UNESCO ERI-Net 2014 Annual Meeting
Research Project “Integrating Non-cognitive/transversal Skills in Education Policy and Practice” Phase II

Country Case Study: Mongolia

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Country Case: Mongolia

A  Situation of integration of transversal competencies in education policies

B  Roles of schools in fostering transversal competencies
   Example: ISU

C  Perceptions towards school practices

D  Teachers support and training

E  Conclusions and recommendations
Country Case: Mongolia

In Mongolia:

- Currently, school-aged children comprise around one fifth of the Mongolian population.
- There are 760 primary & secondary schools with a total enrolment of over 0.5 million students.
- About 51 per cent of students are female.
- About a half of student population is in primary education grades.
Situation of education reform

• Reform efforts were focused on decentralization, strengthening the role of local authorities, increasing the financial and administrative autonomy of schools, establishment of private schools, and renewing curriculum and textbooks.

• Shift from 10-years schooling to 12-years of study in primary and secondary education.

• New structure: 5+4+3, School age 6-18
Integration of transversal competencies: Findings from Phase I:

- Educators and teachers were well aware of the importance of non-cognitive skills.
- The integration of these skills needs instrumental guidance from relevant institutions and effective mechanisms to encourage schools and teachers.
- Government program “Upright Mongolian child” reflected many of non-cognitive skills as the main objectives.
- There was a need to reach a consensus regarding the definitions of non-cognitive skills among education policymakers.
Integration of transversal competencies: Findings from Phase I:

- National curriculum is designed to meet educational standards for primary, secondary and complete secondary education.

- It consists of stable/fixed content and additional content. Additional contents can be decided at local level.

- Additional contents include: citizen education, project work, and elective subjects.
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Integration of transversal competencies: Findings from Phase I:

- Citizen education course taught in all grades: Respect and care for national customs, traditions, and values, collaborative and humanistic attitude.
- Project work course is taught in grades III-VI to determine urgent issues, find solutions to those issues and encourage children’s participation in social and community activities.
- The contents of elective courses should be decided by the school to meet needs and demand from students for their development.
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Roles of schools in fostering transversal competencies

Roles of schools in fostering transversal competencies

International School of Ulaanbaatar: focus on global citizenship

ISU is a private, non-profit, secular, co-educational school established in 1992.

ISU core values, strategic plan and mission and vision statements

Programs that committed to global citizenship

More than one foreign language, intercultural experience, international week, promotion of human interactions in the school community to take place in a spirit of cooperation, understanding and celebration of national, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences; and promotion of national, linguistic, and cultural diversity among staff.
Roles of schools in fostering transversal competencies

Survey: 28 school principals and 73 teachers. A half of school principals and teachers were from Ulaanbaatar city and the other half was from Khovd and Bayankhongor provinces.

- Most of the schools have a development plan (77% of principals & 86% of teachers)

- Majority of teachers (85%) indicated that they were involved to some extent in the development of school development plans.
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Roles of schools in fostering transversal competencies

Figure 4.8: Importance of competencies in teaching and learning
Roles of schools in fostering transversal competencies

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- Teachers are able to cover the curriculum (86% + 9.8%)
- Current assessment system is appropriate for measuring students’ transversal competencies -85% of teachers.

**Figure 4.10: Skills and competencies to develop in the classroom**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the contents</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically analyzing the information</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building their own opinions</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in discussions constructively</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting their opinions logically</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with other students</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing innovative ideas</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Country Case: Mongolia

Perceptions towards school practices

- The majority of respondents think that there was a reform towards integration of transversal competencies.
- However, a substantial group of respondents (16-36%) believed that there was no reform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reform to integrate transversal comp.</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Perceptions towards school practices

- Teachers observed most changes in creativity (88%), teamwork/collaboration (85%), self-motivation (82%) and application and communication skills (80%).
Country Case: Mongolia

Perceptions towards school practices

- As a result of reform, teachers were
  - better involving students in classroom activities,
  - more interacting with the parents and community &
  - more initiative-takers in classroom activities

Figure 5.3: Changes in teachers resulted from the integration of transversal competencies in education (principals)
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Perceptions towards school practices

“Learning of transversal competencies is an essential part of student learning” - (4.25 by both teachers & principals)

