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Newsletter

Lifelong Learning & Non-Formal Education in Lao PDR and Southeast Asia



Issue
No. 1&2 - 2019

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Let's **continue to engage ourselves** for more and better **ALE!**

Dear reader,

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) can look back on 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, but 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 a 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 discovering the paradigms of Andragogy, the science of teaching adults by Malcolm Knowles and others. The CONFINTEA was established by UNESCO as a series of high level conferences in 1949, just one year after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with CONFINTEA V in Hamburg 1997 marking a paramount of recognition for the sector. 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 recognized as an integral condition for human development, well-being and democracy.

At the eve of the 21st Century, the moment for ALE somehow disappeared. 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 Forum in 2000 as "Except for Adults". Powerful actors like the World Bank and other development banks took a negative stand towards ALE as a thing 'nice to have' quite low on the education agenda. Many national governments, especially in developing countries, have adopted this view.

Today, Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is probably the sub-sector of any educational system with the highest impact for the lowest input. Working in ALE for nearly thirty years, it strikes me, how often we actually are able to support people to improve their lives 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.

Yours,
Uwe Gartenschlaeger
Regional Director



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Re-thinking Adult education – Asian Perspectives

Uwe Gartenschlaeger, DVV International

Re-thinking Adult education – Asian Perspectives
In March 2019, DVV International published a new book called “Re-thinking Adult Education – Asian Perspectives”. The book, edited by Uwe Gartenschlaeger, regional Director for Southeast Asia, tried to collect the voices of experts from more than twenty Asian countries on good practices, ideas and challenges for Adult learning and Education (ALE) around the vast territory of Asia.

In the history of ALE in Asia you can find good examples of top-down literacy campaigns as well as grassroots movement, able to mobilize the marginalized and give a voice to the disadvantaged. The history of the 20th century is full of those stories, and travelling through the vast Asian territory you can still find these good examples, in India, China, Korea, Central Asia or Southeast Asia.

On the other hand, there is a lot of complaining about the low level support of ALE by governments, business sector or even society. Although the concept of Lifelong Learning opened up a perspective beyond the formal system, many actors are still trapped in a limited understanding of what education should actually include. Not only governments preserving a limited understanding are to be blamed, but many civil society actors and development partners support an understanding, which reduces education to education for children only.

This publication offers you various insights in the changing landscape of ALE in Asia, a continent characterized by huge diversity. Here, some of the most developed countries are located. Here, you can find some fast 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 third of the illiterates live here and many regions are strongly affected by the natural disasters and consequences of climate change. While several Asian countries have some of the youngest populations on a global level, others are confronted with ageing societies. Regarding all these multiple developments, it is worth it to take 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 and thus, forming 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 Southeast Asia. Across the publication, ten stories of young people share diverse experiences on what is called ALE in a wider sense. These stories are supposed to link the analytical view of many contributions with the real life situation of the next generation, as the respond to real need is at the core of quality ALE. My special thanks goes to Mrs. Anita Borkar of ASPBAE, who provided me with these wonderful stories!

The publication in English language can be ordered by at DVV International Regional office.

Experience from “Opening up Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in rural Lao PDR for Youth and Children”

Junko Onodera, M&E Consultant

From September 2016 to December 2018, DVV International implemented the first phase of the project ‘Opening up Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in rural Lao PDR for Youth and Children’ funded by the German catholic organization Kindermissionswerk “Die Sternsinger”. The project was initiated to implement a number of interventions that aim to maximize the use of CLCs as public spaces for children and youth living in 10 villages¹ of the two most impoverished districts in Lao PDR: Nong and Sepon districts in Savannakhet province. In both districts, school attendance rate is quite low while dropout rates are high. Moreover, a lack of both vocational skills and access to vocational education hinders youth to obtain income generation opportunities. In order to improve the situation in those two districts, especially regarding children and youth, the project has two objectives: (1) 10 CLCs, 3 in Sepon and 7 in Nong, provide learning opportunities to youth and children, and (2) CLCs have made sufficient progress towards sustainability.

¹ The project target villages are the following: 7 villages in Nong district (Asingna, Asingsanae, Bangyalang, Kaysone, Phonmakmee and Pachatian) and 3 villages in Sepon district (Lako, Sadoun and Latuana).

At the initial stage of the project, the management system of each CLC was developed through a series of workshops and trainings on activity planning for youths as well as advocacy and fundraising for CLC management members, including village authority members, teachers, youth representatives and women. All 10 CLCs offered classes to prepare children and youth for their future and to improve their income generation: In total, 200 activities were carried out such as Lao language lessons, trainings of weaving/sewing, vegetable and fruit growing, motorbike repairment, disease prevention and hygiene management as well as events for gender equality awareness, sports and culture. In total, 4.820 people in 10 villages participated in these activities during the whole project period. Furthermore, all 10 CLCs were equipped with a basic library, sport and communication equipment as well as material for the trainings.

