Asia-Pacific countries participating in UNESCO’s Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) came together in Islamabad during 20-22 March 2006 to attend the Regional Planning Meeting on LIFE. The meeting was organized by UNESCO’s Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in close cooperation with the UNESCO Islamabad Office and UNESCO Headquarters. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how LIFE countries could effectively plan and commence preparatory activities for implementing the LIFE initiative so as to make a substantial and positive difference to the literacy situations in their societies.

Forty-five participants attended the meeting, twenty-one of them from six of the nine Asia-Pacific countries participating in LIFE: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan. There were also United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) International and Regional Resource Persons, including representatives from UNESCO’s Headquarters, Institute for Education (UIE), Institute for Statistics (UIS), and field offices in Apia, Bangkok, Delhi, Dhaka, Jakarta, Kathmandu, and Islamabad. In addition, a number of observers, including representatives of NGOs and development partners in Pakistan, attended the meeting.

Meeting activities were designed to help participating countries develop the overall framework for conducting literacy needs assessments and prepare outlines of plans to implement LIFE. Participants also discussed the support mechanisms required for LIFE implementation at the national, regional and global levels.

During the course of the meeting, participants informed each other about the current literacy situations in their respective countries, while sharing information about good practices, issues and challenges. They discussed and helped to refine the proposed Guidelines for LIFE Needs Assessment aimed at helping countries to develop LIFE Country Plans, and also deliberated upon the proposed framework of support mechanisms for implementation of the programme. They drafted outlines of these plans that covered needs assessment and other activities at the national level. Finally, they shared information about literacy and teaching/learning methods through a display of posters and other materials.

Continued on page 12
Gender Equality in Education

New Advocacy Brief on Gender in Education Assesses the Impact of Women Teachers

The latest title in APPEAL’s Advocacy Brief Series on Gender in Education is The Impact of Women Teachers on Girls’ Education.

As in the case of previous titles in this series, this new publication draws on research and practice from different contexts, and presents strategies for developing policy and programmes that address issues related to women teachers within a broad gender equality perspective.

The brief highlights the importance of women teachers, as well as the need to give greater policy and programming attention to them in view of their critical role in and impact on increasing girls’ enrollment in basic education.

While presenting arguments for increasing the number of women teachers in schools, the publication recognizes the fact that this does not automatically translate into increased girls’ enrollment and greater gender equality in education.

The reader is reminded that any effective policy and programmes for women teachers must go beyond recruitment to address the importance of training and the professional development of women teachers.

The brief concludes with strategic recommendations in three main areas, namely recruitment strategies, women-centered professional development, and related policy development.

It is hoped that this new title will contribute to raising the awareness of many concerned policy makers and readers in general as another step forward towards achieving gender equality in education.

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The participants were introduced to ways of best ensuring the positive development of young children (birth through age 6) by focusing on health, nutrition, preschool education and ways of working with and encouraging the participation of parents, caregivers and communities. Participants were also taught how to use a handbook for trainers that has been developed as part of the project. The handbook provides trainers with a methodology for ECCE that will help them in training trainers themselves. This methodology emphasizes ways of ensuring the care, development and growth of children from birth to age 2, and from ages 3 to 6. The handbook also includes tips on how to make use of the learning potential in the local community by involving local people in education. Trainers learn how to base learning sessions on events, ceremonies and places in the community, such as marketplaces, temples and rice fields. The book also suggests games and participatory activities related to ECCE that can be used in the training of trainers.

The handbook was developed by a local consultant with the help of an international ECCE expert from the Philippines, and has been adapted to the Laotian context where it will be used. It is the first of its kind to be developed in Lao PDR. The plan is to disseminate the handbook to ECCE trainers and facilitators and continue on page 13.
Mother Tongue/Bilingual Literacy Programmes

APPEAL is currently supporting nine countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) as they implement pilot mother tongue/bilingual literacy programmes. The countries undertake research with the participation of linguists and community members; prepare context-specific literacy materials using mother tongue/bilingual approaches and train locals in the use of these materials by community members. The programmes are intended to contribute to the achievement of EFA goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the objectives of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD).

