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Newsletter

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



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Dear reader,

“Literacy and Skills Development” was the slogan for this year’s Literacy Day on September 8th. Here in Lao PDR, we celebrated the day at the Non-Formal Education Development Center (NFEDC). At this fantastic event, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sports and UNESCO stressed the importance of literacy for development and underpinned the importance of non-formal education to eradicate illiteracy.

At the same time, the event inspired me to reflect on the meaning of literacy in the 21st century. Can we really still agree on the definition of Adult Literacy used by UNESCO in their Glossary?

“Percentage of population aged 15 years and over who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. Generally, ‘literacy’ also encompasses ‘numeracy’, the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations. Adult illiteracy is defined as the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who cannot both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on his/her everyday life.”¹

Or should we adjust our understanding to the realities of the 21st century? Dr Lamphoune Luangxay from the Department of Non-Formal Education recently stated that:

“Literacy of the 21st century is not only the ability to read and write a language – often a dominating language. Instead, it is the capability to understand the meaning of words, signs and symbols which have meanings for an individual for a specific purpose in a particular context.”²

In other words, instead of using a fixed (outdated) definition, we should relate our understanding of literacy to the needs of the learner. In fact, they find it more necessary to, for example, know how to use the smartphone or how to calculate prices on the market than understand a simple statement.

For this reason, the term “functional literacy” was developed. Functionally literate people have “reading and writing skills that are (...) adequate to manage daily living and employment tasks that require reading skills beyond a basic level”³. As you can see, this definition is more demanding and it relates literacy to a person’s individual needs. By doing so, even developed countries report rates of functional illiteracy of seven to 25 per cent or more!

What does all this mean for us? For me, it would mean that we constantly have to reflect on what the most appropriate content to teach our learners is. To answer this question, we have to ask them first of all. And we have to be aware of the changing landscape surrounding us in the 21st century.

Yours,
Uwe Gartenschlaeger
Regional Director

¹ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/adult-literacy-rate>

² Quotation from: Lamphoune Luangxay: *The village in the 21st century and literacy practices*: in: Uwe Gartenschlaeger (Ed.): *Rethinking Adult Education*

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Functional_illiteracy

Regional Workshop on Enhancing Community Engagement for Education for Sustainable Development, 10-14 September 2018, Okayama City, Japan

Somsy Southivong, Non-formal Education Development Centre

On 10 to 14 September 2018, the Regional Workshop on Enhancing Community Engagement for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was held in Okayama, Japan. The 5-day workshop was organized by UNESCO Beijing and New Delhi as well as the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in cooperation with several partners, such as Okayama University, Okayama City, the Okayama ESD Promotion Conference and the Asia-Pacific Culture Center for UNESCO (ACCU), with support from the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO and the ESD Resource Center of Japan.

More than 40 participants from 15 countries participated in the workshop: Delegates from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Japan, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand gathered and shared their experiences in promoting ESD and the SDGs. They further reviewed guidelines on Community Learning Centres (CLCs), teacher education resources, and created follow-up action plans for every country. Through the workshop, the participants were exposed to and learnt from Okayama City's experiences in ESD which are built on strong political commitment and solid partnerships.

Okayama City has effectively engaged local education institutions and communities to promote the SDGs. The city has successfully developed a unique model to promote CLCs and has thereby institutionalised the SDGs through an ESD platform. For this achievement, the Okayama City's ESD project was awarded the UNESCO-

Japan Prize on ESD in 2016. The project was recognized for its 'whole city' approach to ESD involving schools, the government, corporations, NGOs and other civil society associations. In Okayama City, ESD begins in elementary schools and further extends to all levels of education, where students have many chances to visit local farms, meet with elders who have specialized knowledge of the local area, take part in rice planting, work with non-profit organizations and more. Okayama University, as a leader of the Okayama ESD Project, takes a UNESCO Chair in the promotion of ESD. It makes great efforts towards creating spaces for dialogue and knowledge sharing at national and international levels.



Somsy Southivong
Director General



Official Launching of SEAMEO Regional Centre for Community Education Development at the National University of Lao PDR

Sayaseng Rattanaovong, SEAMEO CED

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) is an international and intergovernmental organization established on 30 November 1965 to promote the regional cooperation in education, science, and culture.

Its 11 Member Countries include Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. It includes eight Associate Member Countries: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom; and five Affiliate Members: The International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), University of Tsukuba, the British Council, China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) and UNESCO Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU).

Over the past five decades, SEAMEO has developed 26 specialized institutions in 10 of its 11 Member Countries that provide regional leadership in human resource development, and they offer diverse expertise in the areas of learning, health and environment as well as agriculture and natural resources. Since its inception, SEAMEO has not only become the oldest chartered intergovernmental organization serving the Southeast Asian region but also Southeast Asia's largest, longest existing, and most dependable provider in human resource development.