In October 2018, the field survey for a final evaluation of the project was conducted in all 10 villages of both Nong and Sepon district. Individual interviews using questionnaires were conducted with 5 target groups: beneficiaries (youth and children), CLC authorities, village authorities, district officials² and DVV project staff members, in total 170 people. Interviews were mainly conducted by the project field staff and district officials who can speak both Lao and local languages as ethnic minorities constitute a large percentage of the population in the target villages. The evaluation results identified that the project’s expected objectives and outputs were mostly achieved.

The most important findings were: (1) village

² District officials mean representatives from District Education Sports Bureau (DESB), Lao Women’s Union, Lao Youth Union, District Agricultural Organization, District Health Organization.



Our Special writer for the CLCs project.



Some of the youths' comments on the question
“Did the CLC activities change your life?”

“Before the project started, I did not know anything. But after the project started, they teach techniques of vocational skills. I know those skills and use them in my family. My life is better now.” (Male, Asingna village)

“I am proud of learning from CLC. I have received some knowledge to practice for my family.” (Male, Asingsanae village)

“Before, we only followed the traditional ways of life, and now we know more and have more options.” (Female, Bangyalang village)

“I can get knowledge from reading stories; sports competition with other villages; gain knowledge about planting.”, (Male, Kaysone village)

“I love to read story books, it makes me fun and get new ideas” (Female, Lapid village)

youths recognize positive impacts on their life after attending CLC activities, (2) their voices have gained more power in order to make decision in their villages, (3) women have been more active and started expressing their opinions, and (4) CLC authority members understand the importance of income generation activities for sustainable CLC management and recognize their urgent need on further developed management skills. Interestingly, district officials and village authorities also share the same views.

Among the youths' comments, creative and constructive suggestions were made to improve their opportunities for life-long learning in a sustainable way. Regarding the financing of CLCs, 13 youth respondents in Nong district showed their willingness to start fundraising their future CLC activities. Furthermore, one youth respondent in Kayson village proposed a competition between CLCs to find the best practices and share and learn about their experiences. Another respondent in the same village commented that his CLC needs a computer, printer and copier to plan activities. Three respondents in Lako suggested to video-record their vocational trainings to make it easy to understand for the villagers.

However, there are still some challenges that CLCs need to overcome. Firstly, women's participation should be more encouraged. The percentage of women participating in the CLCs' activities were 31% for a total of 4.820 people. Secondly, financial

sustainability of the CLCs should be seriously considered by all stakeholders. CLC authority members and youths have already noticed that proactive fundraising is a must. In order to achieve a sustainable development of all CLCs, stronger collaborations with current stakeholders and the networking between public and private sector actors should be further encouraged.

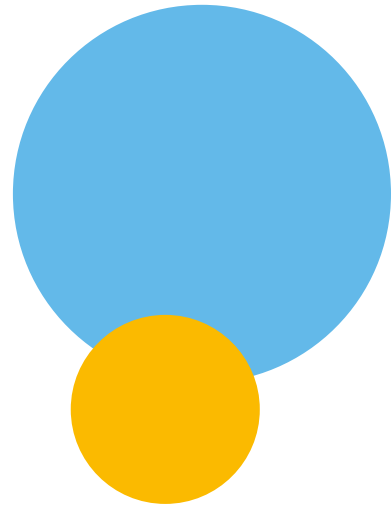


Education in an Interconnected World: Ensuring inclusive and equitable development

Global Education Meeting (GEM)

3-5 December 2018, Brussels, Belgium

Maria Khan, ASPBAE



ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan (centre), and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific, Peter-Clinton Foase (R), participated in the GEM. Also seen here is CAMPE's Rasheda Choudhury (L). (Source: www.aspbar.org)

The 2018 Global Education Meeting (GEM) reviewed progress towards the global education targets and commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Meeting brought the global community together to take stock of progress and identify strategic priority areas requiring political guidance and intervention for the effective achievement of the global Education 2030 Agenda. The Brussels Declaration was adopted at the conclusion of the Meeting. Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) Secretary-General, Maria Khan, and ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific, Peter-Clinton Foase, participated in the GEM.

The targeted outcomes of the Meeting were as follows -

- Assessment of current progress towards the implementation of SDG 4-Education 2030 targets and commitments at global, regional, and national levels, and identification of bottlenecks impeding progress.
- Identification of recommendations for strategic areas requiring political guidance and/or intervention for the effective achievement of the global Education 2030 Agenda.
- Agreement on key policy messages to input into the global 2019 High-Level Political Forum (2019 HLPF) Review and UN General Assembly 2019.
- Strengthening of coordinated support for implementation of SDG 4-Education 2030.