A regional workshop on mother tongue/bilingual literacy programmes for ethnic minorities was organized from 6 to 10 December 2005 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The nine participating countries were able to share their experiences and develop strategies for improving current pilot projects in this workshop. Thirty-one participants from both formal and non-formal education departments attended the workshop along with two resource persons from SIL International (Kimmo Kosonen and Catherine Young) and seven staff members of UNESCO Bangkok, including Mr. Sheldon Shaeffer, the Director of UNESCO Bangkok.

To promote inter-regional cooperation in this area, the Director of Women’s Education, National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, in Nigeria, and the Director of the Department of Linguistic Policies at the State Department for Literacy in Haiti also joined the workshop. Their goal was to learn from the experiences of implementing pilot projects in mother tongue literacy in the nine Asian countries and to visit a remote community in Thailand where a pilot project is being implemented. The two participants also shared with the others their own experiences and lessons learnt.

This workshop aimed at providing opportunities for country participants in these projects and high-level personnel from formal education to share and learn from experiences in implementing mother tongue/bilingual literacy programmes.

A highlight of the workshop was the field visit to a community learning centre (CLC) located in an ethnic Paw Karen community in Om Koi district, Chiang Mai.
learning methods and helping learners to make the transition from mother tongue to national language.

Workshop participants concurred that in some countries many adults are not really keen on learning how to read and write. They are more interested in participating in discussion groups and learning the national languages. One reason for this attitude might be the lack of literature in the mother tongue that is interesting and useful for adults.

The two participants from Nigeria and Haiti, offering an outside perspective, made some valuable contributions to the meeting. In turn, they believed that they had gained much from the field visit and from their experiences at the workshop.

Finally, the workshop participants agreed that, after the second phase of their programmes (which focused on mother tongue materials and teaching), the third phase should concentrate on learning beyond the CLC, namely post-literacy and post-primary education bridging the transition between mother tongue and national language.

Province, Thailand. The visitors observed that children were actively participating in CLC learning activities and appeared to be benefiting from them. This might have been due to the adequate school facilities, such as a proper school building, lighting, teaching aids, and sufficient classroom materials.

The teachers all qualified with Bachelor’s degrees, received training in applying methods of bilingual education to their teaching curricula. The government’s allocation towards teachers’ salaries, allows teachers to give their work the full attention it deserves. Finally, the government’s non-formal education curriculum was modified to fit the realities of the Paw Karen community.

Workshop discussions and activities helped many participants review their own programmes. Some considered revising their methods of orthographic development after learning from other participants. Some are going to modify their programme implementation to be more systematic, especially the transition period from learning the mother tongue to learning the national language. Cambodia and Thailand shared their experiences in preparing good plans and systematic ways of developing literacy.
The APPEAL Unit in collaboration with UNESCO Delhi’s Communication and Information (CI) Unit organized the Regional Workshop on ICT for Community Empowerment through NFE, which took place in Chennai, India, from 3 to 7 September 2005.

Workshop participants aimed to share and learn from experiences in implementing community-based ICT activities, particularly those under the APPEAL-supported ICT project which is implemented through Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and CI-supported Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs).

Through presentations and discussions, as well as field visits to CLCs in Chennai, the participants identified and addressed a number of key issues for improving and sustaining community-based ICT activities.

For example, community ownership can be strengthened through raising awareness, planning and implementing appropriate needs-based activities, and providing hands-on training to strengthen both confidence and ability. The capacity of community people may be insufficient for handling ICT, but by establishing linkages with technical assistance personnel at universities and private companies, the knowledge and skills of local people working at CLCs could be upgraded.

In addition, community people should be encouraged to develop their own local materials, using digital cameras and computers (e.g., PowerPoint and CDs) as demonstrated at the CLCs during the field visits. The use of the mother tongue is very important for this activity. In these rural communities, however, the lack of simple, low-cost equipment, connectivity to electricity and telephone lines, and basic maintenance remain obstacles.

The technologies demonstrated during the workshop could very well be introduced in participating countries with proper orientation and training.

