooling activities, and the missing political power to enlarge the common understanding. This paper addresses the risk of uncritical application of common understanding to ALE and advocates to establish the ESD concept through critical reflection and action based on existing practices from a sustainability perspective.

Difficult concept or does the situation makes it difficult?

Education for sustainable development (ESD) refers to the full range of human activities in order to equip learners with the relevant knowledge, skills, behaviour and values for sustainable development. It applies to all levels of education and occurs in a wide range of settings through a life-long process including formal, non-formal or informal education. All aspects of our life provide the learning places. These include not only the learning conducted in the forms that are generally considered as “education” and “learning” such as kindergarten and childcare, schools, higher education institutes, workplace training, workshops and seminars, but also any human activities wherein the process of knowledge creation and learning is embedded in an unstructured and non-organised manner.

“Everyone” should include the stakeholders who engage with adult learning and education (ALE). ALE can have a significant impact to social change, as it targets adults. Through work and in everyday life, adults directly relate to the causes and results of sustainability problems. They need to know and to understand the problem that they face and make a better decision to make their lives and society better. ALE critically relates to the learning and empowering process of adults in everyday life situations. However, despite how significant its meaning is to ESD, the presence of ALE in the ESD field is scant.

There is a conceptual confusion about ESD amongst adult educators, some of whom may find the ESD concept difficult to understand. This confusion occurs not because the concept of ESD is hard to understand per se, but because the current situation surrounding the ESD concept makes the adult educator feel reluctant to learn more about and engage with ESD, and thus causes an obstruction preventing them from participation in the ESD field. There are two problems that have created the current situation.

Common understanding of education for sustainable development

First, there is a “common” understanding of ESD, which has dominantly, deeply and unconsciously penetrated into the mindset of many people. This common understanding would become apparent if people are asked about what education and sustainable development mean. Very often they think “education” means “formal education”, which includes kindergarten, pre-schools, schools and higher education institutes, or some adaptation of the “schooling” approach to the activities outside school, such as work-based training and local community adult learning classes. Formal educa-



A community group recycles paper for crafts, Indonesia

Source: Fumiko Noguchi

tion and schooling activities are structured and delivered in an organised manner, in which there are qualified teachers, target learners, facilities (such as space, desk and black/white board), resources, teaching content and terms. With the words “sustainable development”, they may have a preconceived image of something that is associated with “environment” and/or global priorities for development, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty, peace, gender and literacy.

Combining “education” and “sustainable development”, then, what does ESD sound like? ESD is often seen as something about school education and about environment and/or development goals. The common understanding of ESD is narrower than the original definition; it overlooks the education happening outside schools and outside the schooling activities, involving the areas of non-formal and informal education, where most of ALE takes place.

Disproportion in education for sustainable development promotion

The common (mis)understanding is magnified by a second factor, a “disproportion” in how ESD has been promoted through policies, research and practices. The policies, research and practices mostly focus on formal education. There are few people within non-formal education who highlight ESD, and there are hardly any doing this for informal education.

It could be argued that this disproportion stems from the conceptual fluidity of ESD, which makes the interpretation of ESD value-laden. ESD is not fixed and is an evolving concept (Tilbury and Fien 2002) and there are variations of descriptions depending on who defines the concept (UNESCO 2009). Even UNESCO changes the definition from time to time, finding no necessity to seek consensus over the meaning of ESD, rather seeking consensus around a range of key principles covering the scope, purpose and practice (UNESCO 2009) of ESD.

ESD is interpreted and implemented through policies, research and practices, reflecting the views of the majority who seek to use ESD in a politically, economically and culturally acceptable way. The majority's views, of course, carrying the common understanding, emphasises formal education and/or schooling activities. In particular, the common understanding of ESD was pushed forward through the UN Decade of education for sustainable development (UNDESD: 2004-2015). The UNDESD mobilised funding opportunities, resources, stakeholders, training opportunities, research, policies, networks, partnerships and projects, which mostly supported ESD in formal education and/or schooling activities. The situation on ESD has also created pressure so that adult educators may feel a kind of obligation to do something like “an ESD learning package” on top of their existing practice if they want to do ESD.

ALE goes beyond a common understanding

The work of ALE goes beyond the common understanding of ESD, and does not fit well in most of the current ESD promotion policies, research and practices. The ALE approach encompasses formal, non-formal and informal education. It involves stakeholders from broad sectors of education and is conducted in diverse fields. Some of the work that ALE engages in could share the same characteristics of formal education and schooling, such as the presence of planned and structured curriculums, qualified teachers, targeted learners and institutions that are widely recognised as “educational organisations”, such as adult education and community learning centres, library and museum.

ALE also involves the activities that go beyond the common understanding of ESD. In such activities, “education” is not explicitly a classroom activity and happens anywhere, including both educational and non-educational settings, through dialogue, peer counselling, consultation for community development, product development, business management, farming, fishing, etc. The learning is embedded in actions. There are neither organised and planned curriculums nor qualified teachers. In those activities there are often key persons who engage with the process, intending to solve the problem that they face through emphasising learning and empowerment of the people they work with, including community leaders, company employees, farmers, fishermen and government officers. Those people are not called teachers, but they play the role of educators in non-education settings. Unfortunately, the common understanding dismisses such a critical part of the work of ALE, which largely relates to informal education.



Urban visitors learn traditional rice farming, Japan

Source: Fumiko Noguchi

Risk of uncritical application

What happens if the common understanding of ESD is applied to ALE uncritically? Common understanding looks at the knowledge and learning approaches that conform to a certain previously accepted model and dismisses the rest. Common understanding of ESD and ALE contrast in many ways. What clearly differentiates these is the knowledge paradigm that they are mainly grounded on. Common understanding of ESD is predominantly based on conformity to a single definition of knowledge (of things in the modern era, which will henceforth be referred to as “modern knowledge”) and narrow thinking about education. On the other hand, ALE is based mainly on local/traditional/indigenous knowledge. (It should be noted that the author acknowledges the continual challenges made by educators in the area of formal education in ESD against “modern knowledge” and thinking regarding modern education. But that challenge never goes outside of the formal education system.)

“Modern knowledge and local/traditional/indigenous knowledge are different in terms of their nature, learning approach and the way they are communicated. (See table below.) More importantly, the holders of power always put “modern knowledge in a position superior to other types of knowledge. So if the common understanding of ESD is applied to a local community, it focuses only on that part of local/traditional/indigenous knowledge that “modern knowledge” can understand and integrate in order to make it fit into structured and planned learning activities.

A planned learning activity has a set goal, aim and timeframe that pre-conditions the teaching approach, learning content and target group. Teaching needs to be conducted efficiently and the knowledge has to be transferred in an explanatory way. The explanatory teaching, which relies so much on cognition and verbal communication, belittles the tacit and embodied knowledge.

Common understanding of	
ESD	ALE
• Modern knowledge	• Local/traditional/indigenous knowledge
• Expressive/verbal	• Implicit/tacit
• Cognitive	• Embodied
• Universal	• Contextual
• Explanatory	• Observatory
• Conceptual	• Holistic
• Superior	• Inferior

Establishing education for sustainable development from existing practice

So, what is the ESD concept for ALE? ESD for ALE is not the application of formal education or schooling to teach about sustainable development to the local community. Elements of the ESD concept already exist in the current practice of ALE. ESD for ALE is a process of critical reflection and action based on the existing practice that already retains key elements of ESD. In practice, an adult educator works with colleagues, participants and various stakeholders, to (i) critically reflect on the existing practice, including his/her life and as an educator, and the way to engage with the community, issues and the stakeholders as well as the impact of existing efforts, (ii) plan out the strategies, (iii) implement, (iv) observe and (v) reflect again.

The concept of sustainable development provides conceptual ground for the process. There are a number of resources available to help one learn about sustainable development (for example, Gaia Education (2012), UNESCO (2012), The AtKisson Group (2015)). Among the various interpretations and arguments, the most important feature is their interrelatedness. Sustainable development includes the interrelationship of key elements (economy, society, environment, culture, spirit and well-being), time (past, present and future), inter/intra generations, different types of knowledge (traditional/indigenous knowledge and modern knowledge), global-local, centre and margins.

Reframing the framing

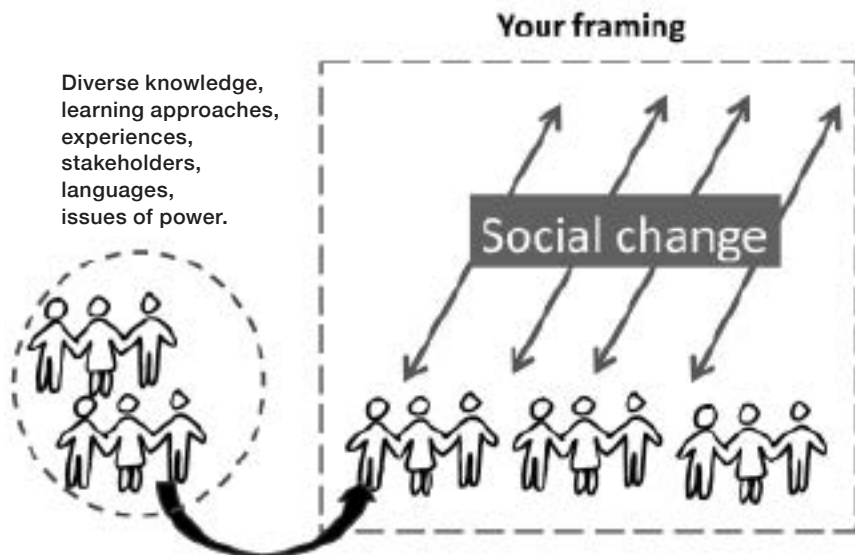
The idea of “framing” can be a useful tool for a “critical reflection” from the perspective of sustainable development. Framing is a technical term within cognitive science for how things are understood and is discussed in the field of environmental studies (Lakoff 2011). When people think, search for solutions and engage in an activity, they unconsciously set up a structure which is called a “frame” (Lakoff 2010). The process of setting a frame involves people bringing in ideas, knowledge, cultural norms and resources to assist them in finding a solution to the problem. For example, with framing, environmentalists attempt to reveal the issues of power, exclusion and oppression in a way people unconsciously know, understand, communicate and can then take action about in order to solve the environmental problem (see Lakoff (2010 & 2011 and From The Lab Bench – 2012).

The idea of framing can be applied to critical reflection in ALE. It makes us be mindful about the frame that we unconsciously set, and helps us to explicitly identify the knowledge, languages and resources that we

have brought into the frame to tackle the issue. The idea of framing gives us insights so that we can know what is really happening within the frame.

Critical reflection for ESD starts with becoming mindful of the invisible framing that the adult educator sets around the key issue that has been focused on through the existing practice. Then the following questions can be asked:

- What is your current practice? How is your practice responding to the interrelatedness of the sustainability concept?
- Who has the most power to decide about the knowing and understanding of the issue?
- What is the language used in the framing? Who uses the language dominantly? Does it fully convey the experiences and knowledge of the stakeholders who relate to the issue?
- What is the knowledge your practice is based on? Whose knowledge is it? Is anything missing? Who is missing? Whose voices, experience, knowledge and learning? Why and how is it missing?
- What will be the potential conflicts and/or obstacles if you bring the missing pieces into the existing practices?
- How can you bring the missing elements into the existing practice? Any supporting policies, stakeholders, networks and resources in your country or overseas? If nothing is available, what can you do?





Traditionally produced ghee by women eco-entrepreneurs, India Source: Fumiko Noguchi

Solidarity of adult educators on education for sustainable development

Establishing the ESD concept for ALE from existing practices is particularly important now, as global policies are currently looking at the local community as one of the key strategic points for ESD promotion towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO 2014). Is this an opportunity for the further expansion of the modern education concept into ALE? To make the best out of the current policy, adult educators can do three things:

- First, know the existence and the nature of the common understanding of ESD.
- Second, establish an ESD concept for ALE by going through a cycle of critical reflection on the existing efforts from the perspective of sustainable development. Reframing the framing is the key for critical reflection.
- Third, adult educators come together and network to weave the individual experiences on ESD into collective knowledge and to advocate for spaces for discussions, funding, resources and capacity building opportunities.

There are key organisations that have worked to bridge the gap between ALE and ESD throughout the UNDESD and up until now, including the

International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) and the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU). The UNESCO Bangkok Office has also supported ALE regarding ESD in the Asia-Pacific Region. These provide informative resources for adult educators so they can learn more about ESD from the ALE perspective and can be appraised of networking and advocacy opportunities.

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Pedagogy of problematisation: Global citizenship education through study tours and immersions for learners from backgrounds of privilege

Overseas immersions and study tours continue to be powerful transformative and learning opportunities for global citizenship education (GCE), especially for learners who come from backgrounds of privilege. While there has been a lot of examination of the experience from the perspective of the learners, there is a gap in the literature with regards to the learning, and the inherent tensions involved for educators who lead these immersions and study tours. This chapter aims to explore these learning tensions and the opportunities they offer for educators committed to utilising study tours or immersions for GCE, in particular for learners from backgrounds of privilege. Through sharing our own experiences, reflections and our exploration of the literature, we will propose a pedagogy that will allow us as educators to continue to explore these tensions through what we have called a pedagogy of problematisation.

“Why can’t we build something for the community?”
“Isn’t it nice that they are happy even if they are poor?”

These are a couple of the questions that we have heard, variously expressed by participants of overseas immersions or study tours that we have conducted for Australian students and teachers since 2001 to the Philippines, Myanmar, Timor Leste and Fiji. While we have both found these questions problematic, they were very “ripe” tensions and opportunities for global citizenship education (GCE). This chapter aims to explore these learning tensions and the opportunities they offer for educators committed to utilising study tours or immersions for GCE, in particular for learners from backgrounds of privilege. Through sharing our own experiences, reflections and our exploration of the literature, we will propose a pedagogy that will not overcome, but allow us to continue to explore these tensions.¹

Our own privilege and immersion experiences

We acknowledge our own backgrounds of privilege having been born as males – Robbie in Manila and Glenn in Melbourne – to families who provided us with quality education that is characteristic of the upper middle class in the Philippines and Australia. However, we also recognise the more complex layers of privilege, given our varied life experiences, and in particular how our own immersions have been transformative experiences that have shaped our commitment to facilitating such opportunities for learning. Robbie’s background of privilege includes being educated in a Catholic primary school and in a government secondary school in the Philippine capital, Manila. This period, which coincided with Martial Law in the Philippines, provided opportunities for short-term immersions that were part of the high school curriculum. These included visits to urban poor communities living on garbage dumps, picket lines of factory workers, families living under a bridge, street sweepers just outside the school campus. As part of his environmental studies at university, Robbie met first-hand with farmers who were victims of the Green Revolution.

1/ This chapter draws from Glenn Abblitt’s published articles and his PhD proposal, and from Robbie Guevara’s own research and publications on global citizenship education. The photos are by the author, Robbie Guevara, who led the Environmental Education Study Tour to the Philippines in 2001 for the Catholic Education Office – Melbourne. The study tour was funded by the Australian Government to help teachers become “Asia-literate”. It was during this study tour hosted by an NGO, the Centre for Environmental Concerns – Philippines, that Robbie met co-author Glenn who was a participant.

Glenn's own story will be elaborated later as an illustration of the critical learning process that we are encouraging educators to be open to and more aware of.

Study tours and immersions

While our own experiences have referred to these activities as study tours and immersions, similar activities are referred to as study abroad, service learning and a range of specialist tourism activities. For the purposes of this chapter, we shall identify a few key descriptions as guideposts.

Doerr notes that a key element of these activities is “learning outside the classroom” (2013, p. 224), while Walton et al. explain that “participants engage in activities with people in a cultural environment different to their own”, with such aims as the promotion of cross-cultural sensitivity and enhanced “self-awareness in relation to cultural contexts” (2015, p. 220).

Service-learning equally occurs outside the classroom, and is embedded within a course and a community, but with a defined aim to develop values linked to civic engagement and responsibility. It is described as a “course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a



Welcome ceremony for Australian teachers during the study tour

Source: Robbie Guevara

way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility” (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995, p. 112 as cited by Bringle, Robert G. and Hatcher, Julie A (2009:p. 38)). In service-learning, students are not only “serving to learn,” through forms of curricular engagement and applied learning such as clinical, fieldwork, internship, and practicum, but also “learning to serve,” the unique civic dimension of the pedagogy (Bringle, Robert G. and Hatcher, Julie A. 2009: p. 38).

Doerr (2013, p 235) citing Williamson (2004), distinguishes immersions on the grounds that the immersed visitor “lives like the locals”. However, when people from richer countries visit places in disadvantaged nations and excessively characterise them as places of hopelessness and poverty, they risk wandering aimlessly into the field of poverty tourism with such “morally dubious” activities (Rolfes, 2009, p. 422).

Therefore, we set as guideposts for our research, educational activities that occur in a geographical context different to that of the learner, often overseas, organised and managed by either a formal education institution or non-formal provider in partnership with a local community or organisation in the destination and with objectives linked to GCE.

A background of privilege

We specifically reflect on working as educators with learners from a background of privilege, meaning individuals such as Wheeler-Bell (2017:381) described, with “*unequal and unjustifiable* access to wealth and income, which are converted into unequal opportunities to live a flourishing life.” Most of Robbie’s work in international development, whether in the Philippines or the Asia-Pacific, has focused on educating the poor and marginalised, based on the argument that through empowering these individuals and communities, they will secure for themselves their rights as citizens. However, as Wheeler-Bell clearly argues, “the privileged class also bears a responsibility to advance justice, and a social justice education should teach students about such responsibilities” (2017:380).

Clearly, the guideposts we identified to define the nature and contradictions of the activities we conduct as study tours or immersions includes a deeper dimension when placed within the context of learning for those coming from a background of privilege. Wheeler-Bell (2017:380) states this succinctly: the challenge of addressing “the pathology of class privilege” is for these individuals to “understand the systemic nature of their class privilege”. Furthermore, the aim is to facilitate a learning process for these individuals to “recognise how the suffering of others relate to their own

class privilege” and how such privilege affords them “greater opportunities to influence policies and institutional arrangements in a manner that reproduces or betters their class status” (Wheeler-Bell 2017:382). It is important to emphasise that we both prioritise critically reflecting on our own positions of privilege, not once but as an on-going process.

Wheeler-Bell (2017) examined a number of learning approaches, the most common being “civic volunteerism” that “focuses on short-term issues – such as food banks, trash clean-up, and after school reading programmes – where there is little political disagreement or discussion on structure injustices” (cited from Levinson, 2012, pp 169-210). This seems very similar to the immersions conducted for high school students, whereby controversial issues are avoided and their participation and engagement are deemed “neutral” (cited from Kahne & Westheimer 1996).

Civic volunteerism is problematic when participants ask: “Why can’t we build something for the community?” Such well-intentioned sentiments perpetuate the notion that the poor are unable to help themselves, thereby reproducing the problem of “privileged paternalism” because the structural issues linked to poverty are not examined (Wheeler-Bell 2017).

Freire (1996) advocated for a process of consciousness-raising for the “oppressed”, yet a similar approach can be applied for learners from privileged backgrounds. In place of “privilege paternalism”, the learning objective is to raise political awareness about class domination to help learners identify the links “between structural injustices, their own privileges and social practices that reproduce class domination” (Wheeler-Bell 2017:394). Participants who return from an overseas immersion, reveal their position of privilege when they overlook the contradiction that such trips are not reciprocal and when they describe their hosts as being “poor but happy”. Bourn explains that while this descriptor is common in many development textbooks, adherents to this label are neglecting to analyse the causes of poverty (2014, p. 128). Furthermore, Crossley explains the inherent contradiction of “the poor but happy” label as a “comforting illusion” that romanticises and trivialises poverty (2012, p. 249).

Recognising and problematising privilege paternalism

As educators, it is helpful to reflect on how we have come to recognise our own backgrounds of privilege, and identify the critical learning incidents when our own conceptions of “privilege paternalism” were challenged. We would argue that having an awareness of how study tours and immersions can potentially perpetuate notions of “privilege paternalism”, is an excellent starting point, and while one can prepare for this prior to leading study



Australian teachers attending a community consultation

Source: Robbie Guevara

tours and immersions, the actual experience itself literally immerses the educator in learning not just *about* but in learning *through* this activity.

Mahan and Rains (1990) note that before school students can develop cultural awareness, “educators must develop this awareness” (1990, p. 402). They conclude that the most effective way of responding to the challenge of achieving this is for educators to spend a “meaningful amount of time living, working, sharing, and communicating with ethnic minority people” through a cultural immersion experience (1990, p. 404).

Glenn’s story captures how these principles have been applied to his own learning through experience. Upon completing an undergraduate degree in environmental education more than thirty years ago, Glenn believed that he had the necessary knowledge and pedagogical expertise to make a difference and to contribute to society. During the early stages of his career, he became increasingly frustrated as the gap between his teaching expectations and his classroom realities widened. Initially, he thought that by completing postgraduate studies in environmental educa-

tion he would acquire more subject knowledge and thereby attain a more authoritative position in the classroom. (Abblitt, 2002a).

It was at this time that Glenn travelled to the Philippines for two study tours conducted by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne in conjunction with Victoria University. The study tours were led by Robbie, and that was when Glenn learned that environmental problems are social problems. Wanting to learn more and wanting to teach in what he referred to then as a Third World country, Glenn volunteered for an educational institution in Manila. It was also in Manila that the writings of Paulo Freire (1996) resonated with him, as he questioned his own good intentions and wondered if he was guilty of what Freire called “false consciousness”.

While Glenn has since attested that immersions can provide teachers with pathways to a deeper purpose of teaching and learning, he continues to see them as being problematic (Abblitt, 2015; 2016). However, he now intends to use this recognition as a means for change – using a cycle of critical reflection involving himself and workplace colleagues in a community of practice to mutually enhance both school immersions and the teaching of GCE.

Learning through global citizenship education

Glenn’s experience is an illustration of our argument of the value for educators to learn through engaging with study tours or immersions, rather than just learning about how these activities can contribute to GCE.