This high-level gathering was a milestone in the assessment of education policies, strategies, and challenges in preparation for the 2019 HLPF. 2019 HLPF will review in-depth the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) focusing on Education (SDG 4). The 2019 HLPF theme, 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality', framed the discussions at the GEM. Focus was given to the inter-linkages between SDG 4 and Goals 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 13 (climate action) and 16 (peace, justice, and strong Institutions), paying particular attention to the issue of migration, displacement, and refugees.

The Global Education Meeting was informed by the outcomes of five regional Education 2030 consultations undertaken throughout 2018 (Pan-Africa High-Level Conference on Education in April; Asia-Pacific Education 2030 Consultation in

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July; Latin American and Caribbean Ministerial Conference in July; Europe and North American Education 2030 consultation in October; and Arab Ministerial Meeting in November), as well as by Voluntary National Reports. The meeting drew on the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) launched on the 20th of November 2018. In addition to its continued assessment of progress towards education targets in the SDG agenda, the Report examined the multifaceted processes and dynamics that link both voluntary and involuntary migration and education.

The GEM gathered some 300 participants including UN agencies and affiliated organisations, multilateral and bilateral agencies, regional organisations, the teaching profession, civil society organisations (CSOs), the private sector, foundations, as well as youth and student representatives, among others.

During the meeting, there was a greater articulation of lifelong learning, youth and adult education, and non-formal adult education than in previous SDG 4-Education 2030-related global meetings. This

can be attributed to several factors, including– (1) different regional consultations convened in preparation for the GEM called for the need to pay greater attention to the full SDG 4 agenda and all its targets; (2) with the GEMR, which was shared in the meeting as a core resource focusing on migration, the importance of education for the integration of migrants and refugees was prominent as was the need for validation, accreditation, and recognition of prior learning. This underscored the importance for governments to put in place lifelong learning systems and within this, the education of adults.

Nevertheless, CSOs had to push for better language on adult education and lifelong learning in the final Outcomes Document. However, this was aided by strong references to these during the plenary discussions. Almost all CSO advocacies made it through the Outcomes Document - a greater focus on gender, youth, adult literacy, equity, training and skills beyond a focus on work.

ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, chaired a session on 'CSO perspectives, bottlenecks, and



Source: www.unesco.org

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Source: www.unesco.org

ways forward in SDG 4 implementation’.

The session was convened by the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030. The session observed that CSOs advancing Education 2030 are fairly well-organised and are able to operate at local, national, regional, and global policy spaces, even in coordinated ways. This needs to be preserved and supported, especially in the context of shrinking democratic space, the criminalisation of protest, and defence of human rights.

The following recommendations emerged from the discussions in the session:

- The need to institutionalise meaningful civil society participation in the whole SDG-SDG 4 process – designing, implementation, and evaluation - including broad-based consultations of education stakeholders, CSOs, and academia.
- Official recognition and status should be given to CSO-generated data or spotlight reports prepared to feed into the Voluntary National Review (VNR and HLPF processes, including the review session of HLPF and the VNR reporting system planned for the UN General Assembly in September 2019).
- Constant capacity building on advocacy for CSOs working at national, regional, and global levels.
- Increase youth representative participation in education policy debate and decision-making spaces, at all levels.

- Increase efforts to synergize VNR and human rights monitoring processes, further tapping into Geneva-based architecture, processes, and human rights recommendations.
- Increase efforts to reach out to other social movements and civil society networks and academia advancing other SDGs so that education gains a wider set of advocates in the wider SDG processes.

ASPBAE Executive Council Member representing the South Pacific, Peter-Clinton Foaese, addressed the GEM as a youth representative and spoke about the importance of youth-led action research especially for young women’s empowerment.

The meeting was convened by UNESCO, in consultation with the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, and hosted by Belgium. The three-day event comprised a Senior Officials’ meeting with a Forum of parallel sessions organised by participating governments and a Ministerial segment.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 24 January the International Day of Education

This write-up draws from a report prepared by ASPBAE Secretary-General, Maria Khan, and from information available on the UNESCO website.

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Celebrating 100 years Folk high schools Past and present of Adult Education and Learning in Germany

Christian Haager

Throughout 2019 many Folkhighschools in Germany will celebrate their 100th anniversary. In numerous provinces and cities public ceremonies and events are going to be held on this occasion. Indeed, jubilees are a suitable opportunity to reflect and draw a conclusion: on the one hand to take a look back on the roots of Adult Education and Learning (ALE) and on the other hand to discuss present tasks and challenges.

