Regional Conference on Community Learning Centres: Lifelong Learning for All through CLCs

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COUNTRY REPORT ON BHUTAN

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1. Efficient Literacy Programmes in your country (An efficient literacy programmes is to ensure sound literacy skills of learners and its sustainability and further development)

1.1 Basic information of the programme

Non-Formal Education (NFE) was initiated by the National Women Association (NWAB) in 1980. From 1992 to 1993, NFE programme was initially co-ordinated by the Dzongkha Development Commission (DDC). Considering the appropriateness of its place in the erst while Education Division, the responsibility of implementing the programme became the sole responsibility of the Education Division from 1994.

The NFE programme was attached with the Inspectorate of Schools till 1996 March. With the ever growing need and demand to expand and strengthen the NFE programme in the Kingdom, a separate Section under the Education Division was established in March 1996. The idea of NFE programme in the Kingdom is not to prepare the learners for job opportunities, but to provide basic education to the target groups such as communities far away from schools, out of school youth and those who did not have chance for schooling. Further, it is aimed at making people more skillful, more aware and knowledgeable on developmental activities leading to more economic enhancement.

The programme was taken over by the Ministry of Education in 1996 and since then has grown to over 953 centres with over 949 Instructors and 13587 learners.

Classes are generally held in the mornings or evenings for two hours each day, when people have more time and the formal school buildings can be used as classrooms. Where there are no schools, the alternative places have been community buildings, health clinics or the village monasteries.

The programme has covered the length and breadth of the country and has so far benefited over 160,000 illiterate adult citizens of which about 70 % are women. The NFE programme provides literacy and numeracy skills in Dzongkha (National Language).

The beginners are offered Basic Literacy (BLC) course for 12 months (2-3 hours a day) and then Post literacy (PLC) course for 9 months. While the objective of the BLC and PLC is to provide functional literacy and numeracy, it provides contents graded into three levels covering learning areas such as; agriculture, health, environment, culture, media literacy, life skills education, ECCD and many other topics on emerging issues.

Further, the Post Literacy course helps learners to strengthen their literacy skills to become more independent learners and be able to overcome the challenges of their day to day life in more comfortable manner.

Most of the instructors are secondary school graduates who have passed class X and XII and work as part time Instructors. The government is encouraging instructors to be from the locality so that they can help at home or do other productive work when the lessons are not being held. Often the instructors are expected to be mobile and to move on to new centres upon completion of the course in one area.
NFE Vision

To create a system of lifelong learning opportunities for all people at any stage of life to build a skilled and knowledge-based society. This vision statement is also keeping in line with the Article 9 section 15 of the Constitution of the kingdom of Bhutan that

“The State shall endeavor to provide education for the purpose of improving and increasing knowledge, values and skills of the entire population with education being directed towards the full development of the human personality.”

Mission

To provide access to lifelong learning opportunities for all sections of the population including those with special needs and circumstances who have missed out the formal education; and to equip them with adequate knowledge on productive skill and life skills through relevant and quality learning programs, including literacy, and continuing education programs in accordance with their own situations and conditions to improve the quality of life.

Goals

To create a lifelong learning environment contributing towards fulfilling eradication of adult illiteracy and poverty through non-formal education programme supporting the realization of GNH goals.

Policy objectives

1. To achieve 100% adult literacy by 2017
2. To increase and diversify access to quality adult literacy programmes
3. To build institutional capacity for effective planning, management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of literacy activities.
4. To provide Life-long learning opportunities for adults through continuing education programme.

The third level is Community Learning Centre which was initiated in 2000 with establishment of 7 CLC funded by UNESCO. Currently, 22 CLC are functional with one more CLC to be established in Dagana district. The CLC is provided to those who pursue lifelong learning after completion of PLC, retired unskilled citizens, dropouts of Middle or higher secondary students. CLC is provided to community to enhance need based life skills and lead a happy life realizing the national goal of GNH. Contextual livelihood and life skills are implemented in different Community Learning Centres in collaboration with different ministries such as Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economic Affairs, & Youth Development Fund. The CLCs are located in rural and remote areas where different agencies provide support to uplift the socio-economic development of the community. National newspapers and other reading materials are made available in CLCs for self learning programme while generic life skills like cooperation, decision making, debates and quiz are encouraged across three levels of literacy programme.
The CLC is managed by a local CLC committee comprising Local Leader, Principal, CLC Manager, Village Head, Learners Counselor, and the Parent Principal. The programme is monitored by the District Education Officer, who is accountable to the Non-Formal Education Division, Department of Adult & Higher Education, Ministry of Education.