In the Australian context, evaluation of the Global Connections programme (Guevara, 2013a) provides some salient advice for this endeavour. The Global Connections programme differed from school immersions in that it did not involve Australian students travelling overseas, and classroom teachers were only marginal participants. However, the programme did connect young Australians with their peers in the global South countries of Asia in a dialogue to engage with, rather than merely learn about global issues that will hopefully lead to a “personal transformative experience” (Guevara 2013a, p. 116).

Some features of Global Connections are of particular relevance to immersions. For instance, it facilitated “an expanded list of possible learners” to include teachers (Guevara 2013a, p. 112). Both the operation and assessment of Global Connections occurred within a “culture of research” (Guevara 2013a, p. 124) involving a cycle of “story-based” (2013a, p. 122), “reflection and action, or praxis” aimed at developing a critical consciousness for personal and structural transformation (2013a, p. 117). This approach was informed by Freire’s critique of the banking approach to ed-

ucation. Assessment of Global Connections involved multiple learning processes that “contributed to the growth not only of the programme but also into embedding a participatory evaluation process” (Guevara 2013a, p. 115). The evaluation tools included “The Tree of Learning” which involved asking programme facilitators “to identify and share their expectations and limitations with regard to their participation” in the programme (2013a, p. 118) and the Most Significant Change technique which is a “participatory evaluation tool appropriate for complex social change programmes with multiple stakeholders” (2013a, p. 122). Global Connections was informed by the work of Argyris and Schön (1974) and grew from being “single-loop learning” into a more “ongoing triple-loop learning cycle embedded within a culture of research” (2013a, p. 124) which resulted in not just doing things better but doing better things (Guevara, 2013b, p. 243).

Unlearning through global citizenship education

Onorati and Bednarz (2010) present a transformative, reflective model of lifelong learning aimed at developing intercultural competences by drawing on Argyris and Schön (1974) to design their triple learning loop model (see Figure 1). Onorati and Bednarz explain that this learning process, which involves questioning and subsequent transformation of values and actions is triggered by salient events or critical incidents which provoke people to open up their minds to new ways of seeing and thinking. These “salient events are raised by activating narrative resources” and by using a variety of reflecting tools (2010, p. 60).

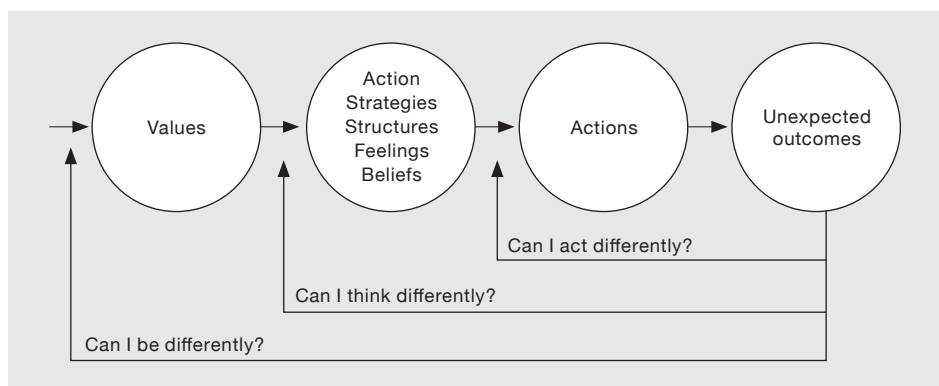


Figure 1: Triple learning loop model (Onorati & Bednarz, 2010, p. 59)

This reflective process fosters transformative learning by enabling practitioners to explore and make transparent their tacit values and illuminate sources of conflict to bring about a change of perspective (Onorati & Bednarz, 2010). In relation to immersions, this process has the potential to “develop a mature intercultural sensitivity and finally bridge the gap between espoused and practised values” (Onorati & Bednarz, 2010, p. 61). Paul Tarc calls on those of us intent on “making a difference” in the world, to consider the contradictions of our privileged positions as global citizens (2012, p. 117). Participants in school immersions are essentially what Tarc describes as well-paid cogs in the capitalist machine, which provides us with “proximity and the resources for the benevolent work of ‘making a difference’ in a ‘depressed’ region” (2012, pp. 117-118). Any claims that one might make to be working for social justice should be tempered by Tarc’s suggestion that the “hyperindividualist ‘making-a-difference’ ethos shrinks the horizon of social action to individualised acts of consumption and the contingencies of charity and benevolence” (2012, p. 119). Tarc (2012) explains that the meanings of action and social justice have been hijacked (and perhaps softened) by the neoliberal (imaginary) agenda (p. 120). He goes on to identify the obstacles created by neoliberalism, and in so doing presents a case for problematisation, not for developing criticism.

Tarc suggests the need to uncover “new questions” (2012, p. 116); and of particular relevance for educators of immersions, he suggests that “rather than conceiving of their actions as (celebratory) end points”, they “could investigate the ongoing effects of their ‘actions’ emanating from a GCE approach as an emergent curriculum” (p. 121). In this sense, Tarc signals a pedagogy which charges educators to problematise their practice.

To counter the risks that GCE poses for operating as “a colonising force”, Taylor (2012) also points to a critical reflexive approach as she encourages trainers to collaboratively engage in a process of “self-risking learning” (p. 186). In particular, she suggests shifting “hierarchical relations”, using a “critical vocabulary” and “difficult knowledge” as part of a “postcolonial global justice pedagogy”. According to Ellsworth (as cited in Taylor, 2012), this pedagogy “equates learning with the breaking up of our identities, the suspension of who we think we are, an opening up to the outside other” (p. 186). Taylor goes on to posit that:

“...the change that GCE might seek would be for privileged learners to become the kind of people who are able to look differently, to enter into relationality with planetary others and position ourselves not as totalising, imperial subjects, nor as a measure nor arbiter of others’ rights or worthiness, but as one of the many groups living in proximate, multilateral interrelation of differentiated but potentially catalytic vulnerability” (2012, p. 195).

Throughout this chapter we have argued that educators and teachers should act as critical researchers to problematise their practice of school immersions. We are inspired by Freire's call for educators to use "problem-posing education" to resolve the contradictions they see in their "relations with the world" (1996, p. 60). We similarly look to Bacchi (2012) who explains Freire's problematisation as a "pedagogical practice that disrupts taken-for-granted *truths*" (p. 1), whereby "*givens* become questions or problems" (p. 2), one questions not only one's own "presuppositions and assumptions" (p. 7), but also one's own background of privilege.

We invite educators to consider this idea of learning *through*, via the application of the proposed *pedagogy of problematisation* as a means to further advance educating ourselves and those who come from backgrounds of privilege in order to continue to learn to become better global citizens.

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Why does history matter in educating youth and adults?

This article will discuss the question of why history matters in educating youth and adults. History does matter, in all contexts. It touches every human life. It is a subject which connects the past with the present and future, which enables people to develop an understanding of national, and global events, and of identity, values, and beliefs. Beyond this overarching function, history education in the context of Cambodia will be looked at in order to elaborate the challenges and opportunities, good practices and to show how innovative history education can help one to learn for the future.

Introduction

Conceptualising "History Matters"

People are living examples of history – so we all live with history. Our daily lives are part of history. When we present ourselves to others, we sometimes tell a story about our life and the society we live in. In the distant past, people educated their children through storytelling. They did not have written history. Storytelling played an important role in educating new generations about the challenges of life, social values, happiness, and future prospects. History is critical in order to understand the present. History enables people to develop their understanding of national, and global events, values, and beliefs. When people know the backgrounds to issues it helps them to understand and shape effective responses. Through studying their own culture and identity, they are able to develop social and emotional well-being and have a sense of worth and belonging. A study of other cultures and communities enables young generations to value and respect differences. History gives them an appreciation of their communities and local heritage and provides them with opportunities to engage with the wider community. History allows youth and adults to explore who they are – their own beliefs and values and develop their understanding of differences and similarities between their own and other people's lives in the past and the present. It also generates a greater understanding of the communities and localities where people live. In addition, history creates a sense of social identity through connecting local history with national and global themes to broaden the relationship of one person to larger communities and societies, as well as to the wider world.

Connecting past to present and future

Studying history is about learning from the past and the legacies of the past in the present. Teaching history usually focusses on understanding the past. The study of the past is essential for "rooting" people in time. Understanding the relationship between past and present is integral for a better understanding of the condition of being human. Peter Lee (Lee 2011) from the Institute of Education, University of London stressed the importance of history to young people, especially historical literacy. He pointed out that pupils need a coherent understanding of the past as well as an understanding of how we know about the past. Youth who see that have the ability to connect past events to present, they find history useful. Research shows that many students do not see the point; they perceive history as not very useful. By connecting past, present and future one



Working group discussing past, present and future matters

Source: Khet Long

makes history relevant to students. In short, history plays a major role in one's orientation to the present and future. If people fail to see this, we should reflect on our ways of teaching history and on whether we lack explicit attention to the application of knowledge about the past to the present and the future.

History education in the context of Cambodia

As elaborated in the above introduction, history does matter in educating people, especially youth and adults. In order to understand and clearly explain the meaning of “history matters” within the context of Cambodia, we should answer the following questions: Why does history matter in educating youth and adults in Cambodia? How has history been taught in Cambodia? How can youth and adults best learn from history that it matters?

Challenges and opportunity for history education

Cambodia's past and recent history is a long succession of battles, internal conflicts, rebellions, insurrection, territorial partitions and ideological dominance by foreign countries, especially if we start counting from the French



Working group presents the discussion results Source: Khet Long

colonisation 100 years ago. Cambodia does not have a gentle past, except for a short period in the 1960s. Other than that, Cambodia continued to be marked by chaos and suffering. During the four years of the Khmer Rouge regime (KR), from 1975 to 1979, nearly 2 million Cambodians died from execution, torture, starvation, overwork, and illness (Khamboly, 2007). The Cambodian people continue to suffer, not only

from physical illness but from unhealed emotional scars left by so many years of oppression, abuse and loss of family members and friends (Mysliwicz, 1988:56).

Both retributive and restorative approaches have been used in dealing with the past in Cambodia. Beyond the mission of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal ECCC¹, civil society organisations – local and international – focused their efforts on restorative justice, on documentation, psychological support, memory building, healing, and reconciliation. The efforts are to empower grassroots communities in rural areas to actively cope with what happened in their locality during the KR regime and to connect the young generations of the villages to these experiences.

The teaching of KR history disappeared during the 1990s as a compromise for national reconciliation, political stability, and peace. In the early 2000s, the teaching of KR history was marginalised by political conflicts. From 2007, the teaching of KR history has turned toward an emphasis on objective genocide education, in which the teaching of KR history emphasises national reconciliation, peace building, and genocide prevention (Khamboly Dy). The educational content on KR history did not improve throughout the entire period between 1979 and 1989 and never became a national concern. The transition period under the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) also saw little improvement in education. All political factions were more concentrated on political stability, national security, national reform, election campaigns, and political

1/ <https://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/node/39457>

as well as military power. UNTAC's mandate had very little authority to intervene in education reform.

Moreover, during the 1990s and early 2000s there has been little effort to foster research on KR history among Cambodian secondary school and university students. The amount of texts about KR history was shockingly short in both secondary school and university. Moreover, people seem to be either unaware of the problem of the absence of genocide education or take it for granted. They were probably inhibited by their poor standard of living, and many of them continued to suffer mentally as well as physically from their experiences during the KR period. Parents in the countryside usually discourage their children from continuing their education to higher levels. They ask their children to help out in the family's businesses and agricultural work or to get jobs in order to ease family burdens. The problem of poverty, in many cases, compels students to drop out of school.

A remarkable turning point in teaching about genocide in Cambodia happened with the 2007 publication of the textbook "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)" by a nonprofit, the non-governmental Documentation Centre of Cambodia (DC-Cam), which has worked on the subject of the KR genocide since 1995. DC-Cam, with its twin objectives, memory and justice, engages with the government and local educators in order to empower and assist the existing institution (the educational structure of the Ministry of Education) to conduct education about the genocide. DC-Cam has also developed a teacher's guidebook and student workbook to accompany the textbook. The textbook also provides historical emphasis on the rise, rule and demise of the DK (Democratic Kampuchea) regime. In addition, it allows students to grasp the daily life of the people at that time so that students can have a sense of compassion toward the older generation, which is a step toward genocide prevention and reconciliation.

There is a conflict in the historical narrative when we talk about the history of the Khmer Rouge. The terms "liberation" and "invasion" are still controversial in the context of Cambodian politics. Khmer Rouge cadres consider their Khmer Rouge top leaders to be heroes. Over 65 % of the Cambodian population today was born after the KR regime ended, and many young people have difficulty believing stories of the horrors of the regime (Open Society Foundations, 2016:16). Some parts of history are not in textbooks, and students are not encouraged to discuss the history of the KR regime in depth due to the limitation and self-censorship of teaching and the sensitivity of the topic.

A study (McCaffrie, et al. 2018) by the HANDA Centre found that young people see value in the educational potential of the ECCC. Through

exploring this period of history, its root causes and long-term impacts, there is the potential for broader understanding of conflict, a totalitarian past, genocide, the treatment of minorities, gendered experiences, and how the Cambodian experience fits into the global context. The fact that the ECCC addresses these topics both publicly and in the Khmer language makes them immediately more accessible to the Cambodian population. The study also found that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have contributed a lot to history education in Cambodia using materials and testimony from the ECCC.

Good practices and innovative history education for youth and adults

Civil society organisations have developed their outreach and education programmes, especially during the ECCC process. Through observation, CSO programmes of history education seem to be more effective due to the fact that participants have been actively involved in history discovery.

Among many other NGOs, Youth for Peace (YFP)² intends to educate young people about Khmer Rouge history, the root causes of killing, understanding ECCC, and the youth's active roles in the reconciliation process. YFP also engages the young generation with the survivor generation in order to take part in dialogue, storytelling, and truth telling. This kind of intergenerational dialogue helps the healing process for the survivors who kept silent for more than 30 years. The next generation needs to promote reconciliation and the healing process because they are necessary to prevent the recurrence of genocide and for securing future peace in Cambodia.

One interesting approach used for that is YFP's Community Peace Learning Centre, combining the well-established CLC (Community Learning Centre) model, developed a long time ago by UNESCO, with peace learning and reconciliation elements (Khet 2018). By combining both, it will be possible to infuse elements of peace education in many learning activities and preserve historical accuracy.

Another good practice developed by the Bophana Centre is an app with learning materials on Khmer Rouge history.

Lessons learned for future history education

- **Connection between textbook and study visit:** The education textbooks on history should connect with visits to crime sites or historical or memory sites. Teaching the history of the community is a necessary factor for development at the grass roots level, focusing on marginalised

2/ <http://www.yfpcambodia.org/>



Discussion about the research results

Source: Khet Long

people, including youth and children. It engages in a community learning process and contributes to the practice of lifelong learning with “No One Left Behind”. Education about the history of past atrocities is part of the non-recurrence mechanism and initiating a culture of resilience in order to move forward toward a peaceful and just society. A stronger, more meaningful long term relationship needs to be developed between schools and outside agencies, for example historical sites, so that learning opportunities are exploited and go beyond the traditional school trip.

- **Space for dialogue is part of lifelong learning:** Space for dialogue will enable researchers and educators to integrate history education, in particular genocide education, human rights education and peace and democracy education, in order to promote genocide awareness, genocide remembrance, and rule of law, respect for human rights, peace, democracy and national reconciliation as well as national unity.
- **Be significant, relevant, and meaningful:** The history curriculum needs to be rooted in the local community to ensure that youth and adults are motivated and see the value of history. Teachers and trainers require more support in developing local history units to meet the needs and interests of their participants. Meaningful history education connects the past to the present and future; and local history to national and global themes.

- **Be accessible, innovative, and participatory:** Tools and teaching methodologies on history education should be accessible to everyone, especially in modern society using modern technology, for instance social media, and applications. These can focus on local history, based on memory sites or sites of atrocity, with the participation of survivors who could tell the stories of what happened during the violent past. Mobilising the grass roots community in memory work is an innovative and participatory approach in learning history, especially at the grass roots level.
- **Be more objective and non-discriminatory:** Interpretation of history in the direction of nationalism is harmful to society. Nationalism, or pride of history, can lead to discrimination and disrespect of others. History education supports people to become a part of global humanity.

Conclusion

History does matter. Studying history is about the dilemmas and conflicts experienced by early societies and individuals in the past. History education contributes to people's own development of understanding dilemmas and issues that they are facing in their own personal daily life. History education is not about a textbook but is about curriculum and teaching methodologies. In general terms, understanding history is integral to a good understanding of the condition of being human that allows people to build and change upon a secure foundation in the fact that humans are rooted in time and people apply those ideas from the past and link them with the present. It is best to gain access to the ideas and evidence of history as an integral part of normal education.

Though history matters in general, yet history education is a challenge in the context of Cambodia. Little progress in history education has been seen in public education. It is critical to change in the political sphere and governance and it differs from regime to regime if one counts from the past hundred years, from the French colonisation to the present. However, the new emergence of civil society organisations that focus their attention on the history of the Khmer Rouge shows that they have developed their innovative education programmes on history, peace and reconciliation using different forms of education, such as arts, theatre performance, documentation, inter-generational dialogues, and forums. This approach to learning and teaching is more effective compared to just the dry study of history. History is even more accessible, visual, and holistic when history education is adapted to modern technology, using apps and social media such as Facebook, and YouTube, etc. Thus, one can combat the concerns over misinterpretation of history for political gain and other reasons which

could lead to social violence and political discrimination. History education truly aims to preserve the memory of the past in the most objective way, to promote social reconstruction, and to build internal empathy and moral development among students, youth and adults in order to build a just and peaceful society for all.

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Training of non-formal educators as agents for change

Education development is a fundamental priority in Laos. Transforming the quality of education to support improved learning outcomes will have far-reaching impact into the future. This is not limited to the formal education sector, but includes non-formal and adult education. Perceptions towards the importance of the role that NFE and adult education plays needs to shift to ensure that all people, whether they be disadvantaged groups who have fallen out of the formal system or adults wanting to continue building skills and professional development, are able to access further education. This shift in thinking towards education has been identified as a priority in Laos. One programme that has and continues to work to expand the capacity of NFE and adult education to promote lifelong learning in Laos is the Training of Master Trainers programme (ToMT).

Lao Context

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a landlocked, ethnically diverse and mountainous country with an estimated population of 6.8 million. It has the distinction of having the highest total fertility rate (TFR) among ASEAN countries in recent years. With one of the youngest populations in the region, Lao PDR is projected to benefit from the "demographic dividend" to the economy in the medium-term. However, this will be realised only if young women and young men are better equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge, and new jobs are able to keep pace with the growth of the working age population.

Laos is the fastest growing economy in Southeast Asia; the main factors for the economic growth are logging, hydro power, mining and foreign investment. These developments have great impact on the Lao people's lifestyle, it forces them to upgrade their skills and competences in order to meet the labour market demand. However, this applies only to those who are able to benefit from the economic growth; people in rural regions and those lacking education will be the most vulnerable to the negative impact of these developments. Many young people are at risk of human trafficking and being exploited from low-paid labour and insecure jobs.

The non-formal education sector plays a vital role in human development in Laos in order to upgrade people's skills and to provide a second chance for youth and adults who drop out. NFE provides both vocational training and equivalency programmes to the learners – young people and villagers. To do this effectively, capacity building for adult educators is needed and reading and teaching material for educators and the learners is required.

At the moment, adult educators have mostly never been trained in teaching methods targeting adults. Pedagogical teaching methods are mainly used for adult education as well. Usually, teacher-centred methods are used throughout the country, from primary education to higher education, and these methods are applied in the NFE sector as well. As a result, this limits learners in the exercise of their creative thinking and limits learning efficiency.

Using the participatory teaching method is completely new for Laos. By using this approach, people can share their ideas, as well as discuss and argue to show different perspectives and ideas. This allows people to escape from the common belief that there is always only a right or wrong answer.



Training course in Laos

Source: Beykham Saleumsouk

The project

Training of Master Trainer is one approach to promote lifelong learning <http://lllplatform.eu/who-we-are/about-us/> (LLL) in Laos in order to advocate for adult education. The Training of Master Trainer (ToMT) is a two-year project, a cooperation between DVV International in Laos, the Department of Non-Formal Education of the Ministry for Education and Sports, and with support from RMIT University Melbourne, ASPBAE, UNESCO Regional Office Bangkok and Australian Volunteers.

The main focus of this project is to provide capacity building for NFE staff regarding andragogy. Since andragogy is new to Lao PDR, most of the adult educators were never trained in adult teaching methods. ToMT provides both the concept of lifelong learning and methods for teaching adults.

The training programme was developed by the trainer team using the Curriculum GlobALE¹ (CG) as a guideline. In fact, the CG provides a clear guidance on where to start in the setting up of the programme. It is also

^{1/} The Curriculum globALE is an outcome-oriented curriculum to train adult educators worldwide, developed by DVV International and the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE), more information is available at: <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/curriculum-globale/>

important to acknowledge that the CG has been shaped on the basis of the local context during the planning process. As a result, with regards to Lao culture and the reading habits of the Lao people, the training has been focused on practice rather than theory. Therefore, the training did not strictly follow the CG sequence and included some additional practical exercises. All in all, six modules and several coaching/mentoring units were implemented over two years. This allowed time to build up relationships between all partners and for understanding demands in the Lao context.

However, as much as external partners and individuals were involved in the project, it was essential to also strengthen the local facilitators, especially when it comes to understanding the Lao context. Having local Lao partners was important to be able to successfully adapt Curriculum GlobALE to the Lao context, since it was initially developed from a European framework. Two members of the core training group (Ms. Beykham Saleumsouk from DVV International and Mr. Souphap Khounvixay from the Non-formal Education Development Centre) were vital to the success of the project. These two individuals, with the support of their respective organisations, acted more than just as trainers, they were the bridge that allowed the non-Lao trainers to gain deeper insights into the needs of the Lao participants and to more clearly understand the social and political factors involved in adult education in Lao PDR.