At the 49th SEAMEO Council Conference (SEAMEC) which was held on 24-27 July 2017 in Jakarta, the establishment of three new SEAMEO Centres in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Indonesia was approved: namely, SEAMEO Regional Centre

for Early Childhood Care Education and Parenting (SEAMEO CECCEP), SEAMEO Regional Centre for Community Education Development (SEAMEO CED) and SEAMEO Regional Centre for Technical Education Development (SEAMEO TED). It is expected that the establishment of the three new Centres will accelerate the progress of providing quality Education for All (EFA) in Southeast Asia.

A year later, on 30th July 2018, the Official Launching Ceremony of SEAMEO Regional Centre for Community Education Development was held at the office of SEAMEO CED in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR. This significant event was chaired by Her Excellency Madam Sengdeuane Lachanthaboun, the Minister of Education and Sports of Lao PDR and Dr. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, Director of SEAMEO Secretariat, as well as witnesses of the Governing Board Members of SEAMEO CED, senior officers of the Lao Ministries, private sector and international development partners. On behalf of the Lao Government and the people of Lao, Madam Sengdeuane Lachanthaboun expressed a feeling of pride and honor for being able to establish the first SEAMEO Regional Centre in Lao PDR and thanked all SEAMEO Member Countries, partners and organizations for their long-lasting assistance and support in establishing the first SEAMEO Centre in Lao PDR. Her Excellency stated that she has strong hopes for the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Community Education Development to contribute to the strengthening of capacities of the local communities in SEAMEO Member countries, and to serve as the community education development information hub and think-tank for governments and development partners in South East Asia. Dr. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto indicated "the successful

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establishment of SEAMEO CED today fulfills another milestone of SEAMEO to have at least one Centre located in Lao PDR where there is a richness of community belongings derived from ethnic diversity of populations. The concretization of SEAMEO CED indeed is a significant event for Southeast Asia and likewise for Lao PDR in that we now have a regional Centre which complements the gap of knowledge in and will dedicate and contribute to the Community Education Development in and for the Region".

The SEAMEO CED aims to cater for the regional needs in promoting and providing opportunities for cooperation in the area of community education among SEAMEO Member Countries and Associate Member Countries. With the expectations of becoming the SEAMEO Regional Centre of Excellence for research and training on Community Education Development, the Centre provides support to strengthen the relationships and increase in mutual understanding among community leaders, educational researchers, practitioners and policy makers of the region. The key roles of the SEAMEO CED are as followed:

1. To conduct inclusive training courses in education for nutrition, environment and local wisdom for the SEAMEO Member Countries;
2. To conduct research in the area of community education development among SEAMEO Member Countries and in related areas to address education for nutrition, environment and local wisdom;
3. To act as an information Centre and think-tank for governments of the SEAMEO Member Countries on research-based community education development reforms;
4. To provide consultancy and services in community education development.

The official launching of SEAMEO CED was followed by the 1st Governing Board Meeting and International Seminar on the theme "Education for Rural Community" from 31st July to 3rd August 2018 where policy makers, researchers and practitioners in South-East Asia shared their knowledge, experiences and good practices in development of education for rural communities.



A joint research project by NFEDC and DVV: Studying Non-Formal Education Centres of the Central Provinces of Lao PDR

Raphaela Hess, DVV International & Vankham Noanphanith, NFEDC

From December 2017 to August 2018, a research team from NFEDC and DVV International worked together to survey a total of eleven Non-Formal Education Centres (NFECs) on Provincial and District levels in five provinces: Vientiane Capital, Vientiane Province, Bolikhamxay, Khammouane and Savannakhet. After completion of the project, the team are sharing their journey, experiences and findings with us.

Background: Why was the research project conducted?

The research project served two main objectives: On the one hand, the NFEDC team meant to

establish a holistic picture of the situation of the NFECs on Provincial and District level in order to report these findings back to DNFE. DVV International, on the other hand, was particularly



Figure 1: Map of all NFECs surveyed

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*Vankham
Noanphanith
from NFEDC*



*Raphaela Hess
from DVV
International*

interested in the capacity building needs of the Directors of these Centres. From late 2018 onwards, DVV will offer a new training cycle, including around six modules, geared towards improving the management skills of NFE Directors.

The study served as the needs assessment for the development of this training cycle. Overall, both parties were and are interested in gathering information on how to make NFECs more sustainable. With better management skills, DVV International hopes for Directors to be equipped to lead their Centres in a more self-sufficient manner.

Implementation: Who, where and what?