“Schools, rather than families, should have the primary responsibility for students learning transversal competencies” (4.0 by principals and 4.2 by teachers)

“Teaching of transversal competencies is given sufficient attention in the school” (3.8 by principals)

“Students have adequate opportunities to learn transversal competencies” (4.1 by teachers 3.7 by principals)
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Perceptions towards school practices

Factors that influence teaching transversal competencies

Top 3 by principals:
  - Support from the parents
  - Student interest, and
  - Support from the local business

Top 3 by teachers:
  - Teacher’s commitment
  - Student interest and
  - Support from parents
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Perceptions towards school practices

Factors that hinder the integration of transversal competencies

Top 3 by principals:
- Insufficient awareness of community members
- Insufficient awareness of parents
- Lack of practical guidance

Top 3 by teachers:
- Lack of IT facility
- Lack of practical guidance
- Emphasis on academic achievement
Some training opportunities for teachers exist, 1-2 times per semester or academic year, however, it is doubtful that all the training sessions were focused on the integration of transversal competencies in classroom teaching.
Schools offer teacher training in many different modalities. These modalities include lectures by specialists (23%), mentoring (19%), online learning (18%), discussion with colleagues (16%), guideline distribution (14%) and model classroom (10%).

Teachers pointed out that most popular training modalities were discussion with colleagues and lectures by specialists.
Country Case: Mongolia

Conclusion and recommendations

The concept of non-cognitive skills/transversal competencies is relatively new to Mongolian educators and teachers.

This study was done within a short span of time based on fairly small sample of school principals and teachers. Therefore, the results of the study may not fully depict a complete picture of the situation of integrating transversal competencies.

Further studies with more in-depth interviews and covering more schools are needed to shed light on the complex issues surrounding transversal competencies in teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, the study provides useful information on many aspects of integrating transversal competencies in education practices.
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Conclusion and recommendations

Main findings are as follows:

• Government program “Upright Mongolian child” reflects many of non-cognitive skills as the main objectives of the program. In particular, its sub-program “talent” requires teachers and school to pay more attention to the development of individual specific talents including many transversal competencies. Thus, it can be considered as a policy document entirely focused on the integration of transversal competencies in education practice.

• School curriculum provides some space for nurturing transversal competencies in students. In particular, the contents of subjects such as “project work” and “citizen’s education” should be decided at the local and school levels, therefore, these subjects can be basically used for non-cognitive skills development.

• International School of Ulaanbaatar can serve as an example that how a school can focus on international mindedness and global citizenship as its main goal for children's development.
Country Case: Mongolia

Conclusion and recommendations

• The majority of schools have school development plan and teachers often participate in the development of such a plan. School principals and teachers alike think that within school development plan, a high priority is given to the development of competencies such as teamwork/collaboration, communication, creativity, compassion and self-discipline.

• Teachers expect that in the classroom students should learn collaborating with other students, developing innovative ideas, constructive participation in discussions, and building their own opinions and their logical presentation.

• Assessment practice in school needs to be improved to become more appropriate for measuring students’ transversal competencies.

• Majority of teachers and school principals believed that there was a reform to integrate transversal competencies. And this reform resulted in positive changes in students’ “application skills”, “teamwork/collaboration”, “creativity”, “communication skills”, “sociability” and “computer literacy”.

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Conclusion and recommendations

• Teachers and school principals in overwhelming majority agreed with the statements that “learning of transversal competencies is an essential part of student learning” and “teaching of transversal competencies should be a formal part of the school policy”.

• Support from parents and teachers commitment were the most frequently named factors influencing teaching transversal competencies.

• There was a lack of practical guidelines and instructions on how to integrate and develop non-cognitive skills within existing curricula and subjects. Materials related to non-cognitive skills and transversal competencies were scarce.

• Teacher training is conducted 1-2 times per academic year and the training on specific transversal competencies was “to some extent”. Because training activities cover almost everything, it was difficult to distinguish specific training on transversal competencies.
Country Case: Mongolia

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the case findings, a set of recommendations have been developed for MOES, MSUE & teacher training institutions, ECDs, and local education authorities, Primary and secondary schools.

These recommendations, if fully implemented, will greatly contribute to the integration of transversal competencies in school life and teaching and learning processes.
Country Case Study: Mongolia

Thank you for your attention!

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