Country report on
“Equivalency Programmes and Alternative Certified Learning for Achieving EFA and promoting Life Long Learning”

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Background

Nepal is a country with multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and geographical diversities. There are more than 102 cast groups and more than 92 languages (mother tongues) in practice. There are differences in need, life styles and local resources of the people in regions to regions, sometimes even in village to village. So addressing such diversity on educational system is the main responsibility of the nation. Though the slogan of equal participation of disadvantaged group’s ethic minorities and minority lingual was raised since long ago, but after the declaration of Nepal as a federal republic state in 2006, to address the demand of these people, nation is compelled to change its centralized and unitary system to the decentralized and federal system. Nepal is now on the way to formulate a new federal constitution in April 2011.

Nepal is a land locked country in south Asia. Nepal has many ever flowing rivers, thick tropical jungles, long mountains ranges and different climate conditions. Nepal is a country of highly diverse traditions and has a rich culture. The population of Nepal has reached 26.1 million approximately. Nepal national planning commission laid the foundation for a national education system within the framework of national unity, democracy and development. The adaptation of National Education System Plan (NESP) for 1971-76 nationalized education system in the country. After that primary education project and basic and primary education project I and II and secondary education development project sustain the various reforms efforts to improve the quality of schooling after 2000. The government policies shifted from incremental towards fundamental reforms through decentralising school management to communities to improve educational performances. These days there are only 7% out of school children in the country and the literacy rate of the country is 63%. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) has reached 93% the participation of marginalized girls, janjatis, dalit and children’s with disabilities are still very low. The gender parity index is 0.61 for adult literacy.
At present effort are underway for improving educational access and quality at basic and secondary level through interventions such as Education For All (EFA) and School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) in the country. SSRP introduced new sets of quality led interventions for improving governance management and resourcing functions in school education, improving efficiency and ensuring students learning with restructuring the school as 1 to 12 which includes 1-8 basic and 9-12 secondary education.

Formal education sector leads by department of education and non-formal education center is responsible for non-formal education in the country. The supreme committee of campaign literacy is headed by Hon. Prime minister. The Non-Formal Education center (NFEC) is headed by director in implementing various programmes are as follows:

- Literacy Campaign (LC)
- Adult Literacy Programme (ALP)
- Post Literacy Programme (PLP)
- Women Literacy Programme (WLP) I and II
- Alternative Schooling Programme (ASP)
- School Outreach Programme (SOP)
- Flexible Schooling (FSP)
- Program for school drop out Children
- Community Learning Center (CLC)

There are several programmes conducted by NFEC and CTEVT are subject to certification in the country for intervention in non-formal mode to formal mode.

NFE provided educational opportunities to the children of 8 to 14 and 15 to 60 adult group literacy programme beside that open school, adult women education and open learning from primary, lower secondary and secondary education takes 3, 2 and 1 years respectively for completing the level and learners complete primary
in 3 years and lower secondary in 2 years and secondary in 1 year only and can complete their School leaving Certificate (SLC) exam only in 6 years.

The non-formal approach to learning has numerous potentials to play both complimentary and supplementary roles to create sufficient and strengthened learning opportunities.

**Linking non-formal education with formal school system:**

Ministry of Education (MOE) has total responsibility to provide school education including responsibility to provide school education for those who have missed school education at an appropriate school age. Two centers within its administrational structures. 1. Non-formal education center 2. Open learning division at the National Center of Educational Development (NCED) we formally link the programmes for out of school children with the formal school system, enabling the non-formal school children/ adults to join the formal school system at an appropriate level. Literacy programmes in Nepal have largely linked to the myriad of development programmes and organized by the development ministries in integrated way such as health, local development, forest, agriculture, women, children and social welfare, labour etc. The campaign literacy is going on in the entire country since 2008, 7.8million People were illiterate in the county; during 2008 and 2009 we literate 2.8 million people but still we have 5 million people illiterate in the country and we are going to literate them within 3 more years of campaigning.

Open and distance learning seek to make education more open to those who need or wish for alternative opportunities to the traditional system. It opens up the multiple options and possibilities to the learners regardless of their educational background, place where they live and time frame of learning.

Life long learning is a broad, generic term that is difficult to define with specificity. It is understood as a learning journey of “learning to be”, learning for all utilizing formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning with the national
provisions for assessment, certification and reorganization learning from less formal and open learning identified as:

1. Home Based Learning (Personal Learning)
2. Work Place Based Learning (Experimental Learning)
3. Community Based Learning (Societal Learning)
4. Resource Centre or Community Learning Center Based Learning.
5. Special Resource Institute Based Learning.

Certification terminology:

A) Certification/accreditation is defined as a mark of quality that publicly attests the worth of learning programme.
B) Validation is the process by which the authenticity of the accreditation is ascertained.
C) Recognition is the acceptance by an outside party of a certificates worth and validation.

In the present scenario in Nepal there are school examination board that conduct and certify School Leaving certificate (SLC) examination.

The Higher Secondary Education Council certifies the +2 examination.

The Center for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) also certify the middle level of man power for technical and labour market inside and outside the country.

Arrange of these types of certification strategies exist which address various target communities and access.

Issues:

- NGO and GO programmes main streaming children into the formal system
- NGO initiatives linking to open school examination system
• Integration of non-formal schools into the formal education infrastructure
• Continuing schooling
• Government recognized schools with Out Reach Programmes (ORP)
• Dual enrolment
• Special strategies for disabled, girls, dalit and deprived, marginalized and madhesi.