Since the two objectives were related, NFEDC and DVV decided to conduct the study in conjunction. Development of the questionnaires as well as other research design and field visits were undertaken together. Data analysis and report writing happened in the two teams separately, with close mutual consultation and sharing and exchanging of key results. As part of the project, two workshops were conducted for the NFEDC team to strengthen their research and enumeration skills.

The study focussed on the central Provinces of Lao PDR: Vientiane Capital, Vientiane Province, Bolikhamxay, Khammouane and Savannakhet. In total, five Provincial and six District NFECs were surveyed (see map / Figure 1), including one pilot site, in Phonhong, to test the questionnaires. In order to gain a comprehensive picture of the NFECs and Directors' capacity building needs, not only the Directors themselves but also teachers, course participants, and government authorities

(PESS and DESB) were interviewed - yet all with a focus on Directors' skills.

Results: What were the key findings and recommendations?

It was found that there are management areas in which NFEC Directors are already skilled and comfortable, and that their leadership is well-appreciated among NFEC staff and government authorities. Some Directors have proactively taken initiative in several instances such as the creation of their Centres' own teaching materials in collaboration with local schools, and researching methods of curriculum and course material development online and with printed resources. Another Centre employs a communications and PR officer for advertising their training activities more effectively in order to counteract declining student numbers. Without the proven leadership of Directors, these creative approaches would not have been implemented. They constitute a solid knowledge base upon which further trainings can build.

On the other hand, NFEC Directors are also in need of management training in various areas (see Figure 2). In a positive vein, they themselves indicated that they would like to receive such training, thus demonstrating clear willingness of upskilling themselves. In Figure 3, Directors' requests for areas in which they would like to be trained are summarised. Teachers' and government authorities' priorities for Directors' training were similar, though with the former strongly emphasising the need for seeking out external funding opportunities, making it their top priority for Directors' upskilling. This finding can be related to an overall severe lack of budgets and other

The participants
attend the need
assessment



resources in all areas of NFECs which was also noted by the study. All four target groups commented on restraints in terms of financial as well as human resources, lack of equipment for vocational and equivalency trainings, limited management and teaching knowledge of NFEC staff, and little existence of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation as well as learners' needs assessments. The research team recommended action to be taken in all these areas.

Further, it was found that communication between NFECs and local government authorities as well as intra-Centre communication can be improved. Information and resources could be shared more efficiently. Likewise, communication channels between NFECs and the communities they are serving could be closer, especially in rural and remote areas which struggle with villagers' limited understanding and appreciation of non-formal education. In order to tap into experiences and the knowledge of other NFECs and related institutions in the NFE sector, the research team also recommended to increase networking efforts with such agents. Parties outside the NFE sector should also be engaged more; for instance, there could be synergies between Centres' vocational trainings and local businesses offering internship opportunities for students, thus improving course participants' learning experiences and the likelihood of them finding employment after

graduation. Lastly, with declining student numbers in almost all Centres visited, public outreach and marketing of NFECs and their activities is necessary.

On a positive note, local government officials support Directors receiving management training as they realise the necessity of such. Teachers additionally showed interest in developing their own capacities. Many of them demonstrated initiative, and job satisfaction levels are high. They are motivated to keep improving the quality of their NFECs. Teachers commented that they 'want to help and develop this centre for the better', and that they are 'proud to share my knowledge and help the learners'. Course participants showed that they are eager to learn new skills, have many ideas on which kinds of activities their Centres could be offering in the future, and how to improve the Centres and help their communities. One participant stated they wanted to learn about organic agriculture because 'it is important for my community, to maintain the health of the people and the soil'. Many said they were taking a particular vocational training course to learn a skill that was needed in their communities.

The research team would like to thank everyone involved in gathering this study's results, and wish NFEC staff all the best for their future and good luck in attending the management cycle!

Recommendations for the development of an NFEC management training cycle

1. Strategic planning and management skills

- **Strategic planning skills for Centre management**
 - **Financial management and budgeting**
 - **Human resources management skills**
 - **Creation of documentation**
 - **Inventory management**
- **Strategic planning skills for course management**
 - **Needs assessments skills**
 - **Adaptation of curricula and course materials**
 - **Follow-up activities**

2. Strengthen internal communication

- **Communications between Directors (management level)**
- **Communications between management level and operational level**

3. Monitoring & Evaluation

4. Networking, fundraising and outreach skills

- **Networking with agencies within the government NFE sector**
- **Networking with other stakeholders**
- **Networking with local communities**
- **Strategic communications planning and tools**

Figure 2: Overall recommendations by the research team for the development of an NFEC management training cycle