Training of master trainers in Laos – Women in action

Source: Beykham Saleumsouk

It is important to also recognise that the 35 participants from different organisations invested a significant amount of their time through their participation in the training workshops and also through conducting their own “homework” of practice trainings between workshops. Some of these practice trainings involved local organisations organising and hosting these workshops. This is a demonstration of partnership, not just of participation.

Module	Date
(M0) Introductory Module	16-17 December 2015
<i>Task: Community Needs Analysis</i>	21 March 2016
(M2) Adult Learning	4-8 April 2016
<i>Task: Stories of Adult Learners</i>	10 May 2016
(M4) Methods	24-28 May 2016
<i>Design Relevant Module</i>	1 August 2016
<i>Implement with Peer Review/Visits</i>	Sept-Nov
Elective course: Gender mainstreaming in NFE	20-22 Sep 2016
Community of Practice (Reflection Meetings)	December 2016
(M3) Group Dynamics and (M1) Approaches to Adult Learning (with CLC Visit)	February 2017
(M5) Planning, Organising & Evaluating	June 2017
Outreach activities lead by Master trainer	Aug 2017-April 2018
Follow-up workshop and deepening understanding of adult education	May 2018

Coaching at the workplace was an important part in order to support the participants when trying out the methods. By providing this additional support, it was possible to narrow the gap between capacity and implementation, which affects the scale of the impact of many capacity building initiatives, and to help the participants to be able to reflect and learn from the outreach activity in order to improve their facilitation skills.

Five outreach activities have been implemented so far, where the master trainers applied their skills at their organisation to share LLL and adult education. These events not just enabled the trainers to apply their skills but also to support them to raise awareness about LLL and adult education. The participants for the outreach activities came not only from NFE but also from formal schools, including primary schools.

ToMT provides not just the teaching skills and technique but also the understanding of the learner-centred concept. It was introduced in Laos more than ten years ago but teachers are still lacking a clear understanding on how to use learner-centred methods effectively. Therefore, awareness-raising alone is not enough, capacity building and supporting the



Training course in Laos

Source: Beykham Saleumsouk

implementation in practice is important as well: What does learner-centred mean, and how can it be applied in the classroom?

All in all, partnership was the key for successful implementation. Without the diverse competencies provided by each partner we would not have been able to design and deliver the trainings and accompanying activities at such a high quality. The partnership was about co-creating the process in order to make it relevant and responsive to the Lao context. It is essential to have a number of local experts on the team, as the main challenge was to “translate” the global features and methodology to the Lao context and make them relevant and understandable for the participants. Flexibility is a key factor. Training schemes and content should be adapted to the local needs, even within one training session, as it happens, so that barriers for learning are identified at short notice. Networking is important as well in order to be able to identify and optimise opportunities which are offered during the process, e.g. the possibility for getting volunteers. Aside from the two Australian volunteers, an Austrian Media/PR expert, volunteered for a few weeks.

Impact and lessons learned

Individual level

The project initially focussed on 35 people who were taught about adult learning and teaching. It enabled the participants to see a bigger picture of LLL, to be able to make a connection and see things from different perspectives. Changing attitudes and minds takes time. But without working on that, learning and improved practice will not happen!

Mr. Vilat Boudsengnam from Southern non-formal education

The training helps me a lot. I have been working in NFE and teaching vocational skills in NFE for many years but I had never been trained to be an adult educator before; I only taught in my own way and from my own experience. This is the first time I have been trained to be an adult educator and this has given me more confidence. What I have learned from the workshop, plus my experience, helps me to understand more clearly. Before that, I only did practical things without theory, for example: $1+1 = 2$. Just like that. We didn't have any other teaching techniques. But now ToMT training helps me to explore more teaching methods, like using games to make learning more interesting and exciting for the learners. In addition, we can have a main trainer and an assistant who can help a facilitator to follow the learner closely and make teaching methods more diverse.

Before I attended the training, my teaching only focused on technical skills. But after I attended the ToT Master Trainer course, I was able to bring not only technical skills, or focus on only one subject, but also the concept of adult education, which allows learners to think and understand their own needs. Before, we only saw the need from outside, but now we can see what their personal needs are and we can deliver a mix between the needs from outside and their personal needs and so provide a variety of subjects to study.

In the past we used the traditional way, by calling them to attend the training, but now we use both the traditional and the technical way, being flexible and using lots of tact.

In management, we have to base our methods on the reality of the situation. For example, if we go to the community, we have to prioritise the learner first and the community second. We have to coordinate with their head of community and work alongside with our technical staff. Without working with the head of the community it would be very difficult. We have to bear in mind that we have to rely on the community and follow their culture and tradition, and we have to follow their rules as well, when for instance the community doesn't work on the weekend or during the full moon.

During the training and after the end of the project the progress of the participants was evident in things like more confidence, improvements in their presentation skills, and an ability to make critical comments, even to persons of a higher status in society.

Institutional and system level

Some remarkable impacts of the project can be recognised at the institutional level. After finalising the training cycle, several Lao and international institutions and projects expressed their interest in inviting the participants to conduct training on various aspects of adult learning. This included the National University of Laos, the Lao Youth Union and the Swiss Red Cross. It became evident that the skills and competencies of the participants are highly valued. Their importance for the further development of the education system in many aspects is understood.

One example of these new partnerships will be described here, it is emblematic for several other unexpected outcomes:

After the end of the project in 2017, DVV International Laos was able to start cooperation with Basic Education Quality and Access (BEQUAL) in Lao PDR. BEQUAL is a ten-year programme led by the Governments of Lao PDR and Australia, with support from the European Union. BEQUAL will help an estimated 450,000 children receive a better quality education, with a particular focus on children that traditionally experience poorer education outcomes – girls, students with disabilities and children from the more remote communities. One important component of the programmes targets on improving teaching skills and enhancing the work of the pedagogical advisors.

DVV International has been invited by the BEQUAL project to contribute facilitation, coaching and adult education skills to primary education teacher trainers and curriculum development writers at Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) in Lao PDR. The activities, implemented by Master Trainers from the non-formal education system, are working to embed adult education techniques and understanding in the process of re-training primary school teachers in the new curriculum and pedagogy being rolled out by BEQUAL.

The value of joining the cooperation with BEQUAL can be described as follows:

- It allows the Master Trainers to practice their new skills and competences.
- It offers a basic understanding of adult learning and LLL to the teacher training system. As mentioned, most of the NFE trainers are receiving their pre-service training at the moment through this system.
- It builds bridges between the sectors of the education system, which can be used later to strengthen the LLL framework.

Conclusion

The project has set a very strong foundation for promoting LLL in Laos. It prepared a group of experts, on the one hand, with a deeper understanding of the concepts which guide the LLL framework. On the other hand, it created partnerships and networks essential to implement LLL in the future. Adult education is recognised as a cross-cutting issue to be embedded in all sectors of the education system and beyond. Through the follow-up activities, it became evident that andragogy approaches are relevant as well, for example for teacher training, health education, youth activities and much more.

Most of the participants are linked to a community of practice, sharing their experiences and communicating about their challenges and good practices. A resource centre, which was created during the project, supports these networks and tries to broaden the outreach by providing essential support for the establishment of the digital communication platform for the community of practice of the participants.

Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Aizhamal Kudaibergenova, Kyrgyzstan

It is a great chance to participate in different Adult Education programme. For us, villagers, education especially non-formal education is something magic.

According to modern requirements the adults have to be comprehensively developed and versatile thinking, but now, unfortunately, the percentage of such active and educated adults is very small. Adults have talents, wishes and strong energy but they can't turn them into the strengths, use them to make the choice for their future. The trainings have helped to solve these problems, have helped to awaken our hidden qualities and talents which were in the expectations mode in us, have helped to find answers to our questions. I have passed through these stages.

I have decided to participate in a project called "Cultural Diversity" because I wanted to win against the rival in myself, to create my own personality, to win against the fear of being uneducated and being nothing for the society. I understand, if you want to change others, begin these changes with yourself. Having learned about such cool project I have expanded the circle of acquaintances and friends, the same adult women who wants to be educated and successful. I wanted to be successful, as other participants and trainers of the project with whom I have got acquainted during the implementation of the project.

Now I know, self-confidence amplifies only when you learn the first progress. After I achieved certain results, by each new call I asked myself a question "And why I won't be able to make it? I have coped with the same complexity only yesterday. The new call / new complexity is a new opportunity for the following success! The one who has gained defeat, knows taste of patience and further will continue to try to achieve the objectives.



Source: ASPBAE

Looking back – professionalisation of adult education – lessons learned from Central Asia

The aim of this article is to share the main steps in developing adult education professionalisation in Central Asia. This includes trainings of trainers, innovative formats and activities, as well as the piloting of Curriculum GlobALE. Other issues include the role of adult education associations in professionalisation of adult educators and professionalisation of political decisions. It shows how much was done from the moment when the term “adult education” had not yet been recognised officially and had not been mentioned in regulations. Taking into account the regional experience, the article proposes a conclusion regarding lessons learned.

Introduction

Professionalisation of adult education (AE), both at the level of individual countries and worldwide, is now considered as one of the key challenges for the sector. The educational needs of adults stem primarily from their demand for professional development, but are not limited by it. As was once said by Denis Waitley¹: “Continuous learning is the minimum requirement for success in any field” (Tracy 2001:25). Literally, to be able to survive in a constantly changing technological and information environment, people today must learn continuously. This significantly increases the level of requirements that adult educators (andragogues) should possess. These requirements should take into account certain considerations with regard to teaching adults and andragogues should not merely be the “transmitters” of boring information, but a “guiding light” in the world of necessary, useful and interesting knowledge that is not mere 21st century knowledge, but a way to achieve progress, worldwide peace, as well as a healthy and happy life for all.

First trainings of trainers

DVV International has been assisting adult education development in Central Asian countries since the second half of 2002 by applying a holistic and step-by-step approach. Target groups were selected out of socially disadvantaged population groups that could benefit from educational activities in order to overcome poverty, improve the quality of life and acquire a new role in a society that was experiencing complicated transformation processes typical for all post-soviet countries.

One of the obstacles for the initial projects was under-qualified local adult educators (trainers). Additionally, legal frameworks for education lagged significantly behind the world standard. Educational laws and other policy documents did not even include the term “adult education”. At the same time, the demand of changing labour markets for training and retraining of adults in terms of quantity, quality and structure had been rising rapidly in all countries of the region. In the light of this situation, each project included various short-term educational activities on professional development of adult educators in the form of Training of Trainers (ToT). There was such a high demand for this type of activity that,

1/ Denis Waitley, an American writer, lecturer and consultant on high-performance human achievement. He trained NASA astronauts and Olympic athletes.



Curriculum GlobALE pilot project, Uzbekistan

Source: Irina Razilova

at the request of the participants, it developed into entire trainings and a workshop series.

Although initially trainings of trainers played a kind of “first aid” role, they maintained their relevance later and are still relevant. That’s because first trainings with some elements of coaching are targeting a minimum basic knowledge of interactive methods, while the following ones target more profound knowledge of subtleties of work with different target groups and the expansion of the so called “trainer’s toolbox” as well as psychological and other dimensions of a trainer’s work.

Need for in-depth assessment

Though initial operational decisions were made, and while various ToTs and textbooks for trainers in Russian (the language, which is still understood among professionals in the region) had partially mitigated the problem, there was a need for in-depth research to enable important strategic decision-making that would have an impact on the situation within each country and in the region in general. Such a study was conducted in late

2004, early 2005, at the request of DVV International through a questionnaire survey among adult education organisations.² Both formal and non-formal education system institutions from four countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – participated in the survey (42 organisations in total).

Research findings showed a list of problems, including lack of qualified trainers for adults, no opportunities for their continuous professional development and for regular experience sharing, trainers' lack of organisational skills related to learning, lack of criteria for professional assessment of trainers for adults, the short-term nature of ToTs that do not allow for ensuring a high quality education, lack of theoretical topics in the syllabuses, and that is just to mention the most important ones.

The study concluded that “Adult education is still far from being the concern of the governmental sector and the public and is not yet an integrated component of the continuing education system”. (Gartenschlaeger 2005:29). Obviously, several trainings of trainers cannot solve all problems, and it's necessary to look for opportunities to implement other additional forms and methods of work.

New formats and activities

New forms of activity intended to solve the problems in the short and long run have been introduced since 2006. It was important to not only assist the professional development of specialists in each country, but also to establish regional cooperation, open access to general information and create conditions for experience-sharing between the countries. This goal gave rise to an interesting format – “summer academies” – that took place nine times between 2006 and 2014. Adult education experts, scientists, practitioners and managers were invited to participate in them. These events sought to create a group of well-prepared adult education specialists in the region, train them together and discuss cooperation opportunities.

Representatives of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan participated in summer academies each year. Specialists from other countries and regions were invited as guests. Throughout this period the summer academies hosted 150 representatives from Central Asia as well as 28 people from such countries as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Laos, Moldova, Mongolia, Ukraine, Vietnam, etc. Trainings within the summer

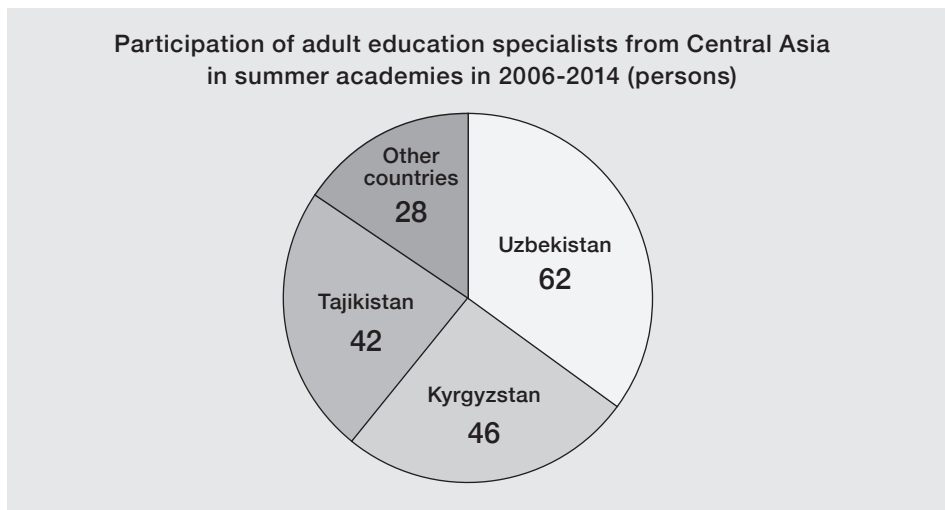
2/ Report on “Assessment of andragogues' skills in Central Asian countries”, Social Research Centre “TAHLIL”, Feb 2005, 61 pages (source: DVV International project documentation).

academies were conducted by leading experts from European and Asian countries (Australia, Bulgaria, Germany, India, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Philippines, Russia, Turkey).

Participation of adult education specialists from Central Asia in summer academies in 2006-2014³

The key themes during the academies included networking and the establishment of AE Associations (from the issues pertaining to their establishment, to the topic of joint AE lobbying). Several years later, all three countries had national Adult Education Associations and a certain pool of prepared andragogues. Summer academies accomplished their mission and at some point reached their limits because they failed to produce a deeper impact; so there was an attempt to find a new mode of professional development of andragogues on a joint regional platform. As a result, the format of annual regional meetings was changed to adult education forums, which is a democratic communication and discussion tool for the interaction of creative specialists (theoreticians and practitioners) working in adult education (primarily within the non-formal system).

Forums have the advantage that they enable us to invite not only adult education teachers, trainers and managers, but also key relevant decision-makers. Up to now two Central Asian AE forums have taken place.



^{3/} Excluding trainers, interpreters, volunteers and DVV International employees.

Attempts to assist trainings of qualified andragogues

As the higher education system in the region doesn't provide for the training of andragogues, at some point there was an attempt to influence this situation. It resulted in a project "Training of andragogy practitioners for the system of professional development of pedagogues of Secondary Specialised Vocational Education" that was launched in Uzbekistan. The project was intended to create an opportunity for a wide range of specialists from such fields as psychology, sociology, pedagogy and other humanities to receive further professional education/training. Specialists from EU countries and the Russian Federation were to be invited to conduct trainings.

The idea was to be tested on the premises of the institute for training, retraining and professional development of secondary specialised vocational education employees (IPK SSPO). A modular educational programme "Andragogy basics" had been developed and was tested in 2010. The establishment of a Department for Adult Education at the institute was in planning.

However, this initiative did not get further developed. Implemented pilot activities and a small Resource Centre for Andragogy at the IPK SSPO were almost the only achievements of the collaboration at that time. The main problem which prevented further development of the initiative was the fact that the occupation "andragogue" had not been included in the state classification of occupations, which means that in accordance with the existing rules no public financial means could be allocated to such a course out of the state budget.

Unfortunately, the region still lacks a properly qualified and motivated organisation that could be responsible for the lobbying of this process as well as the development of qualification requirements for adult education specialists. In the meantime, international experience proves that the recognition of an "andragogue" occupation as well as the availability of opportunities to obtain this qualification and constantly upgrade it is one of the prerequisites for the successful functioning of the AE system.

Curriculum globALE testing and multiplication

Global processes that have recently become visible in all spheres of life, including adult education, also had an impact on the idea of enhancing professionalism of adult educators worldwide through the development of a universal curriculum. And such a universal and at the same time unique programme in terms of its purpose, Curriculum globALE (CG), was created as a result of the joint efforts of the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE) and DVV International.



Curriculum GlobALE multiplier training, Tajikistan

Source: Nodir Irgashev

Specialists, whose work is primarily related to teaching (course teachers, trainers, lecturers, etc.), were selected as a main target group. The curriculum is modular (5 compulsory modules) and requires about 660 academic hours.

Several pilot countries, including Uzbekistan, were selected to test CG. During 2013-2014 the programme was tested in full accordance with its contents and structure:

Module 1: Approach to adult education

Module 2: Adult learning and teaching adults

Module 3: Communication and group dynamics in adult education

Module 4: Adult education methods

Module 5: Planning, organisation and assessment in adult education

(DVV International, DIE 2015)

During the testing period the CG programme completed a step-by-step preparation of adult educators, who received access to free learning with the involvement of international experts. Participants that had successfully completed the entire preparation cycle obtained a certificate for three levels (master trainer, trainer, assistant trainer).

The DVV International country office in the Kyrgyz Republic, as one of the key stakeholders in adult education development, was initially interested in the implementation of the Curriculum globALE programme in the country. In this regard, the completion of testing of the first two modules in Uzbekistan at the end of 2013 brought about the decision to share this experience with colleagues from Kyrgyzstan by proposing the participants of CG programme from Tashkent as trainers. The experiment was so successful that it developed into a three-stage course embracing all five programme modules. It was beyond the experiment's goal to completely mirror the CG programme modules due to the time limits, but it was as similar as possible content-wise and also used the programme's structure, contents and logical consequences as a basis. In total, 63 people have participated in the trainings based on the CG programme in Kyrgyzstan.

The Tajik case of the CG programme implementation is also interesting. The implementation of modules started in partnership with GIZ/ GOPA⁴ as part of the programme "Supporting Reform of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training System".

It is noteworthy that the development of vocational education and training (VET) in Tajikistan is regarded as one of the national high priority objectives as it is a crucial factor in dealing with the employment issue in a country with a huge labour surplus. An analysis of the VET system conducted as part of the Torino process⁵ showed that the republic lacks competences at very different levels of this system, including pre- and in-service training of teachers and trainers (European Training Foundation 2013:32). CG trainings for VET employees received positive feedback from both target group representatives and managers of relevant authorities.

Significant interest in the CG programme in the country led to the decision to implement it full scale with the support of DVV International in

4/ GIZ – *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH* (German Agency for International Cooperation). GOPA (GOPA Consultants) is a leading German development consulting firm and one of the strongest consulting groups in Europe.

5/ The Torino Process (TRP) is a participatory process leading to an evidence-based analysis of the vocational education and training (VET) policies in a country. <https://www.torinoprocess.eu> [Accessed 11 Jun. 2018].

2018-2019 on the premises of the Institute for professional development of university teachers. Twenty potential multipliers from all regions of Tajikistan have already started to actively participate in trainings organised by the Adult Education Association of Tajikistan.

Adult education associations as platforms for personnel professional development

National adult education associations contribute to the professionalisation of trainers. Kyrgyzstan was the first (2006) in the region to establish such an association (KAEA)⁶, which is now a unique network of education providers covering all regions of the country. The Adult Education Association of Tajikistan (AEAT)⁷ was registered in 2007 and NGOs from the entire republic have since joined it. AEAT initiated and actively participated in the development of the AE law in Tajikistan.

In 2010 an AE association called an “Association of harmonious development of adults and young people in Uzbekistan” was established in Uzbekistan. Main activities organised by the association include trainings for AE providers, consultations for nonprofit educational organisations on legal, method-related and organisational matters, creation of conditions for experience sharing, organisation of workshops and meetings for AE specialists.

Professionalisation of political decisions in the field of adult education

Political decisions related to AE heavily depend on the level of the economic development of the country, demographic trends and many other objective factors. Subjective factors such as competence of decision-makers, their awareness of international trends and the experience of other countries, as well as understanding of the importance of AE and support for social and economic development, also have a certain impact on these decisions.

