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Community-Based Lifelong Learning and Adult Education

Role of Community Learning Centres as Facilitators of Lifelong Learning



Community-Based Lifelong Learning and Adult Education:

Role of Community
Learning Centres as
Facilitators of Lifelong
Learning

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Foreword


UNESCO BANGKOK HAS LONG LEVERAGED THE CAPACITIES OF ASIA-PACIFIC countries in establishing and implementing quality and sustainable Community Learning Centre (CLC) programmes. With strong support from the Government of Japan, various initiatives devoted to the development of the CLCs have taken place at both regional and national levels. Likewise, the “Transforming Education and Training Systems to Create Lifelong Learning Societies in the Asia-Pacific” project aims to assist countries around the region in enhancing their institutional capacity to advance the wider benefits of the CLC for lifelong learning.

In response to SDG Goal 4 and the dynamic trends in globalization and regional development, the extended role of the CLC beyond the realm of literacy and numeracy shall be addressed to cater to the current needs of youth and adult learners as well as the communities where they live.

This sequential booklet on the Role of Community Learning Centres as Facilitators of Lifelong Learning as part of UNESCO Bangkok’s “Community-Based Lifelong Learning and Adult Education: Situations of Community Learning Centres in 7 Asian Countries” publication lays the foundation of the CLC frameworks and addresses the key areas for transforming CLCs. Multiple aspects of the cross-cutting elements in the functions of the CLC – including the effective use of ICT, recognition, validation and accreditation, migration, sustainability, financing strategies, inter-sectoral approaches and decentralisation – were specifically discussed. Taking into account successful examples and experiences from different countries, the inputs provided by national experts from 11 Asian countries plus Australia during the two consultative meetings held in November 2015 and September 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand, were incorporated into this booklet.

Together with the booklet on the Adult Skills and Competencies for Lifelong Learning in the same series, we hope that the key factors and practices presented in this booklet will assist policy-makers and CLC managers in transforming the role of CLC, as a key platform to provide vital knowledge and essential skills to marginalized learners towards sector-wide and inter-sectoral approaches.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan for their long commitment and generous support to UNESCO Bangkok in strengthening CLC and the non-formal education sector across the region. We would also like to extend our special thanks to the author, Ms. Cecilia Victorino-Soriano, of the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), for her great contribution at both consultative meetings and collaborative efforts with the project team throughout the development of this booklet.



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Rationale

The Community Learning Centre (CLC) Project was launched in 1998 within the framework of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL)¹. The purpose of a CLC is to promote human development by providing opportunities for lifelong learning to all people in the local community. CLCs support empowerment, social transformation and improvement of the quality of life of people. The main functions of CLCs are to provide: (a) education and training, (b) community information and resource services, (c) community development activities, and (d) coordination and networking (UNESCO, 2012).

Historically, CLCs have been at the forefront of adult literacy and learning programmes. Beyond teaching literacy and numeracy, the experiences of CLCs in different countries demonstrated their significant contributions in providing access to relevant and appropriate learning programmes towards empowering marginalized communities. Literacy and numeracy have been embedded in activities such as work and livelihoods, community participation, health and other development initiatives. Despite the demonstrated success of such a multidisciplinary approach to literacy, education and development, these programmes have not been scaled up to benefit more people and remained mostly in pockets of communities. Their tremendous work notwithstanding, CLCs in the communities have received limited funding from governments and have been for the most part implemented through volunteer work.

This situation will have to change with the commitments to the global agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes the Education 2030 (SDG4) targets to “ensure inclusive equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The Framework for Action for Education 2030 emphasises the need for strong inter-sectoral approaches for education beyond schools or formal institutions. It calls for “strengthened links between formal and non-formal structures” and, strategically, advocates for the establishment of multiple pathways to learning to ensure that each child, youth and adult will have access to lifelong learning programmes. This signals the crucial need to reinvigorate the CLCs as hubs for learning, information dissemination and networking to implement the SDGs.

The Education 2030 agenda is ambitious – and the CLCs, having worked with different sectors in its education and development programmes, can offer important lessons for SDGs and the implementation of SDG 4. Being located in communities, it can contribute immensely to addressing the unfinished agenda of EFA, particularly in providing access to quality education to poor and marginalized communities. At the same time, it can contribute to the realisation of

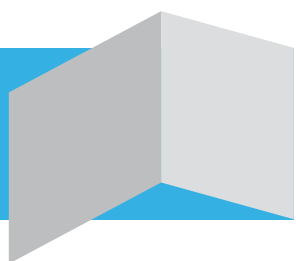
¹ According to the new structure of UNESCO Bangkok’s Education Sector, projects on CLCs, non-formal education (NFE) and literacy are currently carried out under Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development (EISD).

the broadened learning agenda such as vocational education and skills development for youth and adults, global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

What are the key factors that will help transform CLCs towards responding to the global agendas while at the same time catering to community needs? This paper will draw on lessons from exemplary experiences of CLCs; in particular, it will look at the processes and success factors that can help CLCs become vibrant centres of learning and collaborative actions in the community.