However, 1919 was not the official beginning of ALE in Germany. Earlier initiatives can be found: already in the 19th century, during the so-called “university extension movement” and the “workers education movement”, some Folkhighschools were founded. But only in 1919 – like never before in German history – hundreds of Folkhighschools were founded, which is why 1919 is considered as the founding-year of the German Folkhighschools. This major development took place in a period of crisis in Germany. In 1918, World War I just ended with millions of dead soldiers and civilians in many countries. People were starving and tired of war such as the horrendous consequences associated with it. Also, people did not accept the emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, anymore and neither wanted him to rule the country nor to decide about people’s lives. Thousands of people started the so-called “November-Revolution” which resulted in establishing the Weimarer Republic – the first democracy in Germany.

The founding of many Folkhighschools is closely connected to this era and has its roots in the first democracy in Germany. A legal basis for ALE was laid by including it in the “Weimarer Constitution” in Article 148: “Folkhighschools shall be funded by the government, the provinces and the cities/communities”¹.

¹ www.dvv-vhs.de/100jahre-vhs/

This was one of the main reasons and it supported Folkhighschool-initiatives a lot.

Besides, this legal fundament being a new spirit and way of thinking helped ALE to get more importance: “The new democracy not only needed people to cooperate, but also to think by themselves”². After the catastrophe of World War I ALE was supposed to support the democratic system by creating a new community of self-paced, self-reliant citizens, who were able to understand politics but also to make their own decisions and form their own opinions.

Folkhighschools changed a lot over the decades: they proved to be very flexible and to be able to react fast on economic and social developments by adjusting their programs as well as their organizational structures quickly to prevailing needs. Many of the initial ideas developed 100 years ago are still guiding principles for Folkhighschools today, for instance:

- **the power and joy of learning:** ALE can support income-generation and a better livelihood, as well as reduce illiteracy and poverty. However, Folkhighschools have to offer a wide range of courses and a diverse program in order to promote interest in many different topics. Participants can choose any topic they are interested in – so it’s also about broaden one’s horizon and about the **freedom of learning**.
- Folkhighschools do have a **public responsibility** for ALE and are partially publicly funded: However, they have to be totally **independent of any political party**.
- Folkhighschools shall be **open to everyone** irrespective of age, gender, social class,

² *Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV) (2011): Die Volkshochschule – Bildung in öffentlicher Verantwortung. Bonn.*



*NFE Consultant from
Folkhighschool Munich:
Haus Buchenried,
Germany*



religion, race, nationality or sexual orientation. Also they should take care to create and maintain an open and accessible learning culture which links to the varied educational needs of all people.

Beside many other public and private organizations like NGOs, foundations or companies offering ALE in Germany. Folkhighschools still are the most popular learning centers. They offer a wide range of high quality courses in many different areas: general, vocational or cultural courses as well as civic education, literacy and school degrees, health education and much more.

There are 10 reasons why Folkhighschools support the people, communities and society until today.

They ...

- are the most popular learning centers for adult education in Germany: each year more than 900 Folkhighschools offer around 600.000 courses, workshops or lectures for around 10 Million participants.
- are language schools: around 50 foreign languages are taught and applied here.
- build bridges between people with different cultural origin and make an important contribution towards integration: for instance more than 1 Million people learnt German as a foreign language in 2016.
- serve local businesses and industry with a broad range of vocational trainings and cooperate with many companies.
- provide a "second chance": thousands of teenagers and young adults catch up with their basic education, school degrees and academic

qualifications every year.

- promote health education: more than 2 Million people use the courses each year to keep fit through movement and healthy nutrition.
- teach science: new findings from science and research are communicated in an easy and understandable way to enable people to form their own judgements.
- encourage cultural vitality and bring people closer to the cultural treasures and heritage of a city or region
- strengthen solidarity between the generations: young and old learn here for themselves, with each other but most importantly from each other!
- are a public forum for debate and opinions, where current political and social topics are discussed.

ALE provides [many benefits for individuals, economy and society](#) – it can improve health and well-being, income-generation and employment opportunities and support local communities in many different ways. For example the BeLL-study ("Benefits of Lifelong Learning") funded by the European Commission evaluated:

"The data showed that adult learners experience numerous benefits from liberal adult education. They feel healthier and seem to lead healthier lifestyles; they build new social networks and experience improved wellbeing. Moreover, adults who participate in liberal adult education appear to feel more motivated to engage in lifelong learning and view it as an opportunity to improve their lives. These benefits were reported by learners across all course areas, ranging from languages and the

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arts to sport and civic education³.

To achieve this mission and fulfill these important tasks ALE needs sustainable funds and all colleagues working in non-formal education sector have to advocate for a better support – in Germany, Lao PDR and elsewhere.

Although many governments plan to improve financing because of the evident benefits, there is still an enormous gap worldwide as the UNESCO Global Report on Adult Education and Learning (GRALE) shows. ALE only receives a small proportion of the overall public funding: 42% of all countries spend only 1% of their public education budgets on ALE, only 23% spend more than 4%⁴.