There was also general agreement that using ICT to assist in marketing and promoting the sale of products from income-generating programmes was crucial for mobilizing the financial resources needed to sustain CLCs and their activities.

Participants agreed that the collaboration of CLCs and CMCs had great potential. The technical expertise of the Multimedia Centres can help CLCs to strengthen their information and communication functions through the effective use of radio, CDs and Web sites. Since most of the CMCs are currently at the pilot stage and operating on a small scale, the already existing networks and linkages of CLCs at the community, district and national levels can help disseminate the experiences of CMCs more widely.

The collaboration of the two Community Centres can start with sharing experiences and resources such as those introduced during the workshop. Joint activities can be planned and carried out in areas such as needs assessment, community database development, materials development with various ICT tools, networking, and raising awareness.

Participants suggested that UNESCO facilitate the sharing of information and resources through regional forums and periodic publications. It should also provide technical assistance for problem solving and low-cost resource development, monitoring and evaluation, joint research and strengthen regional networks through various media.
Many Community Learning Centres (CLCs) were set up as small multi-functional institutions. However, the functions of a CLC are often limited if there are few contacts with organizations both in and outside the community that can offer assistance. During the CLC Regional Seminar organized by APPEAL in March 2004, participants discussed linkages and networks as vital for the effective management and sustainability of CLCs. By strengthening local networks, CLCs will acquire the potential to promote sustainable community development through coordinating various skills training and education programmes. Such community development will help create a sense of purpose and ownership on the part of the community members with regards to the socio-economic development process, instead of depending on externally driven “community development plans.”

A project on linkages and networks through CLCs was launched in 2004 with the support of the Japanese Funds-in-Trust. The main objective of this project is to assist countries in the region to develop CLCs as coordinating agencies of local networks with the assistance of the private sector, governments and NGOs, and academic and research institutions such as universities.

This Workshop took place in Bandung, Indonesia, from 5 to 9 September 2005. Twelve officials from both governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Bangladesh, China, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand participated in the workshop. In addition, fourteen observers from local government offices and NGOs had an opportunity to attend and learn from the workshop.

The overall objective of the workshop was to discuss and explore strategies to further strengthen CLCs as effective delivery mechanisms for literacy and continuing education within the framework of Education for All (EFA) and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), as well as national development plans and strategies with a focus on community and rural development.

The workshop activities focused on four areas: networking strategies with potential partners, establishing national networks of CLCs, establishing a regional network of CLCs, and the preparation of follow-up action plans.

In regard to networking strategies with potential partners, participants recommended that national governments should formulate policies to encourage networking among various ministries and organizations working in community development. Government agencies can also provide technical assistance to CLCs to improve their management and activities. NGOs can play an important role in helping CLCs establish linkages with a variety of individuals and groups offering development assistance. Although personal connections and individual initiatives are important for establishing networks, there should be an effort to institutionalize these networks to sustain their functions in the long run.

Participants agreed that national networks of CLCs should be established for the purpose of sharing experiences, organizing joint training activities, mobilizing resources from public and private sectors, and creating dialogues with policy makers for mobilizing political support and advocacy in regard to CLCs.

Participants also suggested the possible establishment of a regional network of CLCs. Its objectives would...
A regional planning workshop, “Integrating HIV/AIDS Projects into Community Learning Centres (CLCs),” was held from 7 to 11 May 2006 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Eighteen participants attended, including CLC counterparts and HIV/AIDS experts representing governments from the following countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. There was also a representative from UNESCO Hanoi.

CLCs have the potential of acting as centres for health related information, including HIV/AIDS, drug abuse prevention, reproductive and sexual health, and HIV/AIDS preventive education in the community. They can also play important roles in promoting approaches and strategies to reduce stigma and discrimination against people with HIV living in the community.

At an earlier CLC regional seminar, held two years ago, participating countries showed interest in HIV/AIDS related health issues. This resulted in the launch of a project to promote HIV/AIDS education through CLCs, supported by UNAIDS UBW (Unified Budget and Work Plan). The Project’s first activity was to organize the Dhaka workshop to develop common understanding and a framework for implementing pilot projects in participating countries.