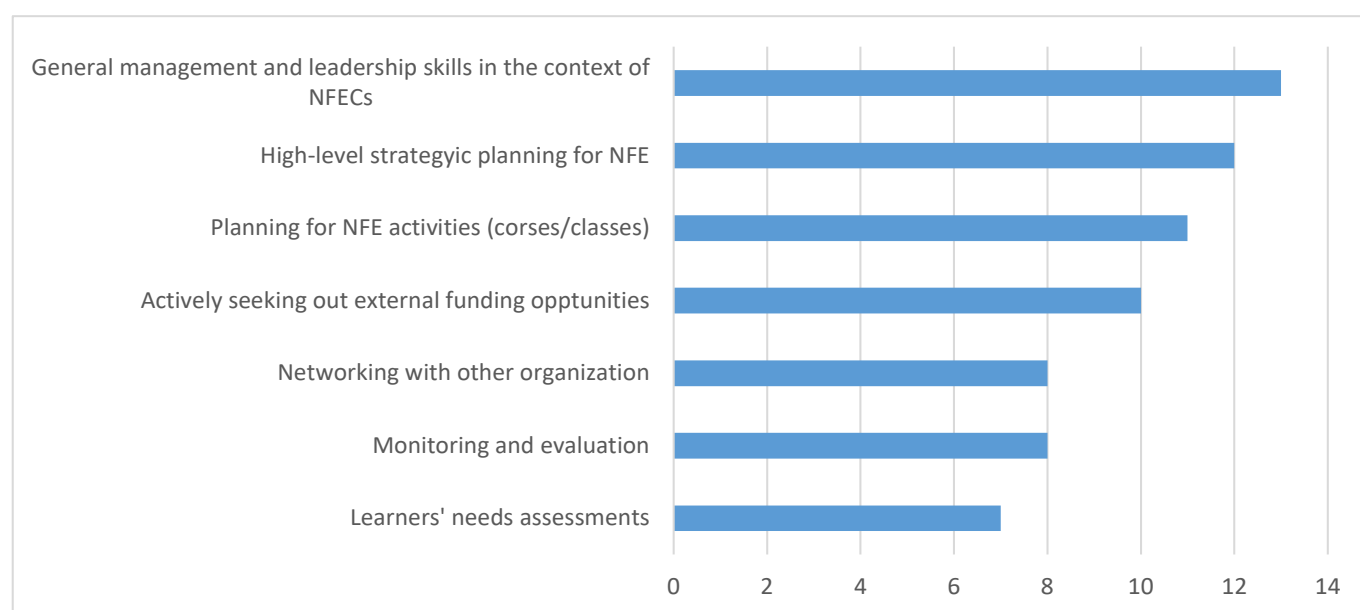


Figure 3: Directors' requests for management trainings



*Souphap
Khounvixay
from NFEDC*

Experience of receiving EAEA Grundtvig Award for ToMT in Tallinn, Estonia

Souphap Khounvixay, Non-Formal Education Development Centre

In the afternoon at Estonian time, four hours behind Lao time, the sun is shining brightly - as if to applaud something ahead of us. On the way to Tallinn Town Hall, an Estonian colleague tells me that we are very lucky to be visiting Tallinn during summer time. The weather is lovely, and temperatures lie between 15 and 21 degrees Celsius. Today is the 27th of June 2018, the European Association for the Education of Adults' participants are walking towards Tallinn Town Hall from the Hestia Hotel Europa. We see old architectural buildings in Russian and Scandinavian styles alongside with contemporary architecture.

When all participants and guests have gathered at the event venue, at about 6.30pm, an Estonian band with saxophone and piano plays very pleasant, traditional music.

EAEA president, Mr. Per Paludan Hansen, gives a speech to open the event. He says that this year, the topic of the EAEA Grundtvig Awards focusses on excellent cooperation and partnerships in three categories of adult education projects: international projects, European projects and national projects.

The winner of the national category, a network of regional coordinators led by the Association of Estonian Adult Educators (ANDRAS), is a regional project aimed at encouraging people to learn and to thus increase their participation in lifelong learning. Members of the network organized events for the Adult Learners Week in their country, collected and disseminated success stories, and made sure that support activities were brought to learners' doorsteps. In promoting adult education, ANDRAS cooperated closely with a number of



From left to right: the winner of the national category, a network of regional coordinators, the winner of the international category, DVV International Laos' project ToMT and the winner of the European category, Skills for Inclusion.

What is Grundtvig Award?

Each year, the EAEA celebrates innovation and excellence in adult education. The EAEA Grundtvig Award highlights project results that produce new ideas, new partnerships, new methodologies and a new understanding how we can work in adult learning.

partners, such as vocational schools, upper secondary schools for adults as well as training companies. The network is an outstanding example of a long-term and highly reliable partnership which has allowed to promote adult education efficiently in a broader social context.