In Germany the proportion of public funds for ALE in 2016 decreased to 36,5% while the percentage of participant's fees increased to 38%⁵. If Folkhighschools still want to be open to everyone and government wants ALE to be affordable for everyone, so there must be better public funds.

“Investments in Folkhighschools are investments in the future of an open, democratic and just society. To improve public funds is an important requirement so that they can exploit their potentials, get higher planning reliability and to overcome the future challenges”⁶.

3 <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/resource-centre/content/benefits-lifelong-learning-bell>, 23.1.2019

4 <http://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/global-report/>, 21.1.2019

5 Meisel, Klaus/Sgodda, Regine (2018). Die Zukunft der Volkshochschule. In: Hinzen, Heribert/Meilhammer, Elisabeth. 100 Jahre Volkshochschule. Zeitschrift für Bildung und Erziehung. Göttingen.

6 Meisel, K./Sgodda, R. (2018)



Source: www.mvhs.de

Frontdesk at Folkhighschool Munich: Haus Buchenried, Germany

Community in Folkhighschool Munich: Haus Buchenried, Germany



Why is ALE neglected by governments and the global community - and what can we do to change this?

Pakoulee Xaiyaxang, DVV International

Adult learning and education (ALE) is neglected by governments and the global community alike. There are several reasons for this: For instance, the concept of adult education is difficult to define and explain, and therefore loses out in policy attention. Further, not only ALE's definition is complex, but also adult education programmes themselves, seeing them located within several ministries which additionally complicates coordination efforts towards making ALE more visible. It is also easier to make a case for spending already limited education funds on children's education, as it is a vote winner especially among parents and guardians, compared to investing in education for adults. Children's education is more so seen as an investment in the future as they are still young and have more of a long-term potential

to grow. Lastly, even though there is much evidence underpinning the effectiveness of adult education, as well as its return on investment, more hard data is needed to challenge orthodoxies promoted by big education funders.

Having painted a gloomy picture of recognition for ALE, there are various ways in which to address these issues. The global consensus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for one, offers opportunities to make a stronger case for enhanced policy attention to youth and adult education and learning which should be utilised by advocates. While the SDGs, especially SDG 4, Quality Education, do not fully embrace the commitments contained in other frameworks, they constitute a clear improvement in terms of



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convergence on ALE compared to the earlier Millennium Development Goals. There are specific targets related to ALE in SDG 4, and many other SDGs strongly relate to adult education as well.

Nowadays, many adult education organisations exist, which can still improve their efforts in networking and cooperation to present a stronger case for ALE to governments. Particularly in the follow up process for SDG 4, governments and countries in the Asia Pacific have indicated openness and interest to set in place lifelong learning policies, systems and programs 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 the public education system to progress in this respect should be strengthened. Efforts by organizations 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.

DVV International is one organization supporting adult education and learning, and thereby working on the achievement of SDG 4 in Laos and in other countries. DVV International is working on adult education and lifelong learning programs for NFE management, in cooperation with the National University of Lao, contributing to the improvement of adult educators in the country through the Training of Master Trainers' program, and community development through vocational and literacy training on village level.

Note: This is the shortened version of a chapter by Maria Khan, General Secretary ASPBAE, in Uwe Gartenschlaeger (Ed): Rethinking Adult Learning and Education – Asian Perspectives, Bonn 2018.

ALE for non-traditional livelihoods for resource-poor women

Xeng Lee, DVV International

In the past, women focussed on very traditional skills - in their everyday lives and when it came to upskilling. They stayed at home, looked after their children, did all the housework such as cooking, cleaning, and potentially worked on the family farm and went back home. They tended not to have a formal job or other income generating activities. Increasingly, however, Adult Learning and Education (ALE) offers ways for women to upskill and step into paid work in non-traditional spheres for their gender: away from the stove and behind the steering wheel of a car, for instance. This could not only improve their and their families living conditions, but also give women more confidence, independence and satisfaction in life - thus empowering them, and transforming gender relations at many levels.

Some of such places for women to learn non-traditional skills, and to thus become empowered to earn their own likewise non-traditional livelihoods, are the training centres of Azad Foundation in India. Maya, a graduate of Azad's Women on Wheels programme, was raped and nearly killed at a young age. This



Azad Foundation Training – Learning to check for oils and coolant

Source: <http://azadfoundation.com/>

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Xeng Lee

incident caused her to get married off to an elderly man. Her life was filled with domestic violence with no help from the police. After some time Maya gave birth to a baby boy and she finally found a reason to live. She fled her abusive husband after he tried to kill her one night. After living with her parents and at women's shelters for a while, Maya found out about the Azad's Women on Wheels programme. This programme does not just teach women driving skills, but provides them with development opportunities in many other skill areas. To be eligible for the course, only a very basic level of education is required. Maya contacted Azad, and after talking to staff there a few times, she finally registered at the training centre.