From the first years of its activity, DVV International organised various events in the region to enhance the professionalisation of key decision-makers in AE, mostly different international, regional and national conferences, forums on general topics and workshops on all kinds of in-depth

6/ www.kaea.kg

7/ www.aeat.tj



Training of trainers in Kyrgyzstan

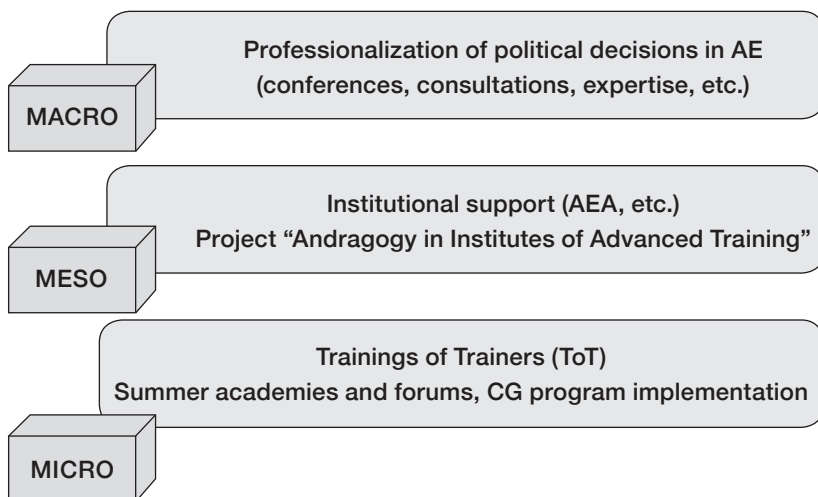
Source: Irina Razilova

topics. Moreover, politicians from the education sphere often participated in various introductory and study trips to the countries with developed AE. Currently there is ongoing work on the improvement of AE legislation in three countries of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). The progress in this regard is different but the process goes on steadily and persistently everywhere.

Shifting the emphasis on adult education

Similar to other regions of the world, DVV International in Central Asia works at three different levels (micro-, meso- and macro-levels). Micro-level work deals with the expansion of a range of adult education services for all target groups, including the enhancement of trainers' professionalism. Meso-level work covers the activities seeking to provide an institutional support to educational organisations, to enhance and build their capacity and to develop networking. Macro-level activity is related to lobbying and promotion of the idea of AE, experience sharing and consultations on educational policy.

Types of activities to enhance professionalisation of AE specialists, as per levels



Interaction and interdependence between all levels and a gradual shift of the emphasis on AE from the lower and middle levels to the higher one (policy level) are noteworthy in the light of the above. However, a professional development of AE specialists and establishment of associations can have an indirect impact on political decision-making (macro-level) as it induces politicians to listen to the opinions of experts at different conferences, forums and within working groups. In the meantime, legislation changes facilitate the activity of education providers (meso-level) and provide more learning opportunities to various target groups (micro-level), etc.

Lessons learned

Successes and, in some cases, failures in AE professionalisation in Central Asia enable us to capture lessons learned:

1. Training of trainers is an effective method to enhance adult educators' professionalism only if they are a part of a comprehensive programme on AE professionalisation that affects legislative aspects as well.

2. Professionalisation of AE should cover both trainers and all andragogues in a broad sense, i.e. teachers, education administrators, social workers, political decision-makers, etc.
3. Professionalisation of AE should be an integral part of the lifelong learning system and should be managed by both state and society through the engagement of state and non-state organisations in shared responsibility.

Acknowledgement

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Claude Heyberger

Cross-social learning for fostering mutual emancipation

The central vision of “All Together in Dignity” (ATD) Fourth World¹ is the idea that all persons living in poverty possess an untapped knowledge: a crucial determinant in identifying how to effectively overcome their conditions. They can contribute to interventions with a new understanding provided they are afforded opportunities to reflect on their own life experiences in a reciprocated manner. Encouraging their contribution on key social issues thus serves as a vehicle for emancipation, fostering continued learning and participation. Accordingly, this article describes two cross-social learning programmes that can inform adult education initiatives in Asia: People’s Universities, and merging of knowledge practices.

^{1/} The International Movement ATD Fourth World is a non-governmental organisation with no religious or political affiliation. It has been active in Asia since 1980. www.atd-fourthworld.org



Workshop in Bangladesh 2014

Source: Claude Heyberger

Mr. Dolfo formerly lived with other families in a cluster of makeshift dwellings along a main city road in Metro Manila, Philippines. Over the course of several years, every working day, a demolition team would arrive and force Mr. Dolfo to tear down the shelter where he was residing with his family. Each evening, he would carefully rebuild to protect his family from the rain. Reflecting on this, Mr. Dolfo solemnly observes: “They come to chase us away, but they have never asked us why we are here.”

This article explores how Mr. Dolfo’s testimony might be connected with the issue of Adult Education.

All Together in Dignity Fourth World is founded on a long-term commitment to work with people and communities experiencing extreme poverty and social exclusion. The guiding ethos of ATD is to promote the participation and representation of disadvantaged populations on key issues as a means of fostering their emancipation and eradicating poverty. Recognising that the knowledge possessed by people in extreme poverty is crucial for identifying how to effectively overcome such conditions, ATD Fourth World programmes seek to impart the lessons and experiences of the poorest of the poor – engaging with them, valorising them, and empowering them to take action toward changes, both at the individual and community level.

Through the course of this approach, ATD teams seek to repair the damaged view that people living in poverty often hold about themselves

and their community, wrought by years of social exclusion, humiliation and disappointment. Driven by the understanding that such people continue to aspire to learn, to grow, and to flourish, ATD seeks to instil confidence for tackling their fear of failure, assisting them in rediscovering their sense of importance and self-worth. In doing so, ATD works to develop approaches where people experiencing extreme poverty are invited to reflect on their own lives, discussing what motivates and gives them strength in a trusting and judgment-free setting.

Central to ATD's vision is the idea that all persons living in poverty have the capacity to think and to teach. This is complemented by the knowledge, representations and practices of other involved stakeholders which, taken together, culminate in a comprehensive and holistic response.

ATD has developed two cross-social learning programmes that largely inform its activities in Asia:

ATD People's Universities

Referred to as the "All Together in Dignity Forum", these events have been organised for more than 20 years as part of ATD Fourth World Philippines' work in Manila, targeting people from different communities throughout the city and its surroundings. Designed for adults and young people affected by long-term poverty, such forums not only provide a space to collect information, but also offer an opportunity for community members to express their voice, reflect on issues and share their knowledge.²

Topics for each of the Forum sessions are chosen with communities and include:

- Community sessions: (1) Individual interviews, data collection and sharing of experiences by community members with a particular need or relevant experience on the topic. (2) Preparatory and follow-up meetings for identifying issues, formulating ideas and producing contributing presentations for public plenaries.
- Main focus session: Guests/resource persons are invited to examine different reported situations from the community, aimed at drawing lessons and strengthening awareness about "knowledge of life", the outcomes of which are carefully documented.
- A report highlights the outcomes of the Forum sessions (written in both the community's native language as well as English to facilitate contin-

2/ <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/what-we-do/participation/peoples-university/>

ued information exchange and communication between communities and their supportive network.

- Key messages of the sessions are occasionally presented by Forum delegates in local, national and/or international meetings, depending on available opportunities, including NGO network meetings, National Agencies, UN bodies and UNICEF meetings, or in events such as the annual International Day for the Eradication of Poverty³ held on October 17.
- Over the past 10 years, the forums have served as a way for the ATD permanent team to tackle issues such as access to health care, child education, support for non-formal housing in relation to forced relocation plans, household budget management, and governance, among many others.

Workshops for merging knowledge and practices

In 1980, Joseph Wresinski, the founder of ATD Fourth World – having experienced poverty and social exclusion as a child himself – conveyed the following to a panel of specialist researchers at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris:

“[often] Scholars [...] regard [people living in extreme poverty] as sources of information to be used for their own purposes. [...] They have, to some extent, subordinated [people living in poverty] to their own exploration as outside observers. [...] More seriously, these researchers have often, unintentionally and unwillingly, upset or even paralysed the thinking of their interlocutors. This happened essentially because they did not recognise that they were dealing with a thinking that followed its own path and goals.”⁴

Inspired by and based on Wresinski’s thinking, “Merging of Knowledge⁵” (MOK) workshops feature collaborative work between people living in poverty (i.e., those with life experience), specific groups of actors with social, professional, political responsibilities (i.e., those with practical knowledge) and/or researchers (i.e., those with academic knowledge). The workshops provide options for concerned stakeholders to learn from one another in an even more intensive and enduring manner (ranging from a few days, to several months, or even years) than the aforementioned People’s Universities/Forums. The workshops thus afford a venue for people

3/ <http://overcomingpoverty.org/rubrique/26>

4/ Wresinski, Joseph (1980): A Knowledge that Leads to Action.

ATD: <http://www.joseph-wresinski.org/en/a-knowledge-that-leads-to-combat/>

5/ <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/category/merging-knowledge/>



Living in hoddan poverty in Manila

Source: Claude Heyberger

living in poverty to discuss their lives, examine individual experiences as well as those of others with a view to propose practical actions, to imagine possible solutions and advance their own projects.

On the other hand, the workshops also serve as a way for experts, practitioners and researchers to examine their knowledge by learning directly from people in poverty. It allows the latter to lead discussions informed by their own ideas and experiences.

MOK workshops are organised as follows:

- First, participant reference groups are defined (e.g., group of parents, students, teachers, NGO Workers, etc.). Each topic is initially discussed with respective participants, defining, building upon, and addressing key issues. A third party facilitator is assigned to groups of people with experiences of poverty. The facilitator works to ensure that all persons can express their points in their own words, without anyone speaking on their behalf.
- Plenary sessions feature cross-analysis and discussion, whereupon outputs from each group are presented. A facilitator is again tasked with

guaranteeing all parties are equally listened to, engage in non-threatening questioning and avoid judgmental comments. The comments and reflections of those with experience of poverty serve as both the starting point and the guiding thread of the approach, which aims to arrive at fresh insights and inform new perspectives.

- Lastly, the co-creation of knowledge emerges from participants' identification of questions, points of agreement or disagreement, recommendations, proposals for action, etc. A shared output such as a poster, art creation, position paper, public statement, action plan, etc., serves as a report of key findings.

MOK has yet to be implemented in Asia to any great extent. Nevertheless, in 2014, ATD's regional team organised a workshop on education based on the MOK approach with the MATI organisation (Mymensingh, Bangladesh⁶) as a coordinating partner. MATI focuses on the promotion of self-determined local community development in Bangladesh. Against a background of high child dropout rates, low school attendance and test scores of many children, the workshop was intended to highlight new understandings about ways to mobilise various stakeholders directly involved in learning/teaching processes, framed under the theme of "Promoting cooperation among learners, parents and teachers for the success of each child".⁷

Community members who have experiences of poverty (parents and youth from MATI elementary school) were invited as participants, as well as teachers, practitioners and representatives of seven other organisations in Mymensingh province and Dhaka. Three representatives of ATD Philippines' education programmes as well as a partner organisation from Vietnam were also invited to share their experiences. The workshop was conducted in an inferential way: as opposed to having presentations or speeches delivered on the topic, participants were requested to apply their own experience and analysis to key questions:

- Perceptions of education among the different groups, including different meanings, components, and expectations, including accompanying sub-questions: What are your concerns/worries when the child leaves for school in the morning? When a child doesn't want to go to school,

6/ <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/category/merging-knowledge/>

7/ MATI & ATD Fourth World (2015): No Poor Education for the Poor. <https://www.calameo.com/read/004609760710cf6320911>



ATD Forum together with UNICEF and Council for the Welfare of Children in Manila

Source: Claude Heyberger

what is your understanding? What kind of problems do children face at school? How can they be overcome?)

- Educational experiences of the participants (documenting personal stories)
- Enabling conditions for positive changes
- Strategies for guiding stakeholder cooperation among students, parents, teachers, NGOs, communities, etc.

Different approaches, including ice-breaking and collective games for tackling cooperation issues, as well as other engaging pursuits such as music, a bonfire, and collective meals were also used to build trust among participants. Drama activities, including mime, provided a way for certain issues to be expressed, among other performances intended to convey different attitudes and situations in a more familiar way. These were recorded and transcribed too for subsequent analysis of outcomes.

Lastly, daily evaluation meetings focused on discussing key observations as well as to review main points of consideration among participants.

To conclude

It's difficult to evaluate in what way the limited 3-day experience in Bangladesh has been a factor for change. Substantial change would clearly require working longer and on a larger scale. At the same time, some initial observations can be made. For instance, at the beginning of the workshop, teachers and NGO workers tended to express more than parents and students about behaviour patterns of parents, communities and children. Parents and students generally discussed more about what happened in school, how students are treated, whether the school was more or less accessible. In societies where people are not at ease with public confrontations, the MOK approach offers the chance to expose different points of view with respect in an open and participatory way.

Participants of the various peer groups were also provided an opportunity to discover that they had common views on several factors impacting education, including poverty of the families, lack of support, high costs, boredom at school, as well as other observations.

Overall, the workshop provided an opportunity to raise awareness of most participants about key education issues. For example, all groups agreed that education includes learning reading and writing; however, only parents emphasised that learning also takes place by practicing within families and communities and not solely at school. At this point, teachers recognised that families and communities also directly contribute to the teaching process.

Parents with experiences of poverty also expressed that prior to the workshop, they never before had an opportunity to share stories about their own lives. As such, the workshop offered a chance for these parents to gain a new perspective, while at the same time allowing them to look beyond their immediate problems.

The experience in Bangladesh set the stage for MATI to join ATD Fourth World and Oxford University in a participatory research entitled: "Determining the Dimensions of Poverty and How to Measure Them".⁸ Initiated in 2015, the project seeks to advance global thinking about the nature and measurement of the dimensions of poverty starting from the experiences, views and reasoning of people facing poverty in diverse cultural and development settings. The research is being conducted until 2019 in six countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, France, Tanzania, United Kingdom and USA. The project utilises MOK on a wider scale, tailored to various contexts.

^{8/} <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/measuring-poverty-differently/>



Discussion of parents during a MOK Workshop (Bangladesh 2014)

Source: Claude Heyberger

Similarly, in the Philippines, community members who have been engaged in the ATD Forum sessions for many years have taken the floor on behalf of their peers in official meetings and national commissions on Education, Housing or Social Welfare. Some have assumed responsibilities in *ba-rangays* (local administrative units) whilst others have been impelled to join trainings or pursue a new job or activity.

From 2011 to 2013, a study group of 25 persons from the communities mentioned above – coordinated by ATD in 12 countries – engaged in participatory action research aimed at evaluating the progress and impact of the Millennium Development Goals in improving the quality of life of people experiencing extreme poverty.⁹ This work also featured collaboration with practitioners and academics. Outcomes of this research supported ATD's advocacy work contributing to the United Nation's 2030 Development Agenda.

Significant changes have also been observed in the communities with regard to education. For instance, where previously it was routine for children not to attend school, many parents and children now look upon school more favourably, with an associated increase in enrolments.

^{9/} <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/millennium-goals-from-the/>

Forum discussions about financial literacy and meetings with resource persons also led to creation of an experimental savings programme¹⁰ in one of the communities, which has been assessed regularly by both the ATD team and community members. In a context of low wages and irregular employment, meeting the challenge of saving money seems to offer a source of pride for people, earning the respect of neighbours.

In this context, perhaps the earlier statement of Mr. Dolfo – a participant in the ATD Forum in Manila for several years – is appropriately in line with the objectives of adult education. Notably, in order for education to be successful, it should offer both opportunities for reflecting on one's life experience, as well as ways to evaluate what can be learned to nurture one's potential growth together with others. Ultimately, both of these elements contribute to preparing individuals for further learning and engagement.

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¹⁰/<http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/sulong-savings-program-manila-works-everyone/>

Reuse, recycle and reduce

It is interesting how an idea in one facet of life can be applied across others. Recycle, reuse and reduce is a practice advocated in waste management. However, the practice can be recycled and used to a large extent in education for good results. Similarly, rethinking the adult learning and education (ALE) system does not mean we need to reinvent the wheel, but can reuse it with improvements for higher efficiency. We can reuse old wisdom, teaching materials, techniques of delivery that have established themselves and use them appropriately to deal with new teaching and learning situations.

In search of adult learning and education development

Adult education was first discussed and promoted at the First International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA I) in Denmark in 1949, but the practice of teaching and learning in informal contexts had taken place long before that. The wise elders of the community did it by the transmission of their wisdom to the next generation. This was how collected wisdom could be reused through generations. A good wise elder would add the innovations that provided answers to new situations, thus recycling the old wisdom for new purposes.

Reuse – Recycle – Reduce is what the developers from PRIA, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, have done in the compilation of a Training Manual for Facilitators: Using Soft Skills in Non-Formal Education. To facilitate the use of this manual a SEAMEO CELLL project team has developed a resource package for the trainers. Can this training manual and the accompanying resource package serve as building blocks for the rethinking of adult learning and education? Yes, because they are positive steps forward.

A general misconception in the West is that progress means new things are created in order to be used. However, this is not always correct. It is time to rethink ALE without assuming that progress must be connected to something absolutely innovative. In fact, reuse may fit well into the traditional Eastern education philosophy which encourages students to receive knowledge rigidly and directly from their teachers (Hassan, A. and Jamaludin, N. S., 2010). This leads to the fact that Asian education has an outstanding tradition of copying, which can be understood as a variation of recycling and reuse based on the search for an (non-existent) ideal past.

A very useful approach is to no longer just copy for preservation in respect of the teaching of one's master but copying connected to research/evidence in adult education. We can get inspiration from John Hattie's *Visible Learning* (Hattie, 2009). Adult education trainers don't need to become researchers to realise that what works best for their adult learners also works best for them. In other words, knowledge that has been transferred to the trainer and has proved to be workable can now be relayed to learners. The trainers can recycle and reuse what is good for their local situation. The final goal is always to develop the best training materials possible based on research/evidence which comes from the real world of adult education. Trainers need to formalise their intuition into small actions or research/evidence during their reflection after a training session.

Let us reflect on the practice of recycle, reuse and reduce in Adult Learning and Education.

Reuse

The easiest way is simply to reuse what exists. Many resources, though old, still prove valid and many old techniques effective in achieving the purposes they were designed for. To take an example, *learning by doing* is an old technique. Already around 350 BCE, the Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote “for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them”. Previously, in the eastern hemisphere, Confucius said “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

To train soft skills like team building and leadership, it is best to train them or to learn them by doing and reflecting on the process and result. Learning by doing is the basic idea of the recent experiential learning, which holds that adults learn best from and through experience. The Learning Experiential Model and Structured Experiences were promoted by a group of facilitators inspired by intensive group psychotherapy in the 1970s and have gained wider application since.

One example of this approach from the manual is the broken squares exercise, which has proven its value every time it is used because learners get experience in the development of cooperation among group members, the expression of individuality and at the same time trustworthy behaviour. It is a perfect exercise to reuse.

In this exercise five participants receive a set of puzzle pieces in order to make a square of their own, but each set is different. However, the set that each has is incomplete and they will have to exchange pieces in order to get the pieces they need to complete the puzzle. They have to do this without resorting to verbal communication. The exercise is simple to design. All that the facilitator needs to do is find some sheets of cardboard, draw the broken parts, cut them up, shuffle them and use. The cardboard pieces can be reused many times.

The fact is that the exercise has been reused for fifty years and it is still applicable today because the underlying human behaviour hasn't changed. The trainer can fine tune the rules of the exercise to adapt them to her/his own style, but advisably not change them since they have been well formulated by William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones in their Handbook for Structured Experiences of Human Relations (Pfeiffer, 1974).

By reusing an old well-established activity, we cut down on the amount of time and effort needed to create new things; by reusing knowledge with reflection for improvement, we can improve on what has been established; and by reusing materials, we can save the earth's natural resources by not depleting them for the process of manufacturing learning materials. It is self-evident that in reusing a known activity, or material, one must always respect the copyright of the original. However, sometimes it

is not easy to know the original owner. For example, the broken squares exercise has been published in several psychology handbooks, and it is difficult to trace its origin.

It is important to note that over time, life changes, new innovations and advances are made in all walks of life, making the modification of a previously used learning activity necessary to suit new circumstances or develop it for different levels. Some variation is possible in the reuse of educational games and structured experiences. It is up to the trainer to select an appropriate variation related to the skill being developed and, in some cases, also to the available material. A crucial principle is that teaching and learning is not a linear process with input at one end and output at the other, but a cycle where output of one phase becomes input for the next round. Therefore, reflection on the process and output is necessary for future improvement. Mohith Agadi's saying "It does not matter if you win or lose; what matters is if you learn from it or not" can be rightly adopted for education. This naturally leads on to the idea of recycling.

Recycle

More refined than simply reusing something is recycling. Recycling includes adaptation or even renewed use for another purpose.

One typical example of recycling is the integration of theories of learner-centred teaching and client-centred therapy from Carl C. Rogers in the manual regarding the use of soft skills in non-formal education. For example, Rogers' idea "A person cannot teach another person directly; a person can only facilitate another's learning" (Rogers, 1951) is fully utilised throughout the manual, where adult learners are key players and are facilitated in their learning through various activities¹. Another of Rogers' ideas is that "the instructor should be open to learning from the students and also working to connect the students to the subject matter". This means that the facilitator should be open to learn from adult learners and also work to connect adult learners to the subject matter. (Rogers, 1951)². The seventh hypothesis of his client-centred therapy (the best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual) is directly implemented in the theory on communication in the manual.

1/ It should be noted that in the context of Asian learning and teaching, which is influenced by Chinese Confucian teaching, teacher-centredness is the common practice and this should be changed towards a learner-centred approach to enhance adult learning.

2/ Looking at Taoism: the teacher is always open-minded and able to learn from others.



Reuse the tower building game for training soft skills on leadership

Source: SEAMEO CELLL, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

An example of modification to a well-established activity is the tower building game, which is an excellent tool to get the experience of leadership skills, and it also includes other skills like communication, teamwork and group dynamics. PRIA chose the basic game in which a blindfolded “worker” must build a tower of little wooden blocks with her/his non-dominant hand based on the instructions of two different “managers”. The focus is on the communication and leadership style of the managers. However, what if the building blocks are not available? Adaptation is then needed of the activity: build the tallest tower with playing cards; and then there is the so-called marshmallow problem in which dry spaghetti and tape are used to make the highest construction with a marshmallow on top. The tower-building game and its variations can be reused over time and will retain their value because the underlying human behaviour didn’t change.