[General issues that need in planning and implementation of equivalency programmes for out of school population.]

a. Importance of political commitment and appropriate legal provisions.
b. Need for a variety of programmes involving GOs, NGOs and other civil society groups.
c. To ensure flexibility of entry between formal and non-formal systems not only in terms of curriculum and certification but also policy support, delivery mechanism and training of staff.
d. The need for clear articulation of the target groups so that educational materials content languages of instructions and methods can be worked out.
e. Importance of developing staff at all levels, especially the local level.
f. Importance of community partnership and community support.

In this regards our goal and objectives as follows:

Goal

Our goal is to raise the level of adult literacy, particularly among women and people belonging to marginalized groups such as dalit, madhesi, disadvantaged ethnic groups through the provision of appropriate learning life experience programme for all groups people and adults thus contributing to achieving poverty reduction and equitable social-economic and human development is the overall goal of literacy, non-formal education and continuing education in Nepal.
**Our Objective:**

A. To achieve 95% adult literacy rate by 2015 as is reflected in EFA and SSRP.
B. To achieve socio-economic and human development through literacy, non-formal and open learning systems.
C. To establish a sustainable dynamics national non-formal education system which will create a system of Life Long learning (LLL), that supports national development efforts.
D. To promote innovative, indigenous national literacy NFE programmes has a means of harnessing community supports for the programmes.
E. To strengthen national and international partnerships in order to support literacy and non-formal education.
F. Linkages in formal and non-formal modalities in education.

**The target groups in Nepal:**

- Women
- People living in remote areas
- People working in factories and industries
- Low castes and disadvantages marginalized ethnic groups and madhesi
- Religious minorities such as Muslims
- School dropouts
- People with disabilities
- Children’s like a child labour
- Children who have been affected by the conflict

In order to achieve EFA goals set by Dakar framework for action, a five year strategies plan was prepared, approved and implemented with the financial support of development partners. Adult literacy was one of the goals of 2004 to 2009. From that period of time Nepal started campaign literacy since 2008 in the entire country and within last two years we literate
2.8 million people which is a milestone in this regards. But still we have 5 million illiterate people in the country.

Table 1: Targets of literacy rate in EFA 2004-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Existing status and target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2008/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 15 to 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 6 + years</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: national census 2002 and EFA core document

Nepal also expanding access to schooling including alternative schooling, providing various forms of non-formal education programmes, focused on female adults, dalit, madhesi, marginalized and disabled for example literacy for women’s empowerment and functional literacy for women’s.

By literacy campaigning the literacy for age groups 15 + years has increase to 75% the literacy rate of age groups 6 + years to 69% in 2008/9 upon the completion of EFA in July 2009. The government of Nepal has embarked upon School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) 2009-2015. The target set for increasing the literacy rate during SSRP is:

Table 2: Target for literacy rate, SSRP 2009-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Base year and target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Base year</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>2015/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy age</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 15-24</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 6 +years</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SSRP-2009
We have come a long way in adult literacy, through campaign literacy in a very short period of time (2 years) we literate 2.8 million people in Nepal. NFEC Nepal has been honoured by the recent announcement of UNESCO Confucius prize for literacy 2010 (Twenty Thousands USD) for its National Literacy Campaign for achieving impressive result within a relatively short period of time.

Some challenges of national literacy campaign programme:

- No elected leaders in VDC and municipalities
- Geographically inaccessible area in the mountains
- Spontaneous participation and retention
- Critical Data base
- Funding (from DP)
- Net working
- A few number of post literacy programme
- Lack of community learning center

Ways of addressing the challenges:

- Improvement in implementation strategies
- Capacities building of VDC and municipalities
- Publicity and attitudinal changes
- Effective monitoring system
- Improvement in class centred delivery modality
- Relating with local skills (Need based)
- Co-work with various agencies
- Integrating literacy programme

Open school:

Open school for 8-14 age children who are out of school
Open school for 15-25 in lower secondary and secondary groups
People can participate for SLC exam in non-formal mode (open School) in 6 years of study.

- **Primary mode:** 3 years
- **Lower secondary mode:** 2 years
- **Secondary mode:** 1 year
- **Total:** 6 years only

Department of Education (DOE) involved in primary mode; the number of open school 758
NFEC involved in Lower Secondary mode the number of open school 37
NCED involved in Secondary mode the number of open school 50

The equivalence of the those programme are valid like a formal mode of education and equivalency is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non formal</th>
<th>Formal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary 3 years</td>
<td>5 years primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary 2 years</td>
<td>3 years of Lower secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary 1 year</td>
<td>2 years secondary</td>
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</tbody>
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We have 17% of total budget allotted in education sector, and of that 17% budget the formal section gets 54% and non-formal section gets only 1.4% of the total education budget.

**We have various programmes in non-formal education center like as:**

Adult Literacy programme (ALP)
We want to call upon UNESCO:

- To provide support to member states by designing and developing an open access to case studies of good practice.
- To co-ordinate through the UNESCO institute for life long learning with the member state periodically.
- To produce global report at regular intervals on this regards (Certification and Accreditation)
- To review and update by yearly of the member state
- To co-operate which CONFITEA-VI recommended for their member state.

Our expectation of this workshop:

- It will helps to raising fund for ALE, LLL
- Share experiences and ideas among participants country
- Provides technical support for ALE, LLL
- Build up the provider capacity
- Develop professionalism

Finally

Adopting a Life Long Learning approach to EFA, SSRP and educational policy in general allows Nepal to unlock a reservoir of
traditional and community energy and bring the unattainable within the reach. Life long learning is not the new paradigm added on to existing workload but a way to reformulate existing EFA policy become move efficient, effective and achieves new energies in Nepal. So, these are our thinking behind. This is the vision of Nepal that we want to share with you all in the workshop. I want to know how you feel about it and welcome for your valuable suggestions.