The overall objective of the workshop was to enable country delegations to integrate HIV/AIDS projects into CLC activities. There were also several specific objectives:

- To review and exchange experiences related to implementing HIV/AIDS prevention.
- To build knowledge and skills in implementing HIV/AIDS projects.
- To obtain first-hand experience through study visits in the host country.
- To develop the framework, methodologies, guidelines and evaluations for integrating the HIV/AIDS project into CLC programmes and activities.

During the workshop, participants shared their experiences in regard to HIV/AIDS education and prevention at the local level:

- The lack of proper information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS and its prevention leads to an increasing number of people engaging in high-risk behaviours.
- Poverty and illiteracy are one of the root causes of this problem.
- In response to the community stigmatizing people living with HIV/AIDS, participants suggested the creation of support groups and linkages with experts.
- The lack of government commitment and action as well as financial resources was a constraint on the effective planning and implementation of strategic activities in this area.

Continued on page 13
Regional Workshop in Viet Nam
Focuses on Systematic Resource Development and Capacity Building of NFE Personnel

Since 2004, APPEAL, with the support of the Nordic Funds-In-Trust for EFA, has been implementing a project to promote systematic resource development and capacity building for non-formal education (NFE) in Asia. The objective of the project is to develop comprehensive and concrete NFE master plans and a national network to strengthen material and technical resource development and capacity building. The countries participating in this project include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Timor Leste and Viet Nam.

In 2005, a regional workshop was organized in Bangkok and Korat, Thailand, to share experiences in designing and formulating NFE master plans. Following the implementation of the pilot project, a second regional workshop was organized in Hanoi, Viet Nam, during 27-31 March 2006. The workshop was attended by 21 participants from Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor Leste and Viet Nam. Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan were invited to participate in the LIFE Regional Planning Meeting held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 20-22 March 2006 (see front page).

The main objectives of the workshop were to increase the knowledge of project personnel, share pilot project experiences, identify key issues for analysis, establish national networks and formulate country action plans.

Through sharing country experiences, participants identified the following key issues:

1. Raising awareness of NFE for the purpose of resource allocation, with appropriate statistical data on NFE as concrete evidence;
2. An expanded notion of NFE for lifelong learning, covering not only illiterates but also those who have completed formal schooling;
3. Training facilitators and NFE personnel using all available resources, including local savants;
4. Linkage between NFE and formal education, including higher education institutions;
5. Establishing training institutions for NFE andragogy;
6. Providing incentives and motivation for improving the status of NFE personnel;
7. Quality improvement of teaching/learning materials, in cooperation with other sectors;
8. Developing partnerships within the government and with/among NGOs;
9. Exploring the legal status of CLCs and improving the quality of existing CLCs;
10. A computerized NFE management information system for planning, implementation and monitoring of NFE master plans.

In addition, participants approved the overall project cycle, presented by APPEAL, which included the following phases: project identification, formulation, appraisal, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and documentation and dissemination.

The participants also discussed the need for the evaluation of project’s impact, most appropriately done after project activities are completed in order to identify any changes in policy and organization. They felt that resource mobilization strategies should be supported by policies to ensure the effective allocation of funds to support project activities.

The workshop concluded with the preparation of action plans on the part of the participants. Each country team reviewed the NFE Master Plans in light of the workshop experiences, and prioritized activities for 2006-2007, including the training of NFE and CLC personnel, materials development, a management information system, and decentralized management.

The participants also discussed strategies for resource mobilization from local and external partners. UNESCO was requested to provide technical assistance, such as helping to coordinate donor responses and facilitating the exchange of information.
Is there an added value when using a human-rights-based approach in programming?

The main challenge is: How can we establish this? The question is difficult to answer since there is a lack of actual studies both in regards to analyzing the effect of this kind of approach as well as on the abilities of programme implementers.

In response to this question, UNESCO Bangkok, in collaboration with other agencies, has launched the Lessons Learned Project (LLP). It aims to identify the added value of using a human-rights-based approach to programming.