The unit of the manual on decision-making recycles ideas from Herbert Simon on administrative behaviour (Simon, 1947). According to him, one decision-making strategy or cognitive heuristic is satisfying because it entails searching through the available alternatives until an acceptability threshold is met. It is fine to recycle this fifty-year-old model that combines economy and psychology to train soft skills. According to him, there are the three stages in rational decision making – intelligence gathering, design by invent/develop/analyse and choice, and adult learners need to learn to be conscious about these stages during their own process of decision making.

This becomes clear in the exercise for this unit based on ranking management activities. In this exercise the participants must rank 15 management activities by priority: first individually and then in small groups. The characteristic for this exercise is to demonstrate the difference between the ranking by the individuals and the groups and to reflect on this fact. It is a key-point for feedback and learning reflection afterwards.

Reduce

Reduce is complementary to reuse and recycle. It is essential in adult learning that the learning material focuses on what adults choose to learn and what they think is relevant for their lives and problems. "A person learns significantly only those things that are perceived as being involved in the maintenance of or enhancement of the structure of self" (Rogers, 1951).

The guiding principle is KISS: keep it simple and sustainable.

Today's lifestyle is such that everything is done in as straight forward a manner as possible. This idea, however, has always been maintained in the culture of the orient. The teaching of past Chinese scholars was usually condensed into short simple sayings, many of which contain only four words for easy memorisation and interpretation.

When the trainer reuses or recycles learning materials, she/he not only keeps it simple in order to make it sustainable – the trainer offers it in this way so that the adult learner can always look back to the training and think: What have I learned? How have I implemented it in my life?

Reduction also contains a risk. A good example is the recycling and reducing of Paulo Freire, "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1970) in different learning environments. It is hard to find his original ideas on the distinction between oppressors/oppressed and how education cannot be distinguished from politics in an Asian community education setting.

Several participatory methodologies keep only the element of participation and community building and skip their original goal of social transformation. Is that reducing? Or is it acceptance and transformation that adult education must/may only train good employees or even entrepreneurs?

Are only typical features of a Freire-type education being kept, such as adult learners bring their own knowledge and experience into the learning process? Is this a key development or only a current tendency for ALE from an Asian perspective? It is good to be critical towards the critical pedagogy of Freire and his followers when rethinking adult learning and education.

A personal experience should illustrate the points more clearly:

Reuse

The English 900 was an English-learning book series, published by the Macmillan Company in 1970, along the line of the audio-lingual method, which made heavy use of substitution drills. This method was used for American soldiers in World War 2, and proved effective. In the 1980s, the book was reused at the HCMC Patriotic Intellectual Union with the aim of teaching learners to fluently use particular language structures through repetitive drill practice. The books worked at a fundamental level. However, when it came to higher thinking, the method failed to provide learners with sufficient linguistic inputs that helped them produce infinite sets of utterances that expressed the learners' complex ideas, hence the need to recycle the books.

Recycle

I started training English teachers at Ho Chi Minh City University of Education in 1990. When I was a student of the same university in the late 1980s, I had been taught to use the communicative approach, which emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of language learning.

Knowing the strength of the audio-lingual method, I decided to recycle the English 900 series, by selecting and making use of relevant sessions of the lessons in combination with the Cambridge series for my students at the university. The selective lessons had a good result, with many learners being able to respond promptly to questions common in daily conversations within a short time.

Reduce

The Cambridge series, however, was not fully appropriate for use in Vietnam because it over-emphasised meaning over form, authentic language over simplified language that was written and spoken for the sake of learning, and thus several exercises were either much too difficult for the students' level or inappropriate to the way Vietnamese students learned. To improve the learning outcomes, I made a request to the English Department management for a reduction of the content, and kept only appropriate sections to be used in conjunction with other books. The reduction apparently took the heavy tiring workload off the students and they started to enjoy their learning more.

All in one: recycle, reuse and reduce

A good perspective for creating an ALE system is the three-in-one approach, to recycle, reuse, and reduce what is good from evidence-based education practice for adult education.

In the project on developing a resource package for trainers using the manual of soft skills we did this by introducing the methodology of the lesson plan for trainers of adult learners. The origin of the lesson plan goes back to 1950-1960 with different developers of instructional design. Robert F. Mager popularised the use of learning objectives, Robert Glaser introduced criterion-referenced tests and standards and Robert Gagné described the nine events of instruction and put them in a template (Gagné, 1965). This model and template are still in use. The lesson plan

has proven its value in education and survived many adaptations by pedagogues and teacher trainers. At SEAMEO CELLL we have rethought the lesson plan critically and adapted it for trainers of adult learners in a mix of reuse and recycling. The guiding principle was again KISS: keep it simple and sustainable. For reducing, we have skipped what was less relevant for adult education. We have tested this version of the lesson plan during a consultation workshop with trainers from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. It has been approved and has already been used by several trainers. Continuous cooperation for developing good materials must be a key development for rethinking ALE in Asia.



Reuse the blind folded game for training soft skills on management

Source: SEAMEO CELLL, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

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Specific target groups

In the middle of nowhere

The inherent imagining of adult and lifelong education has been linked to the conscientization of the marginalised sections of society. Taking the case of Indian youth, this article argues that it is important to engage the middle class. With a youth population exceeding 50% of the total population, India needs to re-strategise its higher education and bring to the fore the use of popular education media to challenge the homogenisation of culture and economy perpetuated by globalisation. The paper cites an example of the Youth and Democracy campaign run by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) as a case study.

The need to engage Indian urban middle class youth through lifelong learning

“Premarital sexual relationship is unacceptable in our society.”

“Reservations for the disenfranchised should be better targeted.”

“My education doesn’t guarantee me a job.”

“I cannot practice my religious beliefs freely in this country.”

“My native language is of no use to me. It will never get me a job.”

Above are a few reflections from the nationwide conversations held with Indian middle class youth. Such dialogue was a part of the Youth and Democracy campaign initiated by PRIA across nearly forty different cities in India. A unique initiative, this campaign has attempted to create an enabling environment in academic spaces for the young people to discuss their experiences of living/practicing democracy in everyday life. These remarks by young people in India, largely from the middle class, exemplify the dilemmas they face around their identity, knowledge and culture on a daily basis.

By 2020, the average age in India will be twenty nine (29 years) and it is set to become the world’s youngest country, with 64 % of its population in the working age group (Financial Express, 2017). This youth bulge is seen as a blessing, as the country is currently enjoying a “demographic dividend”, which means, it has a higher labour force than the population dependent on it. India is the world’s fastest-growing large economy, having outpaced China over the past year. This has resulted in doubling the size of the Indian middle class over an eight year period from 300 million in 2004 to 600 million in 2012 (Breen, 2016). The adoption of neoliberal policies, post the economic reforms, carved out a new category of middle classes which outnumbers the other sections of the society. The emphasis on middle class youth has been primarily centred on the economic aspect, which often overlooks the underlying cultural, social and behavioural patterns. A quick glance at the literature around the cross-section of middle class and Indian youth will reveal some very interesting insights. From aspirations, to lifestyle, to availability of resources, common patterns can be drawn to clearly define the characteristics of Indian middle class youth. One of the best ways to understand these social and cultural characteristics is to focus on the young people enrolled in higher education in India (Rajendram, 2017).

The number of young people enrolled in higher education institutes in India is at a staggering 34.2 million. India currently has 760 universities, 38,498 colleges and 12,276 stand-alone institutes¹ catering to the need for

1/ This includes institutes offering Diploma, PGDM and other similar trainings.



Young people are engaged for democracy

Source: Kaustuv Chakrabarti

adult literacy and education in the country (MHRD, 2018). Coupled with the digital revolution over more than half of the last decade, nationally across Tier I and II cities² 70% of students own smartphones. Along with smartphones, mobile phone data services have also become affordable nationally. Most of the urban middle class youth have wireless Internet connectivity at their homes, cafes, colleges and workplaces (Thomas, 2018). As compared to the traditional medium such as phones and emails, digital platforms are preferred by young people to communicate their anxieties, opinions and fears stemming from the blurred idea of their identity. (Tcs, 2013)

Globalisation came to India through the economic reforms and has resulted in widespread homogenisation of culture, economy and social order. According to Oomen (1998), the homogenisation process is characterised by displacement syndrome, that is, movement towards homog-

²/ The classification of Indian cities is a ranking used by the central government to calculate House Rent Allowance (HRA) to government employees. The classification is made on the basis of the population of the cities. Tier 2 constitutes Indian cities with population between 5 lakhs – 50 lakhs. Tier 3 constitutes of cities with population below 5 lakhs (lakh = 100,000).

enisation is taking place through the process of displacement. The merits or demerits of the homogenisation process are beyond the ambit of this paper, but what can be asserted is that this homogenisation resulted in confrontations between the traditional and the modern. In the present context, this confrontation has had direct impacts on the identity of young people. The identities of young people have been blurred and this makes them anxious. The age of digital revolution is in turn adding another layer of digital identity which could be similar or different from their physical identities. In the cultural context, homogenisation has manifested in evolving a common lifestyle and consumption pattern, such as dress, food, and music. Indigenous languages have been replaced with the imposition of the dominant *lingua franca*, particularly the colonial languages. It has also permeated the everyday personal lives of the young people in areas such as sexuality and marriage. Young people are finding it difficult to find themselves in their innate socio-cultural context. As a result, there is a reassertion of a narrow, secure cultural identity along the lines of religion, caste, region, colour of skin and native language. All this commotion is not paying enough attention to the importance of diversity and peaceful coexistence amongst the young people.

In this context, it is important to understand that education has transcended the walls of classrooms and has taken newer and more informal forms. The most popular of those forms is education through social media. The recent years have witnessed a tremendous boom in social media. It has become an important platform for conversation, agitation and education. However, the use of social media is a double-edged sword with an equal potential of backlash and success. While it increases the options for the educators, it also leaves them with the difficulty of acquainting themselves with these newer forms and popularising responsible usage of these media.

A sense of disenchantment is being felt across cities and a direct implication of this anxiety is being faced by youth in the age bracket 18-23 who are going to college. Their aspiration of a good life is not complemented by the opportunities available and their access to resources. Enrolled into a formal higher educational institution, the young people are poised to join the future workforce, contributing not only to the economy but also becoming active citizens. Hence it is in such a space where the need to engage with anxious young people cannot be overstated. Adult education at this stage must define the identity of the individual and educate them towards active citizenship in order for them to contribute meaningfully to democracy. Education in India, especially adult education, has always been seen through a lens of literacy for the deprived communities. Hence it predomi-

nantly focuses on the aged and school dropouts in providing either literacy (including digital), or vocational skills. National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2015 focuses on providing skills for young people across India. Other government initiatives like the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Training of rural youth for self-employment (TRYSEM), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Employment Assurance scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, and National Digital Literacy Mission are directed towards inclusion of economically and socially marginalised youth. Government programmes such as the National Cadet Corps, National Service schemes, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan do engage with youth across class divisions but the discourse is limited to the practice of vertical citizenship. The discourse is around the rights conferred to citizens by the state, through constitutions, laws and policies, and in turn, citizens can claim these rights and accountability from the concerned state agencies, which are duly bound to respond. (Gaventa & Tandon 2010). However, there is another concept of citizenship in practice; it is the sense of rights and responsibilities we feel towards our communities, fellow citizens and humanity as a whole. As social and cultural beings, humans are constantly in relationships with others in their families, clans, communities and socie-



Training of rural youth

Source: Kaustuv Chakrabarti

ties. We interact in these social relations; and social obligations emerge in the process of that interaction. Interestingly, we also claim rights in these relations. Thus, horizontal aspects of citizenship emerge in the context of our daily life and interactions. There remains a need to widen the scope of national policies and programmes to include the middle class youth and educate them about practicing horizontal citizenship (Tandon 2015).

This insistence on holistic learning and education of the middle class youth is relevant due to the contemporary political scenario. As established earlier, the present hegemonic education system, perpetuated by the homogenisation phenomenon, has further distanced the youth from their innate identities. This growing distance is being tactically used to re-assert the imageries of religion, caste, language and nativity and polarise the opinions of young people for political mileage. Such polarisation and radicalisation takes place physically in sites of higher education, as well as virtually on social media. Since young people from the middle class outnumber their counterparts, and a majority of them are college-goers, their disenchantment leaves them vulnerable to be manipulated to drive the majoritarian, populist, political agendas. Consequently, these young people are losing autonomy over their choices and voices. The most effective solution to this polarisation can be through an all-inclusive and critical education system which doesn't just acknowledge the individual identities of the young people but also leads them to strive for their own causes while maintaining an overall solidarity with their peers.

The middle class youth of India today are affected by the populist, majoritarian discourse rooted in identity. Nevertheless there are instances of young people expressing solidarity across class and geographic divides towards social movements³ including student movements⁴. Sadly, student movements and activism are often construed in a very limited sense and the educators fail to use them as an educative tool. Social movements have been interesting sites of learning, not only for those who participate in these movements, but also those who hear about them. They are the prime examples of popular education. It is important to understand the intricacies and narratives of each of these movements and view the embedded sub-struggles

3/ The #Kisanlongmarch was greeted in Mumbai by youth across class and religions who congregated at various places in the city to provide water and food to the marching farmers. Similar support was observed during the #NotInMyName campaign against incidents of mob lynching on communal grounds.

4/ Contemporary student activism is increasingly shaping popular opinion and steering public discourse in India, the "Standwithjnu" and the latest "Students Against ABVP" in the capital city of New Delhi, student crusades are spotlighting pressing issues, influencing government decision-making and initiating policy change.

Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Afroja Akhter, Dakha Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh

I am Afroja Akhter (Bithy) and my position is 2nd among 2 brothers and 1 sister in my family. Locally I'm privileged to be called as the amicable teacher of “Nayantara” Urban Community Learning Center (UCLC) in Mirpur area. Since 2015, NGO Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) has been carrying out the quality education by intervening different angle of pedagogic support to this centre with the financial assistance of a philanthropist organisation named ALOKON Trust.



Source: Dakha Ahsania Mission

I was born in a family that was struggling financially, located in Kazibadha village in Rajbari District. My father Mr. Jalal Biswas was a peasant involved in goat farming and my mother is a housewife. Unfortunately, by the rude mood of fate, my family faced the sudden strike of economic loss in our only survival income. As a result, in the year 2005, my family had fallen into a deep financial crisis and we had shifted to the capital city Dhaka searching for shelter with an alternate subsistence at Duaripara slum. With a very negligible investment, my father started selling tea around and my mother got involved in working at other peoples' homes.

In the year 2006, to overcome my family's terrible situation, I decided to start studying with lots of dreams in my eyes. With that circumstances, I found out the privilege of having the free of cost flexible study system under DAM's center Nayantara. As I was dropped out from my previous native school, I got enrolled to Nayantara UCLC in class four and continued my study up to class eight. In 2010, I got mainstreamed into the government school named National Ideal School and passed exam successfully in 2014. Later, I got the chance to be admitted in Ahsania Mission College and after getting the admission, DAM has given me the opportunity to be a teacher of primary section of Nayantara UCLC.

Currently, I got admitted to Ideal Girls College and studying in 1st year. I am bearing my expenses on my own with doing tutoring and the job at Nayantara UCLC. Learners of Nayantara UCLC are pretty fond of me as I am shouldering the role 'dance facilitator' also. Nowadays, “I want to be a teacher of government school so that I can serve the nation and the poor as well. I want to assist my surrounding under-privileged and marginalized children dream to become true and success.”



Source: Dakha Ahsania Mission

in these struggles. The Indian student movement encompasses in itself other movements, like women's struggle, Dalit struggle, etc. Such movements have seen solidarity from youth far and wide as they demonstrate active citizenship. It is hence the responsibility of the educators to take these movements seriously and use them as a tool to disseminate the essence of active citizenship amongst the youth. It is in these movements where most universal human values have been spread and learned.

The present socio-political context requires civil society to play a catalytic role towards educating the youth. PRIA through its Youth and Democracy campaign does just that. For over the last eighteen months the pan-India campaign has reached around forty Indian cities and has engaged middle class college-going youth. The objective of the campaign has been to provide safe and open spaces for critical conversations on democracy. Wide use of popular education methods have been deployed in this campaign. The choice of culturally relevant methods has been embedded in the campaign and the youth has been encouraged to choose their own media and native language to engage. Some of the mediums were street-theatre, art, music, drama, dance, mime, online polls, open debates, freestyle writing, etc. The campaign identified an ideal balance of online and offline engagement. The themes which have emerged from our engagements are centred on identities, aspirations, freedoms and lifestyles.

As a practitioner and an educator it has to be acknowledged that the method of engagement matters as much as the conversation. It was felt that open conversations like these are not just aiding the critical faculties of young people but are also inculcating a sense of solidarity amongst the similar and distinct others. The campaign has also helped in building a sense of belonging and brought about some clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities towards their peers. Such initiatives in India remain few and far between. As mentioned earlier, the government initiatives are primarily directed at the socially and economically marginalised youth. The urban middle class youth are not considered an important category of intervention, even though they are a sizeable chunk of the young demographic. It is important to adopt such learning tools of popular education to promote lifelong learning amongst the youth. This will help them practice active citizenship in their everyday lives.

Young people, being enthusiastic, vibrant, innovative and dynamic in nature, are the most important section of the population. According to MOPSI 2017, young people show strong passion, motivation and power which also make them the most valuable human resource for fostering the economic, cultural and political development of a nation. A country's ability and potential for growth is determined by the size of its youth population. For India to realise the demographic dividend, the role of

young people needs to be actively shaped in order for them to practice the citizenship conferred to them by the state as well as to practice horizontal citizenship as active citizens.

Adult education and post-secondary education play a pivotal role. It is not enough to just amend what is being discussed within the four walls of the classroom but to find newer and more lucid ways to reach out to more and more youth from all rungs of society, with an objective of instigating a wider solidarity amongst them and also preparing them as active and conscious citizens of tomorrow. The middle class youth at the level of higher education have to be prepared as learners to reduce conflict and lead the social change processes towards harmony and prosperity. Otherwise India could instead face a backlash from the growing numbers of disgruntled young people that will emerge, as has already been witnessed in many parts of the country. As an example, the recent riots in Haryana witnessed maximum presence of urban middle class youth as the agitators (Yadav, 2016). Whether India's youth will be a blessing or a curse, a demographic dividend or a disaster, firmly rests in the hands of the government and the pro-youth policies it implements which will include the middle class.

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The village in the 21st century and literacy practices

Literacy programmes are shaped by the ways in which literacy “experts” and policymakers perceive what literacy is. A few years ago, I conducted fieldwork as part of my PhD dissertation in a rural community in a northern province of Lao PDR. I immersed myself in the community for nearly three months to explore what rural people actually do with their “literacy” skills – reading and writing the Lao language – in their everyday lives. I applied a well-established ethnographic method, known as the “walk along” method (Carpiano, 2009; Evans and Jones, 2011; Kusenbach, 2003; Miaux et al., 2010), through which I followed villagers everywhere and got involved in all their activities. I observed what modes of literacy they used, how they used them, and why they applied them to specific situations and purposes. This paper argues that the literacy of the 21st century is not only the ability to read and write a language – often a dominating language. Instead, it is the capacity to understand the meaning of words, signs and symbols which have meanings for an individual for a specific purpose in a particular context.

Introduction

Sixty years ago, UNESCO defined literacy as the standard skill of being able to read and write (often, of a national language), and this was criticised by academic researchers (e.g. Street, 1984; Rogers, 2000; Barton, 2007; Freire, 1985). In 2005, UNESCO introduced the notion that “literacy must be seen as a tool for communication and for learning, not as a technique or skill valuable for its own sake. Literacy has no meaning apart from what it enables communities and individuals to do better” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 14). In this view, UNESCO (2005) defines literacy as follows:

“The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential, and participate fully in community and wider society” (p. 21).

This new notion of adult literacy has been used by UNESCO’s Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP). LAMP introduced five levels of adult literacy, implying that literacy is no longer a matter of merely being literate or illiterate any more (see UIS, 2009, p. 18). However, the traditional literacy definition still remains in policy papers of many countries across the world. This means that their views and definitions of literacy are tied to the emergence of nationalism: They have included the traditional definition in their political agenda and used it to gain credibility from the international community in terms of showing that their social policies, particularly for the disadvantaged and minorities, are effective. This paper therefore suggests literacy “experts” and policymakers open their minds to consider the complexity of literacy in the 21st century. In the following section, I am going to unfold which literacies people in a rural Lao village practice in their everyday lives, and in which ways, including words, signs and symbols.

Telephone technology and literacy practices

Globalised technologies have flowed into the villagers’ everyday lives and for the last decade they have increasingly replaced their traditional ways of life. Although it is a rural village surrounded by forests, mountains and rivers, new technologies such as mobile phones have arrived in the village and have become popular among the villagers. It is interesting to note that this technology has not evolved from a traditional, landline telephone

system. Instead, the villagers jumped this step and have gone straight to mobile technology, with most of the services provided through hotlines, which allow users to access different services by themselves through particular service numbers (see Figure 1).

Even though not everyone knows how to write and keep their contact numbers to themselves, telephone numbers are things that villagers use when they want to make a telephone call. These telephone numbers are not considered confidential. Rather, they are written down in many places, such as on the columns and walls of villagers' houses, making them public and easy to find when they need to be used. Although not all households can afford to have a telephone, they are useful for villagers in a globalised world to keep in touch with their family members, to communicate with friends, relatives, and even to contact government officials. According to villagers, telephones save both the time and the money of travelling. When I was in the village (January to March 2015), the *Unitel* telephone company was well-known among villagers as *Ber Lak Kao* (9), meaning in English “the number nine telephone company” (other telephone companies use 2 and 5 as the beginning of their telephone numbers).

The technologies of the telephone and telecommunications services influence learning by generating meanings from signs and symbols. For example, in order to refill money onto their phone cards, villagers dial *121*PIN No.# (see Figure 1 below). For checking the lotto service or downloading ringtones, there is a similar mechanism (see Figure 1). At the time of research, villagers preferred to refill 5,000 Kip (≅ USD 0.60) each time as the minimum rate, with a calling period of up to 60 days. They chose this amount of money more than other refills to suit their economic situations. In addition, villagers also used the refill service more often than any others, so they were familiar with the steps and keys required.