This is how more than 60% of the women come to Azad - not just them, but also their families. Many of the women who come to Azad do not have their basic documents, so the first step is to arrange them to get their citizenship and other basic documents. Azad is a place where women can feel safe and respected, and at the same time where they have to take responsibility for their own learning. It is where the journey of self-discovery and change begins. Azad believes that mere skill training will not enable women into non-traditional livelihood domains successfully;

the training courses also cover concepts such as women's rights and personal empowerment. The courses are flexible as per the pace of each learner.

Maya was full of joy when, after graduation, she got her first job. She had many dreams for herself and her son she wanted to accomplish. Maya gradually built an identity for herself as a professional chauffeur. She ensured that her son got into a good quality private school. She saved money and got herself a small apartment. Maya has since been interviewed by many journalists and has driven around many celebrities. She is considered a "women of substance" in her community. Her neighbours come to her for advice, and she has become "a person whose opinion is sought after" - from having been a shunned rape victim who brought shame upon her family. Maya is committed that her son will grow up to be a "different kind of man", a man who knows how to be friends with and how to respect women.

Note: This is the shortened version of a chapter by Meenu Vadera, Executive Director, Azad Foundation, in Uwe Gartenschlaeger (Ed): Rethinking Adult Learning and Education – Asian Perspectives, Bonn 2018.



Azad Foundation Training – Outreach and Mobilization in South Delhi Basti

Source: <http://azadfoundation.com/>

Lifelong Learning in Cambodia: A concept, policy and implication

Vanna Peou, DVV International

The concept of the „lifelong learning“ of 1972 is incorporated into the educational policies of advanced and developing countries. The goal of education for all was reviewed in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, as advanced countries focused on educating adults about professional skills to improve their livelihoods. In the 21st century, lifelong learning has become an important topic for education which responds to the freedom and enjoyment of learning as well as to the need for further education and learning in times of a changing labor market and is addressed to everyone in any circumstance. Lifelong learning is acknowledged as one important component of the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

Associated with this lifelong learning concept, however, there have been some challenges such as access to education, enrollment and quality of education, not yet responding to the development of the world. Since late 2015, through the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Meeting, organized by UNESCO, each country has revised and institutionalized its policy and strategic planning towards quality education, equity and lifelong learning for all. Within this context, some countries in the region have been developing policy and strategy responses to lifelong learning at different levels. The Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MOEYS) has come up with relevant policies, strategies and educational programs, including the Law on Education, Non-formal Education and Non-formal Education Plans in order to meet the needs of all target groups, especially regarding vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

At present, the education system in Cambodia has grown proudly, especially at the primary level. In fact, the participation rate of primary education is about 97% in the last decade. However, the issues of dropout and quality remain a concern. Due to the efforts through non-formal education programs, literacy rates for adults aged 15 and over are at 80.5%, 75.0% of women, but rural literacy rates are only at 76.8%, 70.7% of women surveyed (CSES, National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, 2016).

Employers stated the productivity of employees in enterprises and institutions as limited by the fact that among the labor force aged 15-64 years a total of 8,359,000 people, 4,035,000 of them female, were among those who haven't attended or less attend school or have dropped out of study (Socio-Economic Survey of Cambodia, National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, 2016). In addition, in 2008, the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations stated that people with technical knowledge lack skills, such as communicate skills, decision-making and problem-solving skills.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has the



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The Joint High - Level Meeting “Towards a Lifelong Learning Policy Development” in Phnom Penh

vision to turn Cambodia into a middle-income country by 2030 and to become a high-income country by 2050, driven by labor force combining both advanced technical know-how and soft skills. Therefore, literacy and numeracy programs need to be included into a lifetime curriculum emphasizing vocational skills, professional skills and soft skills, particularly through the use of information technology to support learning activities. The 2002 Education Policy for out-of-school children has contributed to the above results through the provision of comprehensive education. The scope of this policy has not yet been met in the context of the country’s socio-economic development, despite its consistency with lifelong learning guidelines. The 2002 Non-Formal Education Policy needs to be updated, with a view to expanding its scope and mechanisms. In response to these challenges and vision, MOEYS in Cambodia has initiated a lifelong learning policy aimed at developing human resources for achieving sustainable development goals. This policy calls for concerted efforts from all institutions and stakeholders, focusing on the development of high-quality human resources and quality education. The national policy on lifelong learning could be a one-size-focal unit, which holds the capacity to open up a better, more effective and meaningful engagement in providing opportunities and services, as well as to recognize and to

respond to the needs of service providers as well as the labor market, especially regarding marginalized groups. The National Policy has the vision to contribute to economic growth and promote individual and social life by providing lifelong learning opportunities. The National Lifelong Learning Policy aims to provide opportunities and support to all people to access education in all aspects and to utilize knowledge and skills gained in order to increase productivity, and income.