The winner of the European category, Skills for Inclusion, led by the Italian organisation Associazione Agrado, gathered expertise of different European partners with the aim of introducing digital innovation to the education of socially disadvantaged groups such as prisoners. They also improved the competences of educators in methods of international cooperation and non-formal education. The project serves as an example of multi-sectoral cooperation: an NGO, a social cooperative, a small company and a prison.

The winner of the international category, DVV International Laos' project in cooperation with the Department of Non-Formal Education and the Non-Formal Education Development Center, both under the Ministry of Education and Sports, focussed on professionalization of adult education staff as there is a lack of qualified teachers and trainers at all levels of non-formal education in the country. Now, the graduates of the two-year-long Training of Master Trainers (ToMT) program are considered to be the first expert trainers in teaching and learning of youth and adults in their organizations. The project presents a wide range of partnerships and cooperations within the Asia-Pacific region, with stakeholders from different sectors. The ToMT has a clear influence on the national adult education system and the professionalization of adult education staff in the region.

The EAEA Grundtvig Award is named after Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872), a Danish educator who was very influential for the development of non-formal adult education in Europe and worldwide. He provided the adult education sector with a foundational philosophy that underpins the concept of lifelong learning to this day. The EAEA Grundtvig award was launched in 2003 by EAEA in order to recognize and celebrate excellence in adult education. It highlights project results that produce new ideas, new partnerships, new methodologies and a new understanding of how we can work in adult learning.

For me, as a representative from the Lao government's side, the award will raise awareness about the importance of cooperation and partnership in different contexts with key actors in adult education. It also motivates all stakeholders who are already eagerly putting efforts into contributing their expertise, experiences, lessons learnt and financial resources towards achieving



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non-formal education outcomes, lifelong learning and the sustainable development agenda. Deepening and widening collaboration in cross-sectors of adult education will enhance the interdisciplinary understanding of the subject in the long-term. Personally, I feel very proud and appreciated to be a representative of our ToMT team, and to be receiving this award together with Beykham Saleumsouk from DVV International Laos in front of non-formal adult educators from more than 50 countries. We are here on behalf of the whole ToMT team, including Associate Professor Robbie Guevara from RMIT, Anita Borkar from ASPBAE who have greatly contributed to the project as the main facilitators, participants from several organizations at central to district levels who worked very hard during seven intensive training workshops of Curriculum GlobALE and follow-up activities, and many more.

However, the upcoming challenges of non-formal education in Laos concern our target population of 15 to 45-year-olds, who have graduated from

lower equivalency education, and belong to disadvantaged groups. How can we ensure that they will keep developing themselves through alternative learning approaches, including formal, non-formal and informal education, particularly regarding basic life skills, vocational skills, digital literacy and so on? What else have we learned from the ToMT, not because of its success but because of its effective impacts and its process since the project's launch?

All in all, the lessons learned from the ToMT provide a clear model of a developmental platform for several projects in the non-formal education sector. There is a need of expertise as well as of technical and financial support to build capacity in lifelong learning, NFE policy guidance, and sharing best practice from the international community. Our Master Trainers will be a key task force in the national non-formal education mechanism.



The member of the Training of Master Trainers (ToMT) including the local professional adult educators and the international expert.

Community Peace Learning Centers in Cambodia: Creating spaces for remembering and healing

Khet Long, Peace Institute of Cambodia

The purposes of memorialization initiatives are to address the need for truth telling as well as seeking justice and building a culture of democracy. Naidu (2006) posits that the main ideas of memorialization projects are to commemorate previously marginalized histories and heritage including the recognition of victims and survivors of human rights violations and dehumanization of the victims. The strategies used in the memorialization process should ensure ownership and sustainability. Any new initiatives to work with the community should aim to enhance and support local capacities and initiatives by facilitating processes which ensure a shared vision. This is important in the context of Cambodia where people are fragmented as an effect of being under a repressive regime, and being a post-war society.



Sharing stories of the victims is a process of developing group identity which leads to a shared sentiment, joint vision, and collective memory. McGrew (1999/2000)¹ states that any process to facilitate Cambodians to tell their stories is very important – telling stories, having people listen, and having others acknowledge the stories is an important step towards reconciliation and healing.

Community Peace Learning Centers (CPLC) emerged from a consultation process through storytelling and engaging the communities of mass killing sites in action for collective development of sites of memory. The engagement was intended to transform those sites of memory into centers for remembrance, truth telling, healing, and peace-building. The process aimed to create space and encourage people, especially victims, to express

themselves individually and work together in a collective effort to achieve a shared vision and actions. It involved key stakeholders to discuss the inputs and initiatives to build legacy of memory in a way that represents themselves and is meaningful.