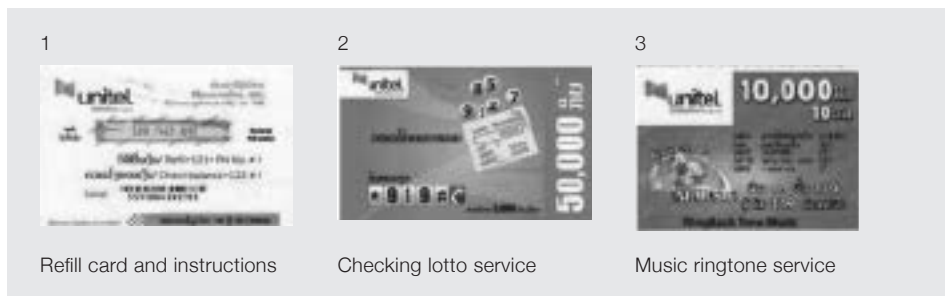


Figure 1: Examples of telephone services and instructions

It was clear that villagers did not have to read the instruction details in order to use the telephone services. They either remembered how to take the necessary steps from previous use, or they followed instructions from their friends. It seemed that the high frequency of executing these steps made them familiar with them, and the villagers came to use the services more efficiently over time. I argue in this paper that knowing how to use a phone is a form of literacy. Here is an example of how a villager practiced her literacies:

Mina (anonymous) is a thirty-two-year-old woman who has difficulty reading the Lao language, and yet used all these services fairly efficiently. Further, she helped other villagers with accessing phone services, even when they had better reading skills than her. She would simply scratch the refill card to find the PIN, and then press the keypad following the instructions on the card. When I asked her how she could do this even though she read with difficulty, she told me that “I do this frequently, so I remember how to do it”. Her brother, who can read and write Lao language with more fluency than her, even said that he asks her to refill his phone credit. I saw how effortlessly she used the different keys on the phone keypad to enter service numbers for checking the balance, refilling, and browsing for ringtone music from packages of the telephone company.

In general, the villagers (those who had a telephone) seemed to be familiar with only two functions of the telephones, i.e. to make phone calls and to pick up incoming phone calls. Thus, if they accidentally set up other functions, such as the alarm clock or an alert for incoming messages, they thought their telephones had problems or were broken. However, whenever they encountered such a problem, they tried to solve these with different techniques, including pressing different keys on the keypad, looking for help from others in the village, or simply ignoring it until they found someone who could help them, or they would wait until the problem disappeared by itself. Interestingly, they did not try to learn to solve a telephone problem through reading the guidelines or instructions built into the telephones, although the instructions were in the Lao language.

Critical reflections, analysis and discussion

The example of using a telephone illustrates multiple literacies, including recognition and use of signs, symbols, numbers and sound. The practice of these literacies show that the acquisition of multi-literacy skills is likely to be different from the traditional acquisition of literacy (see The New

London Group, 2000). Mina would have tried different keys in order to understand the diverse functions of the telephone: she observed signs, symbols, and used the auditory literacy memory built into the telephone, including images, numbers, signs, symbols, and sounds of the keys on the telephone keypad. From what I could gather, she learned the different functions of the telephone through wanting to solve the problems she had with the telephone. She tried to use different keys or buttons in a trial and error manner until she achieved what she had desired to do, and then kept practising and memorising those functions. It did not appear that she used printed reading material to understand the functions of the telephone.

The emerging new literacies of the telephone

Mina's story may be an example of how technologies cause a change in literacy from print literacy to visual literacy, and of how people are making use of new technologies to satisfy their own needs. According to Appadurai (1996), the flow of telephone technology is part of the ongoing global flow which influences the changes to our world through the process of globalisation – divided into the levels of ethnoscape, technoscape, ideoscape, mediascape, and financescape. Drawing on Appadurai, we can understand that we are connected to each other and that one social phenomenon occurring in one society can possibly influence the rest of the world. The global flow theory suggests that the *technoscape* and *mediascape* are shifting away from a singular literacy, which used to be viewed as the ability to read and write in a national language, to plural literacies. As seen in Mina's use of the telephone, as well as other villagers' practices, they have had to cope with multiple modes of literacies (texts, symbols, and images) that are associated with telephone technologies. Mina's use of the telephone thus illustrates that in order to cope with today's world, in which information and knowledge come in multiple modes of literacies, there is a need to understand multilingual and multiple modes of communication (Gee, 2012; Kress, 2009; The New London Group, 2000).

It could be argued that visual literacies are likely to be more useful than print literacy in coping with 21st century technologies, as I observed Mina testing different signs and symbols on the telephone keypad of her telephone. According to Gee and Serafini (2014), visual literacies, including signs and symbols, have become the dominant communication modes of our everyday life, some even replacing print literacy, for instance, traffic signs, symbols and tools we use in our everyday lives. In this sense, it is suggested that the ability needed to cope with everyday life is not likely to depend on the ability to read and write print, but rather on understanding

visual images. As Mina demonstrated in this story, it did not appear that Mina made use of her print literacy skills to decode the information in order to learn how to use her telephone.

Mina's story illustrates that 21st century technologies could be learning resources themselves used to facilitate and teach in order to achieve the skills needed for mastering these technologies, and this is actually happening at the moment when people have problems and need to solve them. The story thus challenges the traditional literacy pedagogy, which is a formal school-based approach that forces participants to memorise reading and writing rules (see also Rogers, 2000). Scribner and Cole (1973); Hansman (2001); Taylor (2006), Merriam and Caffarella (1999), among others, contend that learning is not something that merely relies on absorbing theory, but instead it is shaped by using tools and experiencing situations of everyday life. These tools and situations contain different signs and symbols of communication, including the signs and signals which enable people to communicate with each other. For example, Mina created her contact list in a short note on the telephone rather than maintaining a written record, and she only tried to memorise the last three digits of each person's number. In a similar way, according to adult learning theory (e.g., Dewey, 1963; Malcolm, Holton, & Swanson, 2015; Merriam & Bierema, 2014), humans learn through the process of reflecting on past experiences and their meaning for the future. In this example, Mina tried and tested different buttons and functions of the telephone, and she collated any new knowledge in her memory and used it as experience knowledge; that is to say, she figured out a way of doing things which worked, and thus she used the same way again. Therefore, this experience was the best learning source for Mina, as the more she practiced the more experience she gained and accumulated, and consequently she got to know more telephone functions than her peers.

In addition, this example of literacy practice also contradicts the psychological "scale up" learning approach. This paper argues that adult learning does not have to be divided into levels starting from simple learning to complex learning (see also Rogers, 2000). Malcolm et al. (2015) state in their adult learning approach that adults choose what they need to learn using methods different from children. Once there is a need to learn, adults try different strategies to fulfil their needs. Niks, Allen, Davies, McRae, and Nonesuch (2003) discovered that adults with little formal education used a variety of strategies to acquire a skill or find information, including "asking people, reading, observations, trying (just do it), and the use of some form of technology" (p. 81). As shown in the example, although there are multi-functions built into the telephone, Mina chose to use only those functions necessary for her.

Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Samia Shah, Bunyad, Pakistan

My name is Samia Shah Mohammad and I am 18 years old. I belong to a cotton picker family from the tehsil of Khan Pur, Rahim Yar Khan. Living in a small *basti* (rural slum), getting an education was impossible for me and other girls in the community. Despite having 4 sisters, 3 brothers and my father working on his crop fields, it was very difficult to make ends meet. To support the family, my mother and I used to work in cotton fields as cotton pickers. I had always been passionate about education, but due to my family responsibilities, I could not go to the nearest school, which was almost 3 kilometers away from where I lived.

One day I heard about an organisation named Bunyad Foundation, opening a Community Learning Centre in our *basti*. Driven by curiosity, I wanted to know how they would help the young girls of our village in attaining an education. A team of Bunyad Foundation came to our residence, and explained about the importance of female education, and why child labour is bad for our society. Initially my father did not agree with what they said, as he thought that making ends meet was more important than education. However, on their second visit, the team of Bunyad was able to convince my father and I enrolled myself in the community-learning centre established by them.

After completing my literacy course at this learning centre, I managed to take the public school system exams and got admission in 9th grade at Government Girls High School at Kotla Pathan. After completing grade 10, I am currently teaching young girls in the same Community Learning centre, which transformed my life. Driven towards the education of other cotton picker girls, I aim to pursue higher education and be a role model for them. I am grateful to Bunyad Foundation, whose literacy programme has ignited a passion for education in me and given an opportunity to girls in our community to become empowered women.



Source: Bunyad

Skill development and literacy skills

Mina showed how her literacy skills are not necessarily useful for using the telephone. Mina's skill development in using the telephone was accumulated through the experience of practicing specific functions. She learned how to use each function of the telephone through practicing step-by-step and little-by-little, as she used the telephone every day. The more Mina practised, the more she became familiar and skilful with the functions. Sandberg (2009) argues that skills development is constituted by the reflection of the understanding of a situation by knowing, acting, and being in a particular situation through practical experiences which are renewed over time. According to this circular concept of skills development, knowledge and skills are not primarily acquired through reading textbooks of educational programmes. For example, educational studies (e.g., Borko, Davinroy, Bliem, & Cumbo, 2000; Brown & Duguid, 1991) have provided compelling evidence that professional skills are not only constituted and acquired through formal training or at work, but through experiences that are acquired through using objects and living situations of everyday life. Likewise, Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) argued that "the condition for achieving skilful know-how is embedded within the situations encountered, which demands experience of those situations" (p. 399). They believe that knowledge and skills will be developed accordingly through embodied understanding – knowing, acting, and being in a particular situation – of the practice in question.

Mina's skills development in using the telephone thus offers a suggestion to the cognitive psychologists who believe that human beings acquire and develop skills on a scaled model – from the beginning to expert level (e.g., Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Hoffman, 1992; Smith & Ericsson, 1991). When Mina used the telephone, it was actually not possible to identify where the beginning of her skills was. In addition to this, Mina's skills in using telephones do not seem to relate to the ability to read texts. These findings suggest that human beings can acquire skills and become a skilled professional through practice and learning using mixed strategies, rather than through any level of direct instructions, such as provided by educational institutes.

Although a number of studies have concluded that people who have acquired higher literacy are more capable of learning other skills and solving daily life problems when compared to people with limited literacy skills (e.g., Blunch & Pörtner, 2011; Kagitcibasi & Gulgoz, 2005; Rocha & Ponczek, 2011), a number of studies have also disproven this conclusion. Fingeret (1983), Niks et al. (2003), and Taylor (2006), among others, argue that to learn other skills and to solve problems in everyday life, people do not have to depend on literacy skills. For example, Taylor (2006) reports, from his ethnographic study with ten adults in Canada with limited literacy

skills, that there was almost no difference – in terms of their ability to participate in and function in their everyday lives – between the adults whose literacy skills are officially classified as being at a limited level and adults with literacy skills at an above-limited level. This suggests that although an individual can read and write fluently, it does not ensure that he or she also gains other skills, competency, and “intelligence”, as assumed by a conventional view of literacy (Goody & Watt, 1963; Gray, 1969; Rassool, 1999; UNESCO, 2006). Mina’s literacy skill was lower than that of other villagers. She told me when I asked her if she could read the names and their telephone numbers written on the house pillar, “Yes, I can (read). But I am not good at writing because I do not write as often as my brother does.”

Conclusion

Solving “illiteracy” should not be viewed as providing second learning opportunities for those who have missed out on formal schooling in their childhood. Instead, it is important to help them to deal with their current and future issues and problems. The 21st century as the era of globalisation has been and will be bringing new and modern technologies, and new modes of literacy including words, signs and symbols into our everyday lives – even into a small, rural village like in this case study. The findings from this literacy practice suggest that literacy “experts” and policymakers rethink literacy as something more than just the ability to read and write, as it was defined sixty years ago.

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Thomas Kuan

The growing importance of non-formal and informal third age education

Asia has the second fastest growing rate of a population that is ageing. As older people live longer (many with no jobs and income), their education has become a social issue that countries have to be concerned about. In the recent Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education GRALE III monitoring survey, only 13 countries (out of 195 UNESCO members) gave priority to the education of their “senior citizens, retired people (third-age education)”. For countries where third age learning policies are not prioritised, third-agers are forming their own learning groups to nudge fellow citizens into non-formal and informal learnings. Third-agers are a huge population mass that can contribute to social-economic development.

Introduction: The need for rethinking adult learning and education in Asia

The world's older adult population (aged 65 and above) in 2015 was 900 million and will grow to 1.4 billion by 2030 (World Population Ageing Report 2015); Asia with the second fastest growing rate will have 456 million by 2025 (Asia Ageing Population, 2017), and is projected to reach nearly 923 million by 2050 (ADB, 2017).

With people living longer (many with no jobs, no income and some with no homes), their demands for sustainable living in the new life phase of a period of about “25 years life bonus” (Poul-Erik, 2018) are legitimate.

Nations should be concerned about adult learning and education for older adults as a part of their education and learning policies! In the 2017 GRALE III monitoring survey, only 13 countries (see Figure 1) gave priority to their “senior citizens/retired people (third-age education” as one of their five target groups of potential learners in their national ALE policies.

Countries that did not select this target group of “third age/senior citizens” and those who did not participate in the survey don't recognise that human longevity and older adults' autonomous self-directed learn-



Illustration by en3karriere.dk

Figure 1: Countries that give priority to third age/ later life learning in their national policies.

Algeria,
China, Cuba,
Lebanon, Lithuania,
Malaysia, Morocco,
Nepal,
Poland,
Russian Federation,
Sri Lanka,
Thailand,
Ukraine

TOTAL – 13 Countries (5 countries are in Asia)
Number of UNESCO Members: 195

More information here:

<http://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/global-report-on-adult-learning-and-education/national-reports-grale-3>.

<http://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/global-report-on-adult-learning-and-education/national-reports-grale-3#data-for-researchers>

ing can provide resources for socioeconomic and political development. There are many reasons for not giving priority to third age learners; one of which is that it is not specifically required in the UN Agenda 2030, especially in SDG 4. Therefore, a binding framework is missing. There are many well-crafted national policies with good objectives, but they are implemented with cultural bias towards learners from different social and cultural backgrounds. One such bias is that older learners are different social beings and not valued for their experiential learning knowledge and competence. Learning delivery and assessments are often designed to discriminate against them.

Fortunately, in the recent CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review 2017 (Suwon), the Civil Society Forum (CSF) raised awareness for older adults to be included in ALE policies in their declaration statements (CSF Declaration Statement 1).



Participants playing the “Snake-and-Ladder” game as a part of mental wellness exercise

Source: Thomas Kuan

There are few formal ALE systems for older adults, but informal and non-formal learning has been a tradition in Asia. In China, seniors' learning started in 1983, and today there are more than 7 million members in 60,000 schools for seniors (Signpost Issue 208). Today, third-agers (aged 50 to 80 years-old) worldwide are forming their own interest groups (such as universities of the third age, elder hostels, community learning centres, third age networks, University of the Third Age (U3A) alliances), and linking village/rural learning centres (managed by older adults) into U3A hubs to nudge fellow citizens in later life into learning for community and personal development.

What is University of the Third Age and who are third age learners?

The concept of third age learning started from France then the UK, where U3A organisations grew and established themselves as learning centres for third-agers in the late 1970s. Economic developments, the financial crisis

and health improvements have caused many third-agers to be unemployed and need to seek life-satisfaction through shared learning. In Asia there are several notable models, namely in Australia, New Zealand, India, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Taiwan, China and Singapore (see www.myu3a.org for some examples of models). These models range from informal and non-formal learning to social learning in the framework of active citizenship.

Third age education is also found in village learning centres in Asian rural areas. Their non-formal and informal learning is managed by senior members (mostly third-agers) who are preserving local indigenous knowledge for intergenerational sharing. Such volunteering efforts should be recognised and become partners in the development of “smart” communities. Currently, there are efforts to link these community learning centres under central banners like U3As in case studies in Thailand (Richards, C., Makaphol, J. & Kuan, T).

Smart cities and robotic artificial intelligence have pulled third-agers into digital literacy for social mobility and learning. With digitalised learning, third-agers are harnessing the benefits of later life learning to have fun (in learning), and to acquire skills for disruptive technological workplaces in order to work until their 70s and slightly beyond. Third-agers want access to information for healthy living and getting life-satisfaction through collaborative community learning. Third-agers do not want to be seen as the “new poor” of the 21st century, nor as being incapable of e-learning, and are taking on learning as a responsibility for living in the “smart cities” landscape. With personalised learning, they find that their third careers are often overlooked in many of the implemented ALE policies.

Third-agers contribute to community development by volunteering in, for example, tourism (for seniors) and healthcare, and intergenerational bonding is building resilient social networks. In the knowledge economy, where indigenous knowledge is important, public financing for digital skills and personalised e-learning on mobile platforms and other devices should not be too strongly tied, in a very narrow sense, to returns on investments.

The economy of third-ager learning

Investments in adult learning for seniors have contributed to social and cultural benefits. In Asia, when older adults study, they motivate children, youths and young adults to have respect and affection for elders as learning models, and the young adults soon become competitive (in acquiring knowledge) for national economic development. Such observations may explain the motivation to set up the China Association of Universities for the Aged (CAUA) in the 1980s (Thompson, 2002), when China was then



Delegates from SU3A Silpakorn, Thailand, visited Singapore

Source: Thomas Kuan

a low-income nation. Today, with governmental priority for “third age and senior citizens” learning policies, it has helped China rise to become the second largest global economy. Other countries with similar policies have capabilities to grow within a generation, given the right political environment for their human efforts and desires for learning.

The financial market value of older people in Asia-Pacific will be worth 3.3 trillion USD by 2020 (www.ageingasia.com 2015), and with China’s growing middle class, the need for products and services is rapidly growing. Asians are by nature savers, and generally believe that “wealth is power” to get things done. Their hidden potential wealth creation from fusing indigenous knowledge with wisdom has not yet been realised.

Movements for third age ALE are gaining importance because of the failures of policies that give low priority to their learning (See Figure 1 above). Many national ALE policies have “blind spots” that ignore third-agers, and most of them are not aware of the potential wealth augmentation – plus, the ageing population mass makes a powerful demand for social equality.

The rise of third age learning has stimulated older adults to seek resources for informal and collaborative learning in this disruptive new emerging technology decade where the lowered cost of learning devices has enabled older people to access and share information. Older Asians are learning that e-payment (for collection of pensions, making payments

and savings) is crucial for their livelihood. Many start spending their savings on themselves, rather than leaving them for their children. This may give rise to what I will call the “bonus (age) economy” for third-agers with their rising wealth and population mass.

In Singapore, every citizen 25 and over has received a SkillsFuture Credit of 500 SGD since January 2016 to attend skills development and lifelong learning courses (www.skillsfuture.sg/credit). For many learning diehards, they will pay additionally for their own learning in courses from U3rd Age, a not-for-profit organisation for later life learning on a peer learning community platform (www.u3a-singapore.com).

Conclusions

The revolution for later life learning already started when third age learning began in the 1980s in France, Britain and China, and it is spreading to the rest of Asia today. Now is the final stage, where learning opportunities linked with “conservation” are designed to meet the highest-ranked human need of self-fulfilment through encouraging the prolongation of an established value-system (Kuan, 2005). While every country has its own champion older adult learners, there is a need for an advisory and coordinating body for later life learning in Asia. Bodies like UNESCO, SEAMEO, ASPBAE, PIMA¹, EAFAE² or DVV International are well placed to perform that major role because of their experience and standing in Asian ALE.

With technology and people’s connectivity, it makes sense to share learning experiences – to develop links and to build trust in relationships. It is important to continue the momentum of the UNESCO Agenda 2030 to transform adult education in regions and in the world through emotional bonds and trust.

Over the next 12 years, Asia with its fastest-growing economies, ageing population and with half of the world GDP by 2050 (Lim, 2018), older adult voices will become exceptionably audible in the region. Their voices will have significant influence on policies to promote better living conditions for future generations, and sustainable solutions to urgent problems, to give a better future to their grandchildren. In Asia, the desires for grand-

1/ PIMA is Friends of PASCAL International Member Association set up in 2015 with a membership of 100 plus professionals and practitioners. Contact person: Chris Duke chris.duke@rmit.edu.au

2/ EAFAE – East Asia Federation for Adult Education set up in 1996 with members from 10 East Asian nations. www.adultlearning.net. Contact person: Thomas Kuan kuanthomas@gmail.com.



Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and

promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. UNESCO Education 2015: 18 – Goal 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/ya5w7b46>

children to have good access to education and learning is at least as strong emotionally valued as in western countries (see Best Votes³ – www.bedstestemmer.dk/).

As CONFINTEA VI mentions, “ALE is at a critical juncture as countries embark on realigning their education policies and programmes with the long-term, global sustainable development goals”, and ALE for older adults will ensure a sustainable and equitable future. There are 12 years left to achieve the UNESCO SDG vision of education for all, including for older adults:

The next 12 years will bring new changes to learning for older adults in the “smart city” environment, with more artificial intelligence (AI), coding, internet-of-things in homes, workplaces and communities. Third-agers are critical thinkers (one of the 4Cs of 21st century skills; the others are creativity, collaboration and communication) who appreciate non-formal and informal learning as a source for their own health, well-being and sustainable livelihood.

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^{3/} “Best Votes” is a non-political initiative set up by a number of grandparents, with a total of 26 grandchildren; <http://www.bedstestemmer.dk/>; Contact person: Poul-Erik Tindbæk

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Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Homira, ANAF AE, Afghanistan

My name is Homira, daughter of Mohammad Hussein, resident of the 13th district of the city Etefaq.

I would like to express my thanks to ANAF AE that provided us this literacy course. I did not know anything at the beginning of my life. First our teacher taught us the Alphabet from Aleph "الف" to Ya "ی".

At first I thought I am not able to learn, but teacher Zahra encouraged us and give more morale to us so we learned everything. Now I am helping my family, my brother, and sisters, and wherever I go, I can read correctly when I wanted to go to the doctor. Before, I went to the house and I did not understand what has been written. But now when I am going to meet a doctor I can read everything like for example, the ears section, tooth section and other parts.