This project is a response to the UN Secretary General’s call for the integration of human rights policy and practice in all UN activities. It involves agencies, such as UNESCO Bangkok, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNICEF, UNDP and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).
The long-term objective is to build the capacity of the United Nations and other interested development cooperation agencies to incorporate human rights awareness into all stages of development projects and programmes.

Training materials are being developed to help bridge the knowledge gap that prevents the integration of a rights-based approach to development. These tools will be used during regional and in-country training of trainer workshops to raise the understanding of selected country-level programme officers and key national counterparts. They will share their experiences and ideas, and receive practical training on how to implement human rights-based projects (including a situational analysis, project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation). Through such training and tools, it is hoped that a core cadre of trainers comprised of selected UN and other development cooperation agency staff will be established.

As part of the capacity development exercise, six pilot projects will address various aspects of rights-based approaches to development. These projects, each of a year’s duration, started in May 2006. They are looking at different topics such as access to legal assistance for women, food security, education, indigenous people’s rights, and progress in advancing rights under national and international processes. The idea behind these pilot projects is to ascertain what value is being added to a programme that is rights-based from beginning to end (from planning to delivery to outcomes to documentation) and that would involve all stakeholders at all stages.

Documentation of the pilot project activities from start to finish is crucial, not only in providing valuable information but also for the advocacy and lobbying process that enables communities to realize their rights.

The six pilot projects are:

1. Access to Justice of Vulnerable Groups in Afghanistan
2. Developing Capacities of Fijian Women to Access Adequate Housing and Land Rights
4. Building Capacities of Displaced Herder Groups in Mongolia
5. Building Capacities of Duty-Bearers and Claim-Holders in Select Community Learning Centres in Northern Thailand

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Study Missions to Thailand

To share experiences, exchange ideas and learn about innovations in the field of Non-Formal Education (NFE), APPEAL is promoting and coordinating study missions to Thailand from various member states. So far APPEAL has already welcomed four study missions. The missions enable the participants to learn about NFE in Thailand in order to replicate good practices in their respective countries.

Bangladesh: (8-10 August 2005) A team of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) members visited Lampang in northern Thailand to study the impact and use of ICT in NFE, in particular in Community Learning Centres (CLCs). One ARTC member and one intern from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) also joined the mission.

Afghanistan: (26 January to 1 February 2006) Ten officials from the Afghanistan Ministry of Education visited the Sirindhorn Institute of Continuing Education and Development (SICED) in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. They observed activities at four NFE regional centres and four CLCs.

Japan: (End February 2006) Twenty members of PRENGO, a Japanese NGO, came on a study tour to Bangkok that was organized by university students. They observed more about the social motivations of learners and the implications it has for their education.

Iran: (31 March 2006) Mr Hegazi Idris, programme specialist at the UNESCO Tehran Office, visited the Department of Corrections in Nonthaburi, Thailand. His goal was to observe and learn more about literacy classes for prisoners.

Forthcoming missions:

Pakistan: At the request of JICA Pakistan, Pakistani NFE personnel will undertake a ten-day study mission to Thailand and Indonesia during the first two weeks of July 2006.

Bangladesh: A group of BRAC members plans to visit Thailand in August 2006.
The main objectives of such competencies live in these 35 countries. The currently 85 percent of the world's population without literacy skills. The literacy rates of less than 50 percent or populations – 2015) is taking place in 35 countries that have UNESCO’s Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (2005 implementation. clarification, came up with recommendations for LIFE proposed country plans and, after discussion and country plans. The participants also shared their framework for LIFE needs assessment and implementation.

The meeting resulted in agreement on a general framework for LIFE needs assessment and country plans. The participants also shared their proposed country plans and, after discussion and clarification, came up with recommendations for LIFE implementation.

UNESCO’s Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (2005 – 2015) is taking place in 35 countries that have literacy rates of less than 50 percent or populations of more than 10 million people without literacy skills. Currently 85 percent of the world's population without such competencies live in these 35 countries. The majority of these individuals are girls and women.