Using a participatory approach through village dialogues and consultations, the consultation process resulted in two main outcomes: *individuals and community commitment to come up with a Legacy of Memory, “Never Again” to genocide & repressive regime; and an understanding of the past to confront the present and to positively shape the future.* The process initiated a meaningful Legacy of Memory to Individuals and Community including:

- representation of the community and the nation's identity
- remembering the people who suffered and perished
- living and dynamic communities
- symbol or place of worship - venue for healing,

¹ McGrew is a researcher on the topic of Truth, Justice, Reconciliation, and Peace in Cambodia: 20 Years After the Khmer Rouge, Phnom Penh, December 1999 – February 2000 funded by the Canadian Embassy.

CPLCs are built to enable the current and future generations to learn from the past and to offer a place for sharing difficulties, grief, disappointments, experiences, and stories. CPLCs aim to keep all the memories alive for all generations. They are

places where people can learn, do research, share, and exchange stories, experiences, and inform themselves about history, knowledge as well as skills about conflict resolution, reconciliation, and peace building.

CPLCs offer lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens, regardless of gender, age, origin or abilities. They do not only concentrate on peace and reconciliation, but also on skills development and basic education for the surrounding communities.

Note: This article is a short version of a research report Khet Long co-authored for the Peace Institute of Cambodia: 'Impacts of Memory Building and Reconciliation in the Community Peace Learning Centres', May 2018, Khet Long & Rancha Keo.



International Literacy Day

Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of International Literacy Day, 8 September 2018

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free", wrote Frederick Douglass in the nineteenth century, an emancipated black American slave, champion of the abolitionist cause and author of several books. This call for emancipation through reading, and more generally by mastering basic skills – literacy and numeracy – has universal scope.

Literacy is the first step towards freedom, towards liberation from social and economic constraints. It is the prerequisite for development, both individual and collective. It reduces poverty and inequality, creates wealth, and helps to eradicate problems of nutrition and public health.

Since the times of Frederick Douglass, and particularly in recent decades, considerable progress has been made in all regions of the world, and millions of men and women have been lifted from ignorance and dependency through a broad-based movement of literacy and the democratization of access to education. However, the prospect of a world in which every individual has fundamental knowledge remains an ideal.

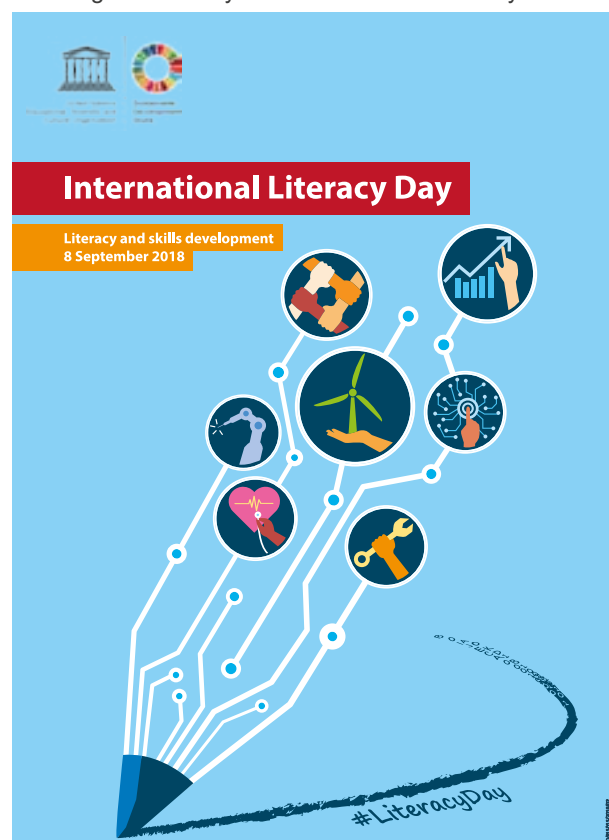
Today, worldwide, more than 260 million children and adolescents are not enrolled in school; six out of ten children and adolescents – around 617 million – do not acquire the minimum skills in literacy and numeracy; 750 million young people and adults still cannot read and write – and among them, two-thirds are women. These seriously debilitating shortcomings lead to a de facto exclusion from society and perpetuate a spiral of social inequalities and gender inequalities.

A new challenge is now being added to this: a world in flux, where the pace of technological innovation is continuously accelerating. In order to find a place in society, get a job, and respond to social, economic and environmental challenges, traditional literacy and numeracy skills are no longer enough; new skills, including in information and communication technology, are becoming increasingly necessary.

Preparing young people and adults for jobs, the majority of which have not yet been invented, is a challenge. Accessing lifelong learning, taking advantage of pathways between different forms of training, and benefiting from greater opportunities for mobility has thus become indispensable.