Now I can help, if someone needs a home address. And I can give them a correct address which was impossible for me before – even I didn't know what kind of alley is this! I did not even know when I was told what Golestan was. I did not know Golestan was the name of the alleys where we are living.

I am very pleased to be able to read and now I get rid of the frustration. Thank God and thank our noble teacher, Zahra, who always comes to us. When she enters the classroom, she is asking lectures of past days.



Source: ANAF AE

Wolfgang Schur

From lost generation to new pathways to education

Afghanistan highlights the need to rethink and reposition the education of young adults and develop a modern youth and adult education sector which responds to the needs of Afghanistan's youth with diverse and targeted offers and demonstrates the important role adult learning and education should play in conflict settings to enable the implementation of a visionary and forward-looking strategy for self-reliance after four decades of armed conflict, millions who out-migrate, displacement, returning refugees and economic crises. Needs have changed, are differentiated, more complex and enormous for the young people bridging from studies to the world of work.

Four decades of armed conflict, out-migration, displacement and returning refugees

The history of Afghanistan during the last 40 years is about war, armed conflict, mass out-migration, internal displacement, labour migration, migration from rural to urban areas and about the integration of huge numbers of returning refugees. Afghanistan belongs to the top 10 countries of origin of refugees worldwide.

More than 75 % of the 32 million Afghans left their homes at least once between 1979 and 2009. This continues to today. The Humanitarian Country Team of UN-OCHA reported that the ongoing armed conflict has displaced 360,000 people from their homes and resulted in 8,019 civilian casualties in 2017. Humanitarian organisations expect another 500,000 returning Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran during 2018, many of them young adults.

In addition, according the latest UN-OCHA Bulletin, about two million people in various provinces are at risk of becoming severely food insecure due to the ongoing drought and be forced to leave their homes. The poverty rate increased since 2011 from 36 percent to 39.1 percent in 2013-2014. 1.3 million people fell into poverty over this period.

Despite huge progress, the performance of the young education system is still weak

None of the Afghan governments were ever able to establish a country-wide education system comparable to the neighbouring countries. During the civil war in the 1990s many infrastructure elements of the rudimentary education system were destroyed. During the Taliban regime, hostility toward secular education, and particularly towards the education of girls and female teachers, increased. The education of women has been traditionally neglected. Afghan women have experienced a tremendous burden, especially over the past few decades of conflict and insecurity.

During the last 40 years of armed conflict the education of several “lost generations” of Afghans was interrupted or never begun. According to the Comprehensive Needs Assessment in Education 2002, together with other hard-to-reach groups including young war widows, orphans and disabled persons, the total number is rising into several millions. Demobilised former child and adolescent soldiers were particularly difficult to reintegrate into the new school system and the labour force.

In addition, illiteracy in Afghanistan, estimated at 64 % by the national Literacy Department, makes it a world hotspot. Women in rural areas are



Women's education is a priority

Source: ANAF AE

the most vulnerable groups. The high illiteracy rate and the poor education system are barriers for a huge part of the population to participate and contribute to economic and civil development. Despite huge progress and international support during the last fifteen years, the education system continues to be among the least developed in the world and the quality of education is low. Still, well over 30 % of school age children are not enrolled.

Not only girls and young women, the whole young generation is suffering from that situation. The country has one of the youngest populations in the world with more than 63 % under 25 years of age. Insecurity, low economic development, high unemployment and the weak education system do not provide future perspectives and, once again, many young people left the country in the past 3 years. According to the World Bank, most of the jobs created in the service sector during the pre-transition phase up to 2014 were lost.

Especially the integration of young returnees and IDPs into the education system is a high priority for national stability. Through the influx of IDPs and returnees, but also through economically related rural exodus,



Training for young women

Source: ANAFAE

population growth in the cities is steadily increasing. UN data estimates the annual population growth between 2010-2015 in the cities to be 4.7 % and in rural areas to be 2.7 %. This brings additional pressure on the young and weak education system.

The quality of education lagged behind expectations, as highlighted in a study published by the Ministry of Education. About 45 % of those completing 6th grade were neither able to read properly nor to understand simple texts, and 31 % were unable to solve a simple mathematical problem. On top of that, the number of school dropouts is increasing.

Focus of the limited national education budget is on general education

The Education Joint Sector Review confirmed that literacy education, with only 2 percent of the national education budget, is the weakest and least developed area in the education sector. Despite all the emphasis, which was set out in key policy documents and in many assurances by politicians, it does not have political priority.

Nevertheless, impressive success has been achieved since 2002, the beginning of the “Back to School Campaign”. Thanks to international assistance and national efforts, access to education, the enrolment rate – a key focus of the Afghan National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) and of the Development Strategy (ANDS) – has risen from 900,000 students in the 1990s to currently 9 million students from primary education to university level.

Invest in the education of young people for the Afghanistan of tomorrow

The first generation to start their education in 2002, after the Taliban regime, passed through a 12-year general education cycle and many even graduated from University in 2014. 500,000 young people, school graduates, returning refugees, young people without schooling, early school leavers and university graduates crowd into the labour market each year. Despite their achievements in developing their education, they lack important prerequisites to actively participate in economic life. The existing vocational education system is unable to provide the necessary skills for the labour market and for economic development. It is not in tune with the requirements of the current and future labour market.

Although there was an economic growth of 14.4% in 2012, mainly based on international military presence and international financial support, according to World Bank figures it dropped to around 1 percent in 2015. However we now see some positive developments. Growth was projected to be 2.6 percent in 2017. Service and industry sectors report a slightly faster growth of 3.4 percent and 1.8 percent respectively. The World Bank confirms a slowly accelerating growth is reflected in a slight recovery of the business sector. This gives hope for more employment and room for entrepreneurs to start their own business.

The national Youth Policy underlines the need for public-private partnerships between the education sector and the private sector and for curricula that are more aligned with the needs of the labour market. Support for career guidance and work experience for young people through formal and non-formal education programmes and internships in government agencies and private companies is seen as a major priority.

It is time to re-think the education of young adults

The young population hopes for a political restart, and above all for an economic recovery, better educational opportunities, better access to



*Young men need education and training
as well*

Source: ANAFAE

education, qualified employment, career opportunities, economic empowerment and a better future for themselves and their families. The youth of Afghanistan could release a huge potential for development if they could be in the focus of development and poverty reduction strategies. With targeted investments in youth and adult education, the transformation process (2015-2024) could become one of the most effective development decades for the Afghanistan of tomorrow. This great opportunity should not be missed by the government and the international community.

ANAFAE and DVV International review the existing education services

Several years ago adult education in Afghanistan was mainly related to literacy education and short term technical skills courses to support the reintegration of refugees or

to civic education courses for women. This has changed over time. The needs of the younger generation now bridging from school or university to the world of work, the needs of young entrepreneurs and of those young people who slowly replaced the older generations in governmental or private employment are more differentiated, more complex and huge.

The Afghan National Association for Adult Education (ANAFAE) and DVV International addressed these challenges and have started a process to review the existing education services, provided in more than 13,000 education courses with about 225,000 learners of the ANAFAE Network of 23 Adult and Community Learning Centres.

The young generation is not looking for national tailor made education programmes anymore but wants internationally recognised education standards and programmes that can provide new validated skills and competences that can help them to build a personal perspective, if possible in their home country. These education programmes should help to improve their employability or should promote competences enabling them to take over responsibility and leadership.



Adult learning centre in Kabul

Source: ANAF AE

Development of new education services package and approaches

Of course complementary programmes to formal school education are still necessary to support young people to finalise their school education and to join higher education. But the new education services of the ANAF AE Education Network will have different dimensions in regard to personal employability, personal competences and sustainable personal perspectives.

One dimension is related to the application of new technologies, ITC developments, data processing and analytical competences. Other dimensions are related to teamwork, social and personal, entrepreneurial and communication competences. These competences are needed nowadays to support a growing economy that is starting to produce more of its own products, building on lively regional relations supported by the Heart of Asia – the Istanbul process.

ANAF AE has started to develop new entrepreneurial education packages that combine these dimensions and tested them in close cooperation with the chamber of commerce in Mazar-i-Sharif. Some of these packages, for example, combine IT competences from International Computer Driver License (ICDL) Standards with Business English Standards, per-



Young technicians in training

Source: ANAFAE

sonal competences and accounting. Other programmes include the creation of personal projects with presentation skills or job search competences. New education programmes for entrepreneurs are based on international ILO experiences and standards, like Start and Improve Your own Business (SIYB). These programmes are facilitated by recognised trainers according to ILO standards.

Besides the improvement of the learning processes, the measuring of education is becoming more important. ANAFAE has established the first online ICDL test centre and an online standard English Language Test will follow soon.

Just recently, ANAFAE introduced the ProfilPASS System, a modern participatory systematic approach to helping a person find out more about their own skills and competencies levels. The ProfilPASS provides a systematic and validated way for better awareness about one's own personal strengths and weaknesses. It is a journey of self-discovery and focuses especially

on personal, social, organisational competences, key competences of the National Qualification Framework. The ProfilPASS approach is to assess evidence and validate the related cognitive activity and affective competence development of learners in informal and non-formal learning settings, like in family life, school, professional education, voluntary and community based action, professional life, work experiences, commitment for civil society, and extraordinary circumstances (which is especially important in the context of Afghanistan). The process, the competences and their levels are visualised and documented in a personal competence file, the ProfilPASS.

Trainers will be certified soon and will spread this new approach with the ANAFAE education network.

In other fields, like in science education or even in art and culture education, ANAFAE is experimenting with new professional partnerships, like the national science centres, the national Art Gallery and Art faculty at the University in order to bring new standards for learning and teaching. ANAFAE started to examine some of the basic national occupational skill standards in order to adapt the simple skills development courses. In IT hardware repair, international based standards like CompTIA A+ will be applied. In Video and Photo Design, the Adobe Certified Trainings, and in networking, CISCO certified trainings will be applied.

The review of the education programmes will also affect the literacy education programmes. Together with UNESCO, new pathways from literacy education to vocational training and skill development, to Community-based Education or formal education will be established.

Strengthen the role and re-position the education of young adults

Of course the rethinking of the content and the sustainability of adult education programmes will not be enough. What is necessary is a new positioning of adult education. Growing evidence has demonstrated that adult education is important for human capital development, work, personal skills and economic success. Adult education is becoming a more crucial and important part of the education system and is very much linked to the integration of high numbers of returnees and IDPs. Adult education is increasingly related to future economic developments, to personal perspectives of young people to stay in the country.

A narrow concentration on skills and economic improvement represents a short-sighted vision, as adult education is much more than that. Adult education is crucial to the development of the country, to the reduction of poverty and inequality. From a broader social perspective, adult education is needed to deliver the knowledge, skills and competencies required to increase employment, income, social cohesion and individual participation in a sustainable peace process, and to strengthen human rights.

The broad scope of the Education 2030 goal of ensuring “lifelong learning opportunities for all” makes explicit reference to education for human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. How to put this into practice remains a challenge without new investment. This key question can only be answered through very strong national lobby work by the education providers, through networking with civil society organisations. ANAFAE plays an important role in this process as a founder and active member of the National Education Coalition.

The discussion on the translation and implementation of the SDG 4 goals is a second important approach for a new positioning of adult education. The National Education Coalition together with the network of NGOs is actively promoting the dialog with the Presidential Office, the Ministry of Education and the Group of international Education Development Partners.

The key focus of the networking and dialog is to promote adult and literacy education as enablers for the other Sustainable Development Goals, as an integrated instrument for a visionary and forward-looking strategy for self-reliance and a driver on the way to implement the Afghan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF).

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Adult learning and education for non-traditional livelihoods for resource-poor women

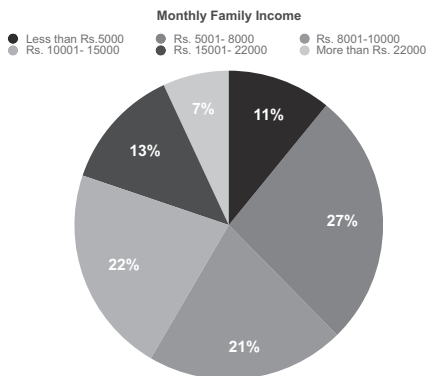
While talking about a woman's journey through Azad Foundation's "Women on Wheels" programme, this article, argues for a more holistic understanding of what constitutes "learning" and "education" within the paradigm of "skills-for-livelihoods with dignity" for resource poor women. Non-traditional skills such as driving, have the potential to transform gender relations at many levels – at home, in public spaces and in the minds of people. They offer a remunerative livelihood with dignity and build role models by breaking the "glass/concrete ceiling" that limits the possibilities for resource-poor women. However, mere skill education does not bring sustainable change. Resource-poor women need to be equipped with the knowledge to interpret their context while learning new skills. They need to be supported to tap the power that lies within them which will sustain them in using the new knowledge and skills to take control of their own lives and bodies.

The success story of Maya

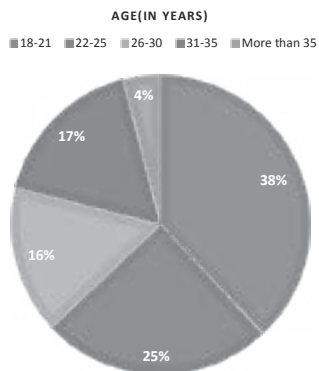
I heard about Maya a few years ago. She had just arrived at an Azad training centre. I was told by my colleague that she had a very traumatic past. She was raped when she was 14 years old. The men were from the neighbourhood. They jumped onto her terrace where she was sleeping. After raping her, they threw her off the terrace and she barely survived, with fractures in each of her upper arms. Her father worked as a daily wage labourer and her mother was a homemaker. Maya was their only child. The shame and embarrassment that the family was subjected to after this incident resulted in her parents marrying her off in haste. Maya was studying at the time, but she was forced to give up on her education. Marriage to an elderly man did not bring any cheer to her life. In fact, much the opposite. She had to live with extreme domestic violence. A couple of times she complained to her family, then to the police, but nothing much happened. She even filed a case with Delhi Police Crime Against Women Cell, but they suggested that the two parties should try to make it work – reconciliation is the first strategy the courts inevitably try. Maya had no option but to go back to her marital home. Over this time, Maya gave birth to a baby boy and suddenly found that she had a reason to live. It was after one extreme experience of violence, when her husband tried to kill her, that Maya ran away from her home with her son. She lived with her parents for a while, and for some time at a woman's shelter home. During this time she heard about the Azad Foundation and thought that maybe this was where she could try out a different life.

A new stage in the life of Maya

Maya was all of 22 when she came to Azad. I was stunned listening to her story. How can so much misfortune, violence and negativity get packed into someone's life when one is so young! It's not that I was unaware of the realities of women's lives, especially women in resource-poor communities. One in three women in the world have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lives, making it one billion women around the world (UN Women Global Database on Violence Against Women). Maya's story was perhaps an extreme story. But then most of the women who come into Azad with a desire to change their life circumstances have stories of denial and deprivation, stories of how the larger social system continues to fail hundreds and thousands of individuals every day. The women who come into Azad not only suffer due to the vulnerabilities that poverty leads to, but also other vulnerabilities due to their gender, caste, religion, etc.



Box 1- Income profile of women who joined Azad Foundation in 2017-18



Box 2- Age profile of women who joined Azad Foundation in 2017-18

Every year, across its various centres, nearly 400 women join Azad for the “Women on Wheels” programme. The profiles of enrolled women for 2017-18 (Box 1 & 2) is typical of the profiles of women who have joined the programme over the years.

Maya heard about Azad from a colleague who worked with the women’s shelter. The colleague showed her a pamphlet that contained information about Azad’s “Women on Wheels” programme. The pamphlet attracted her attention as it was not just offering training in driving skills but many other opportunities for skills development as well, and most importantly it offered those who enrolled a job as a professional chauffeur at the end of the training. Eligibility for the course, as stated in the pamphlet, was very basic education qualification. That encouraged Maya. Maya contacted the mobilisers from Azad and after several rounds of conversation, through which she managed to clarify her doubts, she gradually prepared herself, and finally registered at the training centre.

“Women on Wheels”

That is how, even today, after ten years of work, most women come into Azad. More than 60 % of the women come after several rounds of individual conversations, not just with Azad colleagues, but also with their families. It is an important process where the women, as well as their families, need to be helped to think about how they could let her spend



Women learn how a motor functions

Source: Azad Foundation

almost 8 hours a day out of the home because that is the time it will take for the woman to travel to and from as well as undertake the training. It is important to begin this conversation right at the beginning, since the “Women on Wheels” programme prepares women to enter the job market. It is not a “driving-school” but a livelihood with dignity programme. And in order to earn remunerative incomes the women will have to put in a full day’s work. So, the families have to learn to “allow” women to step out of the homes. This is not easy, given that more than 80 % of the women in India require permission to step out of their homes (IHDS 2012). The families also have to learn to “cope” with women’s absence. Domestic work and care work needs to be renegotiated. In most cases there are other women who step in – a mother, a sister, sister-in-law, mother-in-law, even a daughter. Sometimes there are men who help – a husband, a brother. And of course, many times, it is learning to pack in more work in the same number of hours. Again, something that women across social strata learn to do. Women in Asia end up spending on average 3.17 hours more than men per day undertaking paid and unpaid work (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/do-women-work-longer-hours-than-men/>). But there have been heartening stories of how over time women have convinced

their husbands to look after the home and children as they begin to earn higher salaries.

Maya studied up to class X, but she didn't have her education documents with her. They were at her husband's place, somewhere in a cupboard. And she knew it would be a difficult task to get them. However, she did muster up her courage to retrieve them from her marital home and was fortunate that they had not been damaged in anyway. A few months later, when Maya was able to get her driving licence, one day her husband did manage to get his hands on it and burnt it in a fit of anger. By then, Maya knew she had a purpose, she had steeled her determination, and she simply went and got a duplicate license with the help of her colleagues.

Many women who come to enrol at Azad face a variety of challenges around even having their basic documents (basic documents for address proof, birth proof and citizenship proof that are required to get a licence). Either they don't have all of them, or they are at their parent's home or in their village, or maybe they have just not taken the education certificates from the school where they were studying. Thus, the first step for many of them, after having decided to join the "Women on Wheels" programme, is to arrange to get their citizenship and other documents. This could take anything from one week to several months. In the process, some might even decide to take up other informal work, given the necessities of earning incomes – even if they are marginal and in a hazardous working environment. Azad invests considerable time and effort in just helping resource-poor women obtain these basic citizenship documents. In 2017-18 alone, it supported more than 1100 women to get their documents.

The Azad training centre – a new chance for women

Coming into Azad is like stepping into a very different world that many have not known before. Here is a space where the women can feel safe, where they are respected and where they have to take responsibility for their own learning. I remember another woman trainee narrating the experience of her first two days at Azad. As part of the two-day induction where all the trainees are helped to know each other better and the details of the programme are shared, they had to do an exercise on writing about their strengths, weaknesses and their dream. I remember this trainee telling me, that it was so difficult for her to think of either her strengths or her dreams. She had never thought about herself in those terms. She went home and it took her the entire evening to think hard about herself before she could share that. The journey of self-discovery and change thus begins for most of the women at the point of joining Azad.

Social change is as much about changing the larger structures and policies as it is about changing our own mindsets and what we have come to believe of ourselves and our place in the world. While Azad addresses the former through its advocacy work, its training work is based on the understanding of individual change. The learning pedagogy is premised on the following key understanding:

- On content: That mere skill training will not enable women to step into non-traditional livelihood domains successfully. Women do not have such skills in the first place, not because they are simply “not interested” in acquiring them, but because they are actively denied such opportunities through structural barriers – of mobility, of gendered division of work, of gendered expectations, and many others. Hence the training has to also help them unlearn this and re-learn about a different world where women have equal rights.
- On delivery: That the women who come into Azad are all adults, and thus Adult learning principles guide and form the bedrock of the pedagogy. Taking responsibility for one’s learning and critical reasoning are core to this.
- On a learning ecosystem: That women, especially resource-poor women, need to build a solidarity network that can function as their social capital. Azad facilitates this through several interventions where women from across strata, learning groups and centres interact with each other and participate in campaigns and movements for social change, building a social support network across institutions. Also, through the learning journey, a close engagement with family needs to be managed to continuously negotiate for support for the woman.

The training curriculum covers 14 different modules covering three core learning areas:

1. Driving skills – focused primarily on technical skills of driving, car maintenance, road navigation, etc.
2. Women’s rights – that builds an understanding of the world we live in by exploring various structural inequalities, and imparts knowledge on legal and other ways to protect themselves from violence.
3. Personal empowerment – helps build a sense of confidence, by learning self-defence, communication skills, English speaking, and work preparedness.

While the technical driving practice is delivered through an in-house driving faculty, all the other modules are delivered through a partnership with various resource institutions and individual experts. The curriculum



Preparing for the driver's licence exam

Source: Azad Foundation

is designed to be covered over 6 months. However, in reality the average time taken by a learner is 8 months. Women need to struggle with various hurdles, including social and cultural norms that they continuously battle. And they need to overcome the fear and lack of confidence in their own minds. The internal and external struggles for each woman are different, her coping mechanisms are different, and the manner in which the team needs to relate to them is different. The pace of delivery of the curriculum is thus kept flexible to adapt itself to the pace of each learner.

This journey of change is full of emotions for the women. Every little achievement – learning self-defence, new words in English, participating in a social campaign, getting a licence, and so on, fills them up with tremendous hope. Every small setback – a critical comment, failing a driving test, a tiff with another trainee – is enough to bring tears and throw them into despair. Maya had a tumultuous journey as well. She attended the different courses with great excitement. To me, she has always seemed to be hungry for new knowledge, new experience and new opportunities. But when it came to taking control of the steering wheel on the busy roads of Delhi, Maya was overwhelmed with the speed, noise and aggression of Delhi



Cabs for women by women

Source: Azad Foundation

traffic. She could see her peers overtaking her and gaining confidence and that demotivated her further. The training team was quick to spot this and Maya was supported through various counselling sessions. Finally, she completed her course, and was ready to then move into Sakha to be offered a job as a chauffeur.