The initiative is implemented within the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), Education for All (EFA), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the Asia-Pacific region, nine countries are participating in the LIFE initiative: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea. It is hoped that activities undertaken during the initiative will help countries to accelerate their progress towards achieving the EFA goals -- in particular, the goal of cutting illiteracy rates in half by the year 2015.
Towards Integrating Early Childhood Care and Education, Inclusive Education, and Gender in Education

A training workshop on Inclusive Education (IE), Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and Gender in Education was jointly organized by APPEAL and UNESCO Headquarters and was held from 19 to 21 April 2006 at the UNESCO Bangkok office. Education officers from twelve of UNESCO’s cluster and country offices in the Asia and Pacific region participated in the Workshop.

The Workshop objectives were to promote better coordination and cooperation, and to enrich and strengthen participants’ knowledge of IE, ECCE and gender, especially as the concepts and approaches introduced are all still relatively new in the Asia and Pacific region. Resource persons from UNESCO Headquarters and APPEAL as well as international consultants provided inputs to challenging issues in ECCE, IE and gender.

The workshop also aimed at exploring ways of integrating inclusive education and gender perspectives into ECCE programmes and other programme areas of UNESCO. The training provided education officers at country, cluster, regional and Headquarters levels with a good opportunity to share experiences and discuss challenges, opportunities and future steps as well as strengthen cooperation and coordination in regard to ECCE, IE and Gender in Education programmes.

Lao PDR: Training Trainers in Early Childhood Care and Education (Continued from page 3)

other stakeholders. It will also be introduced as part of the training of formal kindergarten teachers at the three regional teacher training colleges in the country.

In addition, ECCE programmes and activities will be initiated at community learning centres (CLCs) throughout the country. These centres are considered to be one of the most appropriate delivery mechanisms for ECCE services because they are based in the local community and are places where parents, caretakers and children can gather easily.

There is a shortage of ECCE trainers in Lao PDR. Thus the establishment of a team of trainers is an important step in reaching out to marginalized and disadvantaged children and their caregivers.

New ECCE Resource Briefs Published

UNESCO believes that an important step towards ensuring proper early childhood care and education (ECCE) for all children lies not only in educating parents, teachers and caretakers, but also in raising the awareness of policy makers and others about the importance of quality ECCE and the ways to achieve it. To help create this consciousness, APPEAL has developed a series of short resource briefs on ECCE aimed at policy makers as well as teachers, managers and parents. The twelve resource briefs deal with the following topics:

- What is Early Childhood Care and Education?
- Economic Costs and Benefits of ECCE
- International Treaties
- Nutrition, Iron and Iodine
- Curriculum
- Pedagogical Theories
- Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environment (ILFE)
- Brain Development
- Abuse and Neglect of Children
- Language and Language Development
- Inclusion
- Transition to School

The policy briefs are available since June 2006.

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Integrating HIV/AIDS Projects into Community Learning Centres (Continued from page 8)

Participants developed draft frameworks and methodologies for integrating HIV/AIDS activities into CLCs. The first step is to develop a ‘community analysis’. This document will contain information about the background of the community, the current health situation, in particular regarding HIV/AIDS, but also attitudes toward HIV/AIDS, existing programmes and resources, and the potential of the local CLC.

Goals, objectives and activities are also key elements of the framework. It is important that types of activities be organized according to local conditions in each community. However, raising awareness is a must in all cases.

Referring to the generic frameworks and methodologies developed during the workshop, participants developed and reviewed follow-up country action plans and shared them with delegates from other countries. They were requested to finalize these plans and send them to APPEAL after consultations back home.

UNESCO provided information about existing resources and networks in literacy and continuing education, as well as HIV/AIDS, in order to support the planning and implementation of country-level activities.
Community Learning Centre (CLC) News

CLC – Kominkan Regional Workshop

In recent years, various regional forums organized by APPEAL have introduced kominkan (public citizens' halls) in Japan to NFE experts throughout the region. Participants in regional forums such as the ACCU-APPEAL joint planning meetings in 2003 and 2005, as well as the UNESCO-JICA NFE Symposium in 2004, showed their interest in learning more about Japan’s lifelong learning programmes through kominkan.