The national policy on lifelong learning is a roadmap for social and human development towards peace and sustainable development. In order to achieve this policy, all levels of ministries, institutions and stakeholders need cooperation and support. In addition, there is a need for mechanisms and legal frameworks to create a team or support unit in coordinating the work, national strategic planning, broad dissemination, and mobilizing assistance from all sectors to enhance the effectiveness of national policy implementation. The national policy on lifelong learning encourages Cambodians to become global citizens in accordance with social requirements and global trends, especially the labor market context. Learning for a lifetime.

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Summary of Aaron Benavot's

The invisible friend: Adult Education and the Sustainable Development Goals

Christina Perzl, DVV International

In the latest edition of *Adult Education and Development* (No 85), Prof Aaron Benavot from the University of Albany, USA, shares his view on the reasons why Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is neglected in many countries. This article provides an overview of his main arguments.

In comparison to other educational areas the significance of ALE completing the formal education system is not yet perceived among Ministries of Education worldwide. Efforts made to provide and expand access to ALE have declined due to low recognition from governments, minimal donor support, weak data-reporting mechanisms, or the absence of sustained private investment.

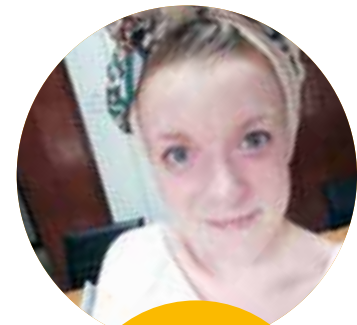
However, regarding global trends such as ageing societies, an increasing demand for learning opportunities in diverse settings and formats, globalization as well as technical progress and their risks, climate change and its effects, economic and health inequalities, democratic deficits as well as migration and a growing number of refugees given the need for solidarity and social integration, nowadays more than ever there is an inalienable need to invigorate ALE in order to cope with those inevitable challenges.

Indeed, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the multifaceted roles and impact of adult education on sustainable development, both referring explicitly and implicitly to ALE within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, despite its presence in the 2030 Agenda, according to Benavot, there are three contradictions clearly demonstrating the limited perception of ALE.

Regardless the acknowledged importance of ALE through the SDGs and the recognition of "lifelong learning opportunities for all" as an international

development priority, in reality the SDG4's focus still primarily remains on preprimary, primary, secondary and higher education as well as on the availability of technical and vocational skills and the sustainment of and access to formal education while adult education, by contrast, receives minimal attention as this term is not explicitly mentioned in any SDG 4 target. "The only recognition of adult education is found in the global indicator for target 4.3, which measures the participation rate of adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months."(Benavot) In addition to this first contradiction Benavot states as a second and third contradiction that neither there is a comparable effort nor standardized ways to define, monitor and measure effects and outcomes of participation in ALE alongside efforts being made in regard to formal education. Rather than focusing on results such as learning outcomes central aspects have to include access, participation and completion of ALE.

And yet, countries are expected to improve adult literacy rates, eliminate forms of inequalities and support further education and relevant skills in times of changing labor markets and in response to aforementioned challenges. Thus, there is an undeniable need for higher educated citizens in order to cope with those issues and to ensure a sustainable development. Ironically, the shift to LLL as a development priority within the 2030 sustainable development agenda does hardly contribute to minimize the challenges and marginalization which ALE nowadays is facing and rather forces ALE itself to find a niche within LLL. That said, there is an undeniable need for new innovative engagement and approaches in ALE addressing conceptual, definitional, measurement-related and financial challenges in order to be able to cope with global challenges until ALE not only will be formally recognized in the SDGs but valued (and funded) in reality.



Our intern at
DVV International
Regional Office in
Vientiane

From the margins to center stage: Young women speak on education rights

Cecilia Victorino-Soriano, ASPBAE

Manisha Gangode is 20 years old and comes from a rural community in Nashik, India. For the past two years, she and 21 other girls and young women had been participating in a youth-led action research programme. They call themselves “shodhinis” or seekers. During the action research, they went around their communities to investigate why girls are not in school and what actions need to be taken by the government, community and themselves.

In Indonesia, Mitha, 28 years old, together with her peers did the same youth-led action research programme in their indigenous community in Tanah Datar. Due to bad roads and lack of schools, many children, youth and adults are illiterate or have not completed education. Determined to find solutions, Mitha and her team pursued the action research despite being ridiculed by their neighbors.