1.2. Innovative points of the programme, particularly linking to lifelong learning are:
   a) Inculcation of basic farm economics & farming practices
   b) Improved method of farming
   c) Promotion of cottage industry in CLC programme
   d) Cooperative business
   e) Promotion of entrepreneur
   f) Align Curriculum development with learners’ changing need
   g) Continue developing CLC Materials on relevancy and need base
   h) Strengthen collaboration with relevant stakeholders
   i) Accelerate Awareness & Sensitization programme
   j) Streamline supply system for effective delivery
   k) Enhance capacity building at all levels
   l) Develop monitoring mechanism
   m) Initiate and Facilitate covering CLC in the uncovered & unreached area
   n) Enhance learning opportunities for BLC/PLC graduates
   o) Strengthen existing 22 Community Learning Centers
   p) Enhance Data on CLC program through NFE-MIS

1.3. Challenge lesson learnt from the programme
   a) Lack of well trained and experience facilitator- Due to lack of financial resources it is difficult to build capacity of the CLC managers on demand.
   b) Time management- the designed course cannot be completed on time by all the learners due to irregular attendance by few learners. The monitors too find difficult to manage time for frequent and regular monitoring.
   c) Material Resources in the Centre- Repairing, replacing or procuring materials such as sewing machines takes long time exploring budget from government or donor agencies since it has to be based on plans.
   d) Dropout rates – dropouts of CLC learners due to health, marital transfer and domestic problems are the pressing concerns and issues in completion of the required course by the enrolled learners.
2. New trends and innovations to reduce poverty in your country

2.1 Any innovative and remarkable projects/cases to reduce poverty (any sector)

Since the main goal of 10th five year plan is poverty reduction, the poverty reduction projects are carried out in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Forest, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Labour & Human Resource, Youth Development Fund and ACCU, Japan.

- Improved Smokeless stove manufacture (Joint Sector Project, MoEA)
- Poultry rearing (Livestock)
- Piggery rearing (Livestock)
- Mushroom cultivation (Agriculture)
- Corporate Project-Fishery, maize grinding, passion fruits (funded by ACCU, Japan)
- Kitchen Garden Project (Agriculture)
- Souvenir making (YDF)

2.2 Innovations and new approaches through CLC to reduce poverty

The strategies and approaches used for implementation of CLC to reduce poverty are:

- Develop CLC policy relevant to diverse stakeholders
- Coordinate and collaborate with other ministries, departments, divisions and agencies
- Incorporate in Government’s five year plans and present for endorsement
- Identify appropriate and relevant CLC activities based on availability of resources. For example: banana chips production in southern belt, yak products in northern Bhutan, potato chips, bamboo products and wood crafts in the central Bhutan.
- Develop monitoring tools and monitoring system to monitor CLC
- Identify and confirm funding donors and agencies
- Plan and get approval for Human Resource Requirement to carry out CLC activities at the Headquarter and the district
- Identify markets for selling the products
- Plan for recruitment and capacity building programme of CLC
- Provide sensitization programme to local leaders to gain support in implementation at the community level
- Develop continuous lifelong learning programme to those who completed CLC
- Conduct CLC stakeholders meeting at District level to ensure participatory decision making process
- Develop better understanding and coordination of the programme among the communities, gewogs, Dzongkhag and the NFCED
- Identify main stakeholders and develop strong communication channel
- Identify areas of mutual interest with the stakeholders and synergize to work towards a common goal
- Strengthen advocacy and awareness programme through various means of communication such as; i. TV spots ii. Print media iii. Radio/TV program iv. Brochures/pamphlets v. Annual News letter vi. Meeting/Conference

3.1 Current contents of Life Skills/Skills Development in your country under formal education and non-formal education.

The following skills which are in implementation are purely traditional based programme.

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<th>Livelihood Skills</th>
<th>Generic Skills</th>
<th>Life skill Based Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Souvenir production</td>
<td>Cooperation &amp; Team Work</td>
<td>Reproductive health</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Tailoring</td>
<td>Decision making &amp; problem solving</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS and STI</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Embroidery</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Management</td>
<td>Drug and alcohol abuse</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Weaving</td>
<td>Interpersonal communication skills</td>
<td>Violence in relationship with families &amp; community</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Carpentry</td>
<td>Critical thinking skills</td>
<td>Gender equality and issues</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Kitchen Gardening</td>
<td>Marketing skills</td>
<td>Human Rights</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Furniture making</td>
<td>Skills for managing stress</td>
<td>Health, Hygiene &amp; Nutrition</td>
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<td>Skills for managing feelings</td>
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<td>Skills for increasing internal focus on control (self esteem &amp; self awareness)</td>
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<td>Negotiation or refusal skills</td>
<td>Accounting &amp; book keeping</td>
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<td>Advocacy skills</td>
<td>Calculation &amp; measurement</td>
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3.2 New Contents of Life Skills/Skill Development required for future in your country

Since Bhutan is rich in flora and fauna, culture and tradition, additional new contents of livelihood or life skills will be based on the availability of local materials considering the GNH pillars.

   i. Banana chips production
   ii. Potato chips production
   iii. Flower production for decoration
   iv. Production of decorative household items
   v. Hair dressing
   vi. Electrical wiring
   vii. Painting
   viii. Tailoring
   ix. Bamboo and cane craft products
   x. Production of Organic Fruit Juice

**Conclusion:** The above write up is a gist of CLC status of Bhutan which had been supported and funded by different stakeholders and agencies.