In view of the above background, a regional workshop on community development through CLC networks and linkages will be organized in Matsumoto, Japan, on 3-7 August 2006. The workshop will be organized jointly by APPEAL and Matsumoto University, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), with financial assistance from the ACCU Invitation Programme for the International Educational Exchange of Teachers and Professionals.

NFE experts and CLC coordinators from countries in the region will participate in this workshop. As a follow-up to the last regional workshop on CLCs held in Indonesia in 2005, they will explore how to strengthen the functions of CLCs through developing effective local networks and linkages, in view of the experiences of kominkan in Japan.

An enriching experience as ARTC Secondment in the APPEAL-UNESCO Bangkok Regional Office

Since January 2006, I have been working in the APPEAL Unit on a secondment from the Asia-Pacific Resource and Training Consortium (ARTC).

After my arrival in Bangkok I was asked to facilitate a study visit for NFE officers from the Afghanistan Ministry of Education. This event enabled both the visitors and I to learn about Thai community learning centres (CLCs) through the observation of their activities during the two-day field visit to sites in Nakhon Ratchasima province. I also had a precious opportunity to observe a Thai ARTC member, the Sirindhorn Institute of Continuing Education and Development (SICED), which was the host of this JICA programme.

Participation in this study visit gave me “new inspiration” as an NFE practitioner in the Indonesian Ministry of Education. The Afghan delegates actively participated in discussions during a series of SICED lectures on many aspects of CLCs, from history to management.

Another great experience was to organize an NFE personnel capacity building workshop in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The workshop was intended to develop project knowledge and skills management with the participation of ten experts and officials from five countries.

Workshop objectives were mainly to increase the capacity of project personnel, share experiences, and identify key issues for analysis and discussion. Participants also analyzed each country’s NFE Master Plans, discussed the establishment of national networks and formulated future country action plans.

I was enlightened by the realization that NFE projects at the initiating stage can attract counterparts to support their activities, but the result hardly creates solidarity, which comes through the active participation of working networks at any level of an institution. At the stage of network building, I would say that a “strategic partner” has to be strengthened either among ARTC members or from key institutions in education.

During my stay with the APPEAL Unit, I also learned how to manage and coordinate project administration by arranging contracts, calculating budget allocations and conducting follow-ups.

Edy Hardiyanto
ARTC Secondment
Advocacy Toolkit on Multilingual Education

At the World Education Forum held in April 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, the countries in attendance collectively committed themselves to ensure that by 2015 all children, especially girls, children in difficult circumstances, and children from ethnic minorities, have access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. In addition, there was a commitment to achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of literacy by 2015.

Achieving the goals mentioned above and making educational opportunities more equitable calls for dealing explicitly with children and adults of disadvantaged groups through affirmative measures. We start by teaching them in their mother tongue, which provides access to education and enables them to participate in the learning process according to their evolving capacities.

However, there is a common complaint that we often hear: “Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MLE) will lead to political instability in the country and is too expensive. Even if we implement MLE programmes, communities and learners will not be interested anyway as they should be learning the official language.” This opinion is one shared by many policy makers who fail to recognize and understand the role that bilingual or multilingual education can play in increasing enrollment, retention and achievement in the formal school system. As a result, the true linguistic panorama of a national population is rarely reflected in its school system, and large numbers of learners in the region are excluded from quality education because the language of instruction – even in the initial years of schooling – differs from their mother tongue. Denying access to relevant education (a basic human right) may lead to social unrest. Providing relevant education will make linguistic minorities feel more a part of their own country, as well as contribute to considerable savings. For example, a shift to MLE schooling in Guatemala, as a result of the reduced repetition, saved the government more than USD 5 million, equal to the cost of providing primary education to about 100,000 students per year.