The theme of this year's International Day, "Literacy and Skills Development", focuses on this evolving approach to education. UNESCO is actively engaged in the redefinition of literacy policies and encourages innovative educational practices. It also supports various forms of public and private sector cooperation, since only a comprehensive understanding of the education cause can enable an appropriate response to the needs of a world that seems to be reinventing itself every day.

On this International Day, I call on all stakeholders in the world of education, and beyond, because it is a cause that concerns us all, to mobilize so that the ideal of a fully literate global society becomes more of a reality.



A toolbox for NFE educators and trainers in Lao language

Beykham Saleumsouk, DVV International, Laos

DVV International has published a new handbook for NFE trainers in Lao language to support the provision of context-appropriate training materials.

Adult education is a new concept in Lao PDR, and therefore local practitioners as well as training materials in Lao language are rare. To alleviate the former, DVV International in cooperation with the Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, developed and implemented the Training of Master Trainers (ToMT) project. It built the capacities of 40 adult educators from throughout the whole country on how to teach adults in the non-formal education sector in Laos. The training cycle was based on the Curriculum GlobALE and took two years.

Regarding the lack of localized training materials,

DVV has developed a new handbook for Lao NFE trainers. Most of the existing NFE materials for practitioners and learners are in English, and many methods are not applicable in the Lao context. Thus, after the third ToMT training, Master Trainers were surveyed regarding their training material needs. Mrs Beykham Saleumsouk, ToMT Project Manager, and Mr Souphap Khounvixay, Head of the Curriculum Development Section at NFEDC, compiled requested content

The handbook consists:

Module 1: Ethics of education

Module 2: Lifelong Learning

Module 3: Adult teaching and learning, communication, and team building

Module 4: Developing training plans

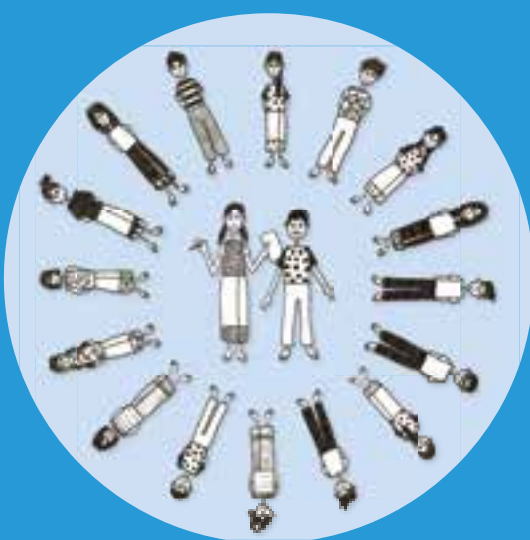
Module 5: The experiential learning cycle

Module 6: Effective facilitation skills

Module 7: Community of Practice

from several sources, and translated it into Lao language. The handbook is available for free on DVV International's website, and can be used not only by the Master Trainers in their work, but by every adult educator and other interested persons in the country.

Within the seven modules, content varies from theoretical explanations to practical advice and instructions for activities which can be used for trainings. The Master Trainers are already familiar with most of the content as they have engaged in many of the activities themselves throughout their trainings, and the handbook constitutes a go-to base for designing their own trainings. It will also be shared with Teacher Training Colleges as well as the Faculty of Education at the National University of Laos, and will thus contribute to raising awareness of the importance of adult and non-formal education in Lao PDR.



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The need for more non-formal skills trainings

Uwe Gartenschlaeger, DVV International Laos

The relationship between Non-Formal Education (NFE) and the sector of Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) is not always easy to understand, and it is full of tensions and misunderstandings. With joint forces, however, they could make a real difference to the provision of non-formal skills trainings.

From the point of view of many TVET experts, NFE can be neglected widely, as in most cases it does not lead to a 'real' profession with a high level of competencies and skills demanded on the formal labor market. NFE advocates, on the other hand, blame the formal TVET sector to be focused exclusively on the needs of the economy (labor 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 highlight the importance of concepts which acknowledge life skills, emancipatory competencies or even basic education.

The objective of "Leaving no one behind"¹ encourages all actors to reflect on the following issues:

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

Diversity and fragmentation of skills trainings in NFE

One characteristic of non-formal skill trainings is the diversity of actors involved and modes of delivery used. In the case of Lao PDR, a country with a not very diverse set of institutions, at least the following institutions are contributing substantially:

- The Department of Non-Formal Education of the MoES
- The Integrated Vocational Education Schools (IVETS) in the system of the Department for Technical and Vocational Education of the MoES
- The Vocational Skill Centers of the Ministry for Labor and Social Welfare
- The Vocational Training Centers of the Lao Youth Union
- The Training Centers of the Lao Women's Union
- Many Ministries offer trainings and courses related to their respective subject, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism.