A new job for Maya: professional chauffeur

Sakha is a strategic partner of Azad that facilitates employment opportunities for women who complete “Women on Wheels” training. In doing that, Sakha also makes available safe and alternate transport options for women customers – these are mostly working women, women travellers, women with children, women running errands for elderly people with special needs, etc. Sakha operates through its two verticals, which are:

Placement of women chauffeurs under full-time annual contracts – where women chauffeurs are found jobs with individual or institutional clients (such as car showrooms, as valets with hospitals or hotels, with state



Maya became a professional chauffeur

Source: Azad Foundation

governments, etc.), or employment with Sakha Cabs for its 24*7 car and chauffeur hire services for women by women. In this type of employment women become employees of Sakha, who provides them with competitive wages and social security.

Maya got rejected in the first two client test drives which Sakha facilitated for her. In the first case, the client thought she was “too unexperienced”. In the second, she belonged to the wrong caste! Maya nearly gave up and stopped responding to any calls from Sakha or Azad. A team member visited her at home and encouraged her to give it another try. She was offered a “safe job” with Azad for a month, where she could practice driving while running some errands, earn a subsistence allowance and give herself time to become confident. A month later, in her next test drive, Maya was selected and she secured herself a job with a very caring employer. Maya worked as a private chauffeur for over a year, and subsequently was offered a job as a commercial chauffeur with Sakha.

I remember meeting Maya when she got her first job – her face radiant, she had come with a box of sweets! She had many dreams and it seemed to her that now, for the first time in her life, all her dreams could

perhaps come true. Over the first year of her placement, Maya gradually built an identity for herself as “professional chauffeur”. She ensured that her son got admission in a “good quality private school”. She saved money and invested in a small one room apartment. Over this period, Maya has been interviewed by many journalists, she has driven many celebrities such as the famous Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan and the Prime Minister of Netherlands, Mark Rutte. She is considered a “woman of substance” in her community. Her neighbours come to her for advice. Maya says that she has become “a person whose opinion is sought after”. She is committed to ensuring her son grows up to be a “different kind of man” – a man who will know how to be friends with and respect women.

Azad has enabled nearly 1700+ women break several barriers – in their minds and in the social environment around them. More than 700 women have taken the leap into the world of employment and have dramatically transformed their life conditions – restarting education, investing in houses and other assets, reclaiming their freedom. In doing so, they have been able to offer more than a million safe rides to women users. They are all a living testimony to the potential of holistic learning and non-traditional livelihoods that can create intergenerational impact.

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Nani Zulminarni

Strengthening grassroots women's leadership through the Paradigta Academy programme

Since 2015, the government of Indonesia has implemented Law No. 6/2014 concerning villages. The enactment of the Village Law demonstrates the Indonesian government's political will to decentralise the development plan and bring decision-making to the village level. However, it was clear from the start that the inclusion of women's participation and leadership, as well as other gender issues, would not be easily accommodated in the implementation of the Village Law.

An adult learning and education (ALE) initiative to strengthen local governance systems

In response to this, and in contributing towards the effective implementation of the Village Law for the well-being and sovereignty of all, including women, since 2015 the non-governmental organisation PEKKA¹ has developed an initiative aimed at strengthening women leaders at the grassroots level, especially among women heads of family, to enable them to play a more decisive role in village “leadership” and to influence development and decision-making processes. It is an “action training” initiative called Paradigta Academy, under the slogan “Outstanding Women for Village Sovereignty”. Paradigta Academy is a structured education and action training process for PEKKA cadres and women volunteers in rural and poor urban areas designed in order to help them be actively involved in influencing decision-making and development processes to be more inclusive and gender sensitive. Since it started in 2016, around 2,524 rural women in 523 villages, 117 sub-districts in 10 districts in Aceh, West Java, Central Java, West Kalimantan, NTB (West Nusa Tenggara), NTT (East Nusa Tenggara) and Southeast Sulawesi have attended the Paradigta Academy, from which 2,081 women succeeded in completing the education process.

Two years of implementing the programme have generated encouraging results and positive impact with the potential for seeing long-term change with regard to women’s participation and influence in villages.

1. Paradigta Academy participants and alumni have broadened their horizons, knowledge and skills, and bolstered their confidence for more active participation in influencing the village.
2. Stronger women’s leadership in village decision-making and representation is evident from Paradigta Academy participants and alumni who actively participate in village development processes, not only in *musrenbang* (consultative development planning forum) at various levels, but also as the leaders and drivers of change in the community. They have piloted community-led programmes, and advocated for

1/ PEKKA – Women Headed Family Empowerment is a national women’s NGO established in 2001. PEKKA focus on facilitating women heads of family to have access to various resources, actively participate in every phase of development, have awareness about their rights, to be involved in the decision-making process within their families as well as within the society. PEKKA work in more than 1,200 villages in 20 Provinces of Indonesia, organising more than 2,500 groups of families headed by women. For further information visit www.pekka.or.id



Participants in the Paradigma Academy programme

Source: Nani Zulminarni

- local regulations, and *adat* (custom) regulations relating to women's protection, basic services and village funds.
3. The government has become aware of the importance of supporting women's leadership education for more participatory and inclusive rural development. This can be observed from the issuance of policies and budget allocations in favour of women and marginalised groups, including for healthcare, empowerment and education, as an outcome of the advocacy work initiated by participants and alumni.
 4. Various parties with the potential to support the implementation of Paradigma Academy have shown interest and demonstrated their commitment. This is evident from the many villages that have earmarked village funds for supporting their local women to attend the Academy.
 5. Availability of tried and tested quality education manuals, supporting materials, and training of trainers for other organisations raised interest in developing similar initiatives.

Context of programme design and delivery

Paradigta Academy provides critical education for members of the community based on their daily life experiences. The education approach and methodology emphasises dialogue and reflection, which is reinforced with practical instruments and themes relating to issues that are strategic to the lives of women heads of family or grassroots communities and other marginalised women. Such strategic themes include food sovereignty, economy, education, health, alternative energy, civil rights and public services. Other themes and analysis will also be introduced to strengthen their perspectives on rural development, such as the Village Law and village governance system, rural development planning based on inclusivity, gender equality and gender justice, and environmental conservation, village budgeting and financial systems, etc. These skills and knowledge will strengthen women's leadership capabilities at the grassroots level in the broader system. Education materials are tailored according to the type of education and training, combining classroom and field-based learning. The education curriculum covers theory, simulation and hands-on learning, including visits to relevant institutions. Face-to-face interaction is necessary for a participatory process that uses popular media.

The curriculum is based on the social transformation paradigm with a view to bringing forth and strengthening grassroots women leaders with a strong transformative vision and the capacity to contribute towards rural development. Furthermore, these leaders are also expected to contribute at a much broader scope, extending to the district/city and national level. The three main frameworks of the PEKKA Paradigta Academy include self-empowerment (35 % of the curriculum), community organising (35 % of the curriculum) and technical capacity (30 % of the curriculum). The curriculum, which is organised into 10 modules and 38 discussion topics, requires 9-12 months to implement, from which 25 % of the time will be dedicated to classroom learning and the remaining for field assignments and write-ups.

Achievement

Paradigta Academy provides "action training" where the education and training process covers empowerment and capacity building that uses a combination of classroom learning and direct practice. Expected changes are not only about technical and analytical abilities, but also shifts in perspectives on one's self, the community and the state. Four fundamental changes experienced by Paradigta Academy participants concern access, critical awareness, participation and control.

- **Access to knowledge and skills**

Paradigta Academy opens up access to opportunities for poor women, marginal groups and those with limited formal education to learn and develop their potential, capacity and leadership. In 2017-2018, several participants were women with disabilities, including the blind and physically handicapped, and senior citizens. Participating in Paradigta Academy has changed their lives, broadened their horizons, and opened up opportunities, enabling them to exercise their rights as equal citizens and inspiring them to contribute towards change in their community.

“After joining Paradigta Academy, I was motivated to continue my studies by enrolling in both the lower and upper secondary education equivalency programme, as I wanted to be actively involved in the village as a member of the BPD (Village Representative Board). Despite my limited education, it did not dampen my spirit to continue to actively participate in village activities. And hopefully it will soon be realised as targeted in March 2018. I also work together with the village chief and the people of Sukarara Village in Jonggat sub-district, Central Lombok District to speed up the realisation of the ODF village.” (Minarti, Paradigta Academy participant in West Lombok District, NTB)

- **Critical awareness and thinking**

All Paradigta Academy modules adopt a critical education approach whereby participants are encouraged to critically analyse the situations that they face and to articulate their thoughts on the matter. They will then gradually learn to think critically and act wisely in handling any situation, which will in turn be helpful in their participation in society. The ability to think critically has steered them away from being passive members of the community who are indifferent to the situation around them, who can only complain and demand.

- **Active participation in the community**

After learning at Paradigta Academy, most participants have greater self-confidence and courage to speak and express their views and opinions in front of others. Some Paradigta Academy modules require them to learn to interact with the government and the wider community. Participants make every effort to attend and be actively involved in *musrenbang* (development planning meeting) from the hamlet to district level to present their recommendations. Although they do not always succeed in having their recommendations taken up, their presence in such forums has opened the eyes of the wider public to the importance of women attending consultative and decision-making meetings for the best interest of the village.

- **Control over village development processes**

Attaining awareness, as village residents and citizens, of their right to all forms of resources and decisions that affect their lives, has motivated participants to take part in controlling how the government is being run. They want to make sure that resources are being well managed and that the decisions made generate optimal benefit for the wider community. After undergoing training at Paradigta Academy, participants and alumni monitor the village budget and oversee village programmes. One of the control instruments developed by Academy participants and alumni to strengthen their control is a proposed village regulation and policies that impact on the lives of women and other vulnerable groups. For example they proposed a village regulation on “Age Maturity of Marriage” to prevent child marriage of girls.

Studying at Paradigta Academy has enabled these two women to become village council members

Masniani was born in Jerneng, Bagik Polak Barat village, Labuapi sub-district in Lombok Barat district on 4 August 1988. She is the third of five children. She is a single woman and lives with her grandmother since her parents passed away. Masniani is a head of family. Her educational background is quite good, with a bachelor degree and she is active in her village, even running as a candidate to become a member of the Village Consultation Council (BPD). However her candidacy was rejected by the Head of BPD because she was a female.

Siti Mustainnah, a staff member in the village office, then fought for Masniani (alumni of Paradigta Academy) and Husnayanti (village activist) to become members of the BPD Desa Bagek Polak Barat, District of Labuapi. According to Siti Mustainnah, both of these women have the spirit and willingness to become BPD members.



Source: Nani Zulminarni

Siti Mustainnah relentlessly approached the village head by pointing out the importance of increasing women’s representation in BPD for the progress of the village and meeting the provisions of the law. Finally the village head agreed to add one more woman to become a member of the BPD. Currently, for the first time, Bagek Village West Polak, District Labuapi, West Lombok has two women members of the BPD.

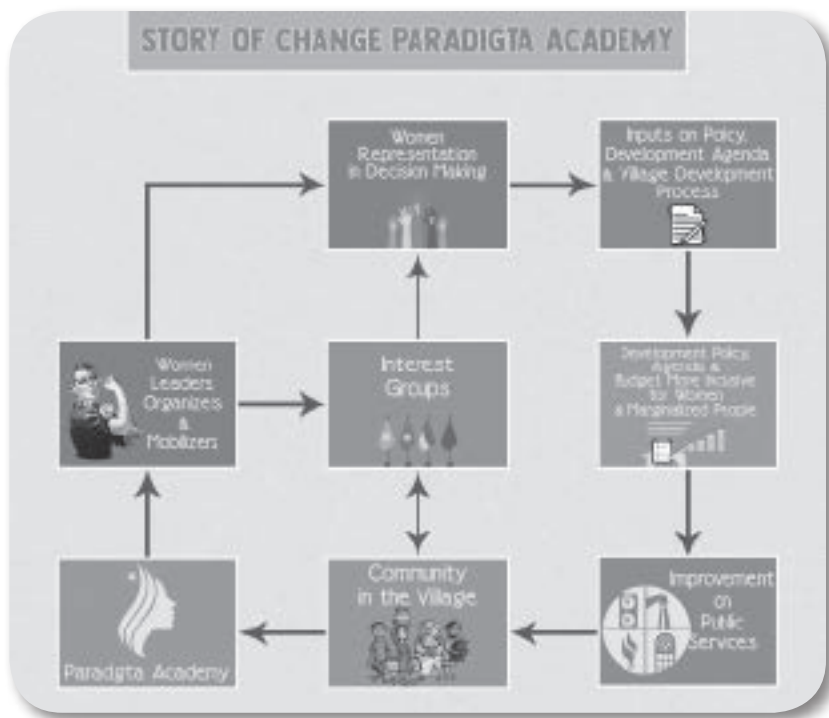
Summary: The story of change

Paradigta Academy’s presence at the village level has not only led to self-improvement among rural women and marginal groups, but also brought positive changes to the family, community, as well as the village



Women celebrate their successful participation in the programme

Source: Nani Zulminarni



governance and decision-making systems. The section below describes the changes that have taken place.

Paradigta Academy has empowered rural women, including women heads of family, women with disabilities and women from minority groups to become leaders, and active organisers. They have developed interest groups in their respective regions and have initiated various community-level initiatives, including village farming, early childhood education, savings and loan cooperatives, waste management and other socio-cultural activities. They also represent women in various village-level decision-making forums. They are actively involved in village development, applying critical thinking in decision-making, including in the formulation of village regulations, agendas, policies and budgets that pay more attention to the interests of women and marginal groups as well as policies on basic services, protection of women and children, and women’s participation that were advocated by Academy alumni and participants, and the PEKKA Union.

Petronela Barek Daen, Indonesia

It was 18 April 2018, a special day for Petronela Barek Daen, because it was the first time in her 38 years of life that she was able to show her education certificate from Paradigta Academy to no less than 600 invitees, consisting of regional leaders from the District Head of East Flores, to village chiefs, social and religious leaders, family members and other members of the community at the PEKKA Centre in Lodan Doe, Adonara Islands, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) – a province in the eastern part of Indonesia. Blind since she was a toddler, Petronela had been



Source: Nani Zulminarni

denied the opportunity to pursue formal education because there are no learning facilities in her village that cater to the visually impaired. Petronela never had the chance to learn, except from her own life experiences. And on that special day, she received a graduation certificate as proof that learning is the right of every citizen, where learning processes should know no boundaries and barriers, and “being blind does not stop a person from learning alongside the others, and becoming leaders.”

Petronela began her education process – which took roughly a year – from which 25 % of the curriculum was taught in the classroom and the remaining part involved actual field practice. Petronela always sat in the front of the classroom, listening attentively and committing all that she was taught to memory. “I rely on my memory because I can’t take notes or read. Therefore, I must concentrate and stay focused when learning.” She has an incredible memory. For field assignments, when assessing public services or reading the village budget for instance, Petronela will be assisted by other Academy participants and mentors.

“My favourite module is module number two, on the river of life,” said Petronela. “For this module, I was reminded once again of my own life story, and I was able to listen to the life experiences of my friends. I came to understand that knowledge can be drawn not only from books written by experts, but also from the reflections of the lives that we ourselves lead”. When asked what she would do after graduating from Paradigta Academy, Petronela firmly said, “I will keep attending the village *musrenbang* and other forums to deliver my thoughts and input for development, especially on how the government and community should see people like me, people with disabilities or health conditions. I hope that we are given special attention to make sure that we are accorded the same rights as those enjoyed by others.”

Meanwhile, 116 village governments in 36 sub-districts, 17 districts in 8 provinces have allocated village funds from their budget for 2017/2018 to support Academy participants from the respective village. Furthermore, the advocacy of village funds by participants and alumni has resulted in the allocation of village funds for basic services such as education and health. An important lesson learned from these changes is that women's participation in village-level decision-making, directly or indirectly, can increase the quality and quantity of public services that are more inclusive for every village resident, including women and other marginal groups.

There are several innovations in this programme, specifically the education approach and process as a strategy to ensure the sustainability of this activity.

- **Action training**

All Paradigta Academy modules apply the “action training” approach, where the education process encompasses field-based activities or actions and lessons from the realities of life. The life experiences of women, local resources, and the realities around them make up the primary sources for learning. Direct interaction with various relevant parties in leading life in the community forms part of the learning process.

- **Mentorships**

The learning process at Paradigta Academy emphasises mutual learning between Academy participants and mentors, where both sides are the resource persons for learning. Mentors who are trained PEKKA cadres represent a powerful resource for the learning process through the mentorship system. As mentors come from their own locality, this approach guarantees the continued presence of mentors in the given region, and are not restricted by the existence of the project.

- **Multi-stakeholder engagement in participant recruitment**

In the selection of participants, Paradigta Academy engages the village government and community to recommend and appoint their own village representatives. Through this approach, participants will feel honoured to represent their village and will more eagerly put their acquired knowledge into practice in their respective villages upon completing the education process. This also makes it easier for the Academy to solicit financial support, including for the transportation of participants.

- **Working module**

The Paradigta Academy modules are developed generically, based on PEKKA's long experience on the ground. Cognisant of the dynamic context in which they work, PEKKA has developed modules that are open to changes, adjustments, additions and reductions that will continue based on the reflections and feedback of participants, and an analysis of contextual developments.

- **Flexibility**

The Academy adopts a flexible learning approach where schedules are arranged and agreed by participants and mentors to allow women the opportunity to participate in the education process in view of the dual burden that they have to bear.

- **The Role of PEKKA Community Learning Centre**

This initiative was developed by PEKKA in regions where it has built a presence. Consequently, the programme's strength lies with the presence of the PEKKA Union, active cadres, PEKKA Community Learning Centres and the good relations fostered with the community and village government.

Sharing my experience with ALE – Youth Stories from Asia

Amarbayasgalan Ganbaatar, All for Education, Mongolia

My name is Amarbayasgalan Ganbaatar and I am 22 years old. I am a second year student in teaching studies. Also, I work in Youth Policy Watch NGO as programme officer in charge of youth engagement.

With assistance from youth activists, after I deepened my knowledge about Youth Action Participatory Research (YAPR), I co-conducted youth-led participatory action research in order to visualise community mapping on adult education institutions in Mongolia.

Our research team was composed from young volunteers who are working in civil society. In the first phase, we gathered raw information from official websites. Then, we made interview with respective officers face-to-face and requested service in some organisations in order to obtain necessary information needed to do the mapping.

Team members were faced with bureaucracy, disrespect, discrimination and absenteeism of civil servants in the office. In contrast, some civil servants served us openly and kindly as great examples of realisation of code of conduct in public service.

We found that adult education institutions were located only in well infra-structured urban areas. However, Ger district (area with lack of infra structure and adequate housing) is excluded from public service such as education, resulting in escalating marginalisation among poor and vulnerable groups including unemployed youth.

During the research, I realised that adult education is crucial to everyone and public service delivery would be enhanced by fulfilment of the right to information. Dissemination of information to young people by friendly means to them is integral part of personal development as well. This is my main take away from my research and the adult learning process, which is never taught in the university.



Source: All for Education

List of authors



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Khau Huu Phuoc taught at Ho Chi Minh University of Education for 22 years before he joined SEAMEO CELLL (Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation) as Manager of Research and Training, where he focuses on lifelong learning development in the region. His most recent work was a collaborative project with Dr. Walter Baeten on the development of the resource package that accompanies the Training Manual for Facilitators.



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Beykham Saleumsouk is a project manager of DVV International in Laos. She has been working in the development sector for about 10 years, and has specialised in youth development for more than 7 years. Ms. Saleumsouk ran a local non-profit organisation for many years, conducting and organising trainings for volunteer internship programmes. Currently, she is on capacity building for NFE staff, project management and development of training plans and curricula.



Wolfgang Schur is the Project Coordinator for DVV International in Afghanistan. His background is in system development for the social and education sectors. He has conducted various country assessments and feasibility studies to promote non-formal and technical vocational education programmes for DVV International. Additionally, he facilitated a study for the BMZ and DVV International on Civic and Adult Education in the Stability Pact Countries of Southeast Europe.



Cecilia V. Soriano has been involved in popular education and community-based adult education since 1986. She was a founding member of E-Net Philippines, a national coalition established in 2000 which has been doing policy advocacy and campaigns on Education for All. She is currently the Programmes and Operations Coordinator of the ASPBAE. She holds a Master in Public Management in Security and Development from the Development Academy of the Philippines.



Meenu Vadera is the founder of Azad Foundation (a not-for-profit) and Sakha (a for-profit) who work together to provide livelihoods with dignity to resource-poor women. Prior to this, Ms. Vadera worked for over three decades as a development professional with local and international NGOs designing and facilitating social change processes. She is also author of numerous articles in this field.



Parichart Yenjai has been working for more than 30 years in the field of non-formal and informal education. She was an educator, plan and policy analyst, Chief of International Cooperation Unit, and former Director of Planning Division. Now her post is Expert in Science Education Promotion in the Office of the Non-formal Education, Ministry of Education. She is a specialist of CLCs and sought cooperation and support for CLC development in Thailand.



Ge Yi has been working with INRULED since 2012. Her special interests span from education for ethnic groups, to functional literacy development and teacher support systems. She facilitates INRULED's capacity building programmes designed for government officials and practitioners from Africa and Asia. In 2017, she won the CONFINTEA Scholarship offered by UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and undertook research on "Lifelong Learning for Ethnic Groups in the Greater Mekong Sub-region".



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Nani Zulminari has more than 30 years experience in women's empowerment, fighting against poverty and discrimination. In 1985 she graduated from Bogor Agriculture Institute, has an M.A. in Sociology from North Carolina State University, USA, and after finishing her term as the director of PPSW, founded PEKKA in 2001, a family empowerment organisation headed by women that supports poor rural widows, abandoned, divorced and single women in Indonesia. She was also elected President of ASPBAE for 2017-2020.

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