To raise awareness by providing some concrete evidence and accurate information about multilingual education, UNESCO Bangkok is in the process of developing the Advocacy Toolkit on Multilingual Education. This publication intends to raise awareness among policy makers and local communities in regard to the importance of multilingual education. The Toolkit contains three main advocacy booklets targeting 1) top-level policy makers, 2) mid-level planners and implementers, teachers and educators, and 3) communities. Each booklet contains key arguments supported by concrete research findings and case studies. The Toolkit will answer many concerns and issues regarding MLE.

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Regional Workshop on Strengthening Linkages and Networks through CLCs
(Continued from page 7)

include sharing experiences, promoting CLCs for poverty alleviation, lifelong learning and other kinds of development, capacity building, negotiating with policy makers and donors to mobilize resources, and using information and communication technology (ICT) for effective networking.

The activities of this regional network would include organizing exchange visits, inter-country meetings and seminars, establishing Web-based networks for marketing, offering training workshops, assisting new CLCs, and conducting research and evaluation.

The role of UNESCO in such a network would be to serve as overall coordinator, to facilitate inter-country activities, and provide technical inputs to the member countries. These countries in turn would be responsible for developing their own national-level networks and for consolidating resources.

The workshop concluded with the preparation of action plans that participants would pursue in their home countries as follow-up. In general, these action plans included a review of already existing CLC networks, future meetings to share the outputs of the regional workshop, efforts to introduce or expand networks and linkages, steps toward establishing a national CLC network, and ways to document and disseminate information resulting from the project.
The basic mission of UNESCO is to contribute to sustainable human development in a culture of peace, underpinned by tolerance, democracy and human rights, through programmes and projects in UNESCO’s fields of competence—education, the natural and social sciences, culture, and communication and information.

Forthcoming Activities of APPEAL
APPEAL Meetings and Workshops Planned for June to December 2006

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<th>Participating Countries</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Meeting on Equivalency Programmes</td>
<td>To review ongoing projects on equivalency programmes in participating countries and formulate action plans to promote synergy between formal education and NFE</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand</td>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Workshop on Community Development through CLC Linkages and Networks</td>
<td>To share experiences of CLCs and develop strategies for strengthening linkages of networks (view of Kominkan lifelong learning centres) in Japan</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam</td>
<td>3-7 August 2006</td>
<td>Matsumoto Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Seminar on ICT-NFE for Community Development</td>
<td>To share experiences of ongoing ICT-NFE projects through CLCs and CMCs; and develop strategies and actions for effective use of ICT for community development</td>
<td>China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam</td>
<td>September 2006</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-regional meeting of Gender In Education Network In Asia (GENIA) for Southeast and South Asia</td>
<td>Annual meeting of GENIA members to share information and experiences of national efforts in gender mainstreaming of education (formal and NFE) and to provide training in gender equality measurement and assessment</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam</td>
<td>September 2006</td>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Training Workshop on Strengthening Life Skills in NFE Programmes</td>
<td>To provide training on integrating life skills into CLC and other NFE programmes, using the pilot experiences in 2004-05 and guidelines to be developed in 2006</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam</td>
<td>November 2006</td>
<td>To be announced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Review Meeting on Mother Tongue Literacy for Ethnic Minorities</td>
<td>To review ongoing projects on mother tongue literacy in participating countries and develop strategies and action plans</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Viet Nam</td>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>To be announced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Meeting on the Gender in Education Network In Asia (GENIA) Impact Assessment</td>
<td>To train national experts and plan for the impact assessment at national and regional levels</td>
<td>Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam</td>
<td>17-21 July 2006 (to be confirmed)</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Seminar on the Status of Teachers: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers</td>
<td>To review the current situation on teacher education, status and working conditions of teachers, and to raise awareness of and review gender issues surrounding the status and role of teachers</td>
<td>Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan</td>
<td>To be identified</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual GENIA Meeting In Central Asia</td>
<td>To promote and foster increased networking and partnerships among GENIA members at the sub-regional level, and build the capacity of GPPs for gender responsive assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and gender indicators</td>
<td>Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan</td>
<td>16-18 October 2006</td>
<td>Tashkent, Uzbekistan</td>
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