¹ "Ensuring that no one is left behind" was the theme of the 2016 UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

- Additionally, several associations and projects include skills trainings into their activities, e.g. the Lao Disabled Women's Development Center and the Women's Entrepreneurial Centre.

This diversity is promising and adequate for the non-formal education sector. The reason of such diversity is that NFE looks at the needs of the target groups first, and caters to these needs directly. And as these needs are diverse, the response is diverse as well.

Suggestions for improvement

1. Diversity and networking, not unification

The situation requires a focus on improving cooperation between the different actors. As it is not advisable or even barely possible to restrict the number of actors, it might be useful to look into the potentials of networking and joint action between these actors. This strategy is a lesson learnt 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.²

This includes the establishment of an entity responsible for networking and connecting the actors in formal and NFE skills trainings. The tasks of this agency can include:

- Regular needs assessments on NFE skills services
- Developing and promoting a functioning system of recognition, validation and accreditation
- Offering regular sharing and learning meetings of the different stakeholders involved
- Facilitation of exchange of resources (textbooks, curricula)

It should be ensured that the networking agency is open to all stakeholders and, more challenging, also perceived by these stakeholders as a supporting and useful tool.

2. Sharing of resources

It is a common understanding that human resources as well as equipment, learning spaces and funds are limited. Stakeholders should reflect on creative uses of existing resources. One option can be to open TVET and IVET schools for NFE activities in the evening, weekend and during holidays. In many cases, these are the time periods when adult learners are able to attend activities. Another possibility might be to use the resources of private workshops. TVET teachers can be sent as well as trainers to villages, CLCs or NFE Centers, just to mention a third promising scheme.

3. Trainings and support for teachers and managers across the sectors and actors

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

4. Include NFE into the projects of development partners

As many development projects in the TVET sector aim at poverty reduction and reach out to the most marginalized groups of the population, NFE skills provision is considered as a tool to offer needs-oriented trainings.

5. Clear commitment from government including budget needed

A substantial boost of NFE skills training provision also requires an increase in financing NFE by many governments. The current NFE funding of many countries, constituting only 1 per cent of the education budget, cannot lead to substantial action and does not allow NFE to prove the desired impacts it could have.

Note: This is the shortened version of a chapter by the author in Uwe Gartenschlaeger (Ed): Rethinking Adult Education – Asian Perspectives, Bonn 2019.

² <http://uil.unesco.org/document/vietnam-framework-building-learning-society-period-2012-2020-issued-2013>

News from the Resource Centre at NFEDC

Somchit Phonvilai, Non-formal Education Development Centre

The main objective of the Resource Centre at the Non-Formal Education Development Centre is to create and promote NFE and LLL resources. This year, we have been focusing on implementing the 2018 Resource Center activities plan No 073/NFEDC, dated 12th of March 2018. In the past three months, our Centre has done many activities, such as:

1. After-hours Resource Centre activities for basic English students
2. Created and printed the Resource Centre brochure to promote Resource Centre activities
3. Created and printed NFEDC Newsletters to promote NFEDC activities
4. Surveyed the two Regional Centres in Pakse and Luang Prabang to study the possibilities and readiness in opening respective Resource Centres there. One DVV International staff member accompanied both missions. The objectives of Regional Resource Centres

would be to prepare a learning needs plan to conduct staff capacity building, on topics such as creating and developing websites and promoting resources digitally. Both Regional Centres also need to appoint a staff member who would be responsible for the Resource Centres.

Our Resource Centre further conducted capacity building training on library management for three Regional Centre staff who are responsible for their respective libraries. They aim at developing these libraries into places to collect useful resources to NFE, students and members of the public who are interested in NFE. We invited trainers from the library at the National University of Laos and from the Vientiane Province Library to do a five-days-training at the latter's venue. Currently, we are preparing a plan for staff capacity building on website development for staff of the Southern Regional Centre.



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 78: Adult education as a key to development - challenges and success factors

IPE 76: Refugees: A challenge for adult education

IPE 75: Agenda - 2030 - Education and Lifelong Learning in the Sustainable Development Goals

IPE 74: 21st Century Mass Graves - Proceeding of the International Conference Tbilisi, Georgia

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Newsletters

The ASPBAE Bulletin access via www.aspbae.org

NEXUS - access via www.uil.unesco.org

Voice Rising - access via www.icae2.org

Education Policy Matters - via www.unescobkk.org

New Publication

Handbook for NFE Facilitators

Soft Skills Training Manual for Facilitator

Soft Skills Instructional Package

Curriculum globALE in Lao language

Compendium of the CLC Development

Lifelong Learning in Transformation: Promising Practices in Southeast Asia in Lao language

DVV International Impact Report 2009-2015

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