Youth-led action research (YAR) is an initiative of the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) undertaken in partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). Manisha and Mitha have been mentored by ASPBAE members Abhivyakti Media for Development and Assosiasi Pendamping

Perempuan Usaha Kecil (Association of Women in Small Business) or ASPPUK respectively.

Both Manisha and Mitha have come a long way since they started their action research in 2016. Manisha was 18 while Mitha was 26 years old when they first volunteered to help in the research. They have become young leaders in their respective communities, taking their actions in education forward. They have scaled up their advocacy from the local to the regional level. Last July, they spoke before government officials from different countries in the Asia Pacific, multilateral organisations, UN partners and CSOs at the 4th

Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED 4), organized by UNESCO-Bangkok in Thailand from 12 to 14 July.

Taking actions for lifelong learning

Manisha presented the Charter of Demands drafted by the shodhinis based on the findings of their action research. There are six demands and for each one, Manisha presented the challenges and actions needed. The demands included formal, non-formal and informal education. Two examples are:



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Demand 1. Schools up to grade 12 in each village

Findings from action research

- 59% girls have dropped out of school
- 28% girls find it difficult go to school due to unavailability of transportation
- Parental anxiety about girls' safety; insecurity about their sexuality

Recommendations

- Trainings to be provided by government in technical and soft skills such as computer skills
- English courses to enable girls to access better livelihood opportunities
- Trainings in skills based on local needs such as tailoring, beauty parlour, computer and internet literacy to equip girls to find work on the current labour market

Demand 2: Library for girls in each village

Findings from action research

- Public spaces occupied by men are uncomfortable for women
- Lack of a reading environment and reading culture

Recommendations

- Shodhini Library-Community learning centre for girls
- Library as a non-formal community learning space
- Space for library provided by local council

Manisha shared how the shodhinis engaged the local government officials and communities on these demands. She also narrated the actions that the girls themselves initiated in the community. The Shodhini community learning center was established through their own sweat and tears. With the help of a woman leader, they got a space for the center. Through book donations from NGOs, they collected reading materials. Setting up the library for girls is more than giving them access to learning. This symbolized a step towards breaking down the barriers to gender equality. Manisha said a few boys rejected the idea of a space for girls and tore down the library signage. But the other boys in the community were supportive and helped put back the signage. Manisha appealed to the audience in APMED 4 that safe spaces for girls and young women can bring about learning and empowerment especially for those in marginalised communities.

Beyond data are the lived realities of young women

From the perspective of Indonesia, Mitha shared the contexts, processes and findings of the action research in the remote

communities of Tanah Datar district.

Mitha emphasized that the process of collecting data, analyzing it and presenting the findings to the local government officials was valuable. This provided interactions amongst girls and young women and inspired them to work together. In remote communities, young women try to escape poverty through marriage. The action research opened up discussions on possible options for education and empowerment instead.

Mitha shared the recommendations from their research, many of which echoed those from India.

These include:

- Enhanced access to formal and non-formal education (package B and C programs of the government) as well as life skills development programs (weaving group and recitation of the Quran Group)
- Provide livelihoods and other productive work opportunities to avoid early marriage
- Establish a community learning center to be funded by the government and managed by young people
- Socialization in the community on the right to education and empowerment of girls and young women and create dialogues with the government

To date, ASPPUK has implemented learning programs for the girls and young women such as on culture and weaving, English grammar, reproductive health and gender relations and youth leadership-advocacy.

Mitha noted that they had meetings with the District Education Office and the offices of tourism and local government officials. While they are waiting for the results of their meetings, they have started their own community library in the mosque. The community that initially questioned their efforts is now very supportive and has even donated books for the center.

With clarity and confidence, Manisha and Mitha put the spotlight on the education demands on behalf of themselves and the countless girls and young women from marginalised communities.

(Note: For more information on the shodhinis, please check <https://www.facebook.com/Abhiviyaktis-Youth-Action-Research-Shodhini-313665418987830/>)

Interesting

Important Website in region

www.aspbae.org

www.pria.org

www.seameocelll.org

Interesting publications

Adult Education and Development

AED 85: Role and Impact of Adult Education

AED 84: Inclusion and Diversity

AED 83: Skills and Competencies

AED 82: Global Citizenship Education

International Perspectives in Adult Education

IPE 77: Rethinking adult learning and education - Asia perspectives

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IPE 76: Refugees: A challenge for adult education

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Published by DVV International in cooperation with partners in Lao PDR, Cambodia, South and South East Asia.

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DVV International

Regional Office South-, and Southeast Asia

351/19 Unit; Watnak Nyai Road

Thaphalanxay Village, Sisatthanak District

P.O. Box 1215, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Tel.: +856 21 315832-3

Fax: +856 21 312511

info@dvv-international.la

www.dvv-international.la



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