Ensuring that CLCs are part of lifelong learning systems, the paper looks at how other countries were able to institutionalise CLCs and what policy and governance mechanisms made this possible. It will also look into education reforms needed for the education system to transition to lifelong learning system, within which the CLCs are located.

This paper builds on UNESCO Bangkok's recent regional research on lifelong learning titled "Community-Based Lifelong Learning and Adult Education: Situations of Community Learning Centres in 7 Asian Countries" and the discussions at the experts' and practitioners' workshop held in November 2015, where eight Asian countries plus Australia were represented. Further, its findings were finalised after a second experts' and practitioners' workshop in Bangkok on 13–14 September 2016.



Foundational Frameworks for CLCs

Lifelong and Life-wide

The Conference on Adult Education IV (CONFINTEA VI) Belem Framework for Action articulated how lifelong learning should be concretely pursued by Members States. It says that "Policies and legislative measures for adult education need to be comprehensive, inclusive and integrated within a lifelong and life-wide learning perspective, with literacy as the point of departure, based on sector-wide and inter-sectoral approaches, covering and linking all components of learning and education" (UIL, 2010).

In the long history of CLCs in the region, many developing countries founded the CLCs to provide learning opportunities for youth and adults who missed out on education in primary and secondary formal education. The programmes of Bangladesh and Nepal, for example, focused on literacy, post-literacy and life skills.

In China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, lifelong learning (LLL) is founded on Confucian culture wherein learning throughout life and different dimensions of life is embedded in people's way

of living. Instituting lifelong learning through CLCs in contemporary times, these countries have provided a variety of programmes for learners from different age groups to engage in learning that will benefit their lives and society at large.

For China, Thailand and Viet Nam, lifelong learning is actively applied and embraced in national development policies and practices.

Lifelong learning has also been promoted in EFA and MDGs, especially in ensuring gender equality in education – to address the illiteracy of women in Asia-Pacific and the lesser proportion of women in higher levels of education.

Lifelong and Life-wide Learning in SDGs

The Education 2030 Framework for Action signed by Member States and other education stakeholders in Incheon in May 2015 committed to “promoting quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education.” It also recognises that “the provision of flexible learning pathways, as well as the recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education, is important.”

Learning as a life-wide pursuit emphasises the provision of education through different systems beyond the formal education system, to include non-formal, informal and other education systems (such as indigenous learning systems), that are relevant and accessible to all learners. The Asia-Pacific region is faced by challenges that impact on the right to education. Climate change, conflicts and persisting inability to address the situations of out-of-school children and youth require “developing more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in these contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees.”

The 2014 Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) reinforced, before Incheon, the intersection of lifelong learning and sustainable development by “the integration of ESD into education, training and sustainable development policies.” It said that “Education, including formal education, public awareness and training, should be recognised as a process by which human beings and societies can reach the fullest potential. Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of people to address environment and development issues.”

Further, the strengthening of CLCs in the Education 2030 agenda is stipulated in the goals of the Framework for Action, which states that “to complement and supplement formal schooling, broad and flexible lifelong learning opportunities should be provided through non-formal pathways with adequate resources and mechanisms and through stimulating informal learning, including through use of ICT.”



Key Areas for Transforming CLCs

UNESCO Bangkok reported that “CLC programmes are operating in more than 24 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region as well as 10 countries in the Arabic speaking world. The number of CLCs and similar NFE/literacy centres is estimated to be more than 170,000 in Asia and the Pacific” (UNESCO, 2008).

The report noted that these CLCs offer a range of programmes such as literacy, post-literacy, income generating skills, life skills and vocational skills. Responding to local needs, some CLCs also implement mother language literacy, conflict resolution, peace building and the use of ICTs for work and personal development.

Taking stock of the work of CLCs through a review of the education sector plans in seven countries in 2015, UNESCO Bangkok’s regional research echoed the challenges faced by CLCs in relation to community participation and ownership and how they respond to the learning and other needs of the community. In many countries, the planning and operations of CLCs are influenced more by national policies and programmes than by localised planning and programme development. Importantly, the dwindling and unpredictable financial support for CLCs has had a huge impact on the quality of programmes offered, the professional development of educators and volunteers, and, strategically, the functionality of thousands of CLCs in the region.

In the process of transforming CLCs into vibrant hubs for learning and community interaction, it is important to learn from good practices from exemplary CLCs. On 19–20 November, 2015, UNESCO Bangkok organised a workshop of experts and practitioners on the theme “Transforming Education and Training Systems to Create Lifelong Learning Opportunities in Asia Pacific.” Based on their experiences, participants recommended areas for reviewing success factors from experiences from various CLCs in different countries.

Relevance

Relevance can be defined from different vantage points. How a CLC can remain responsive to the needs of the learners and communities can differ from learner to learner, from community to community and from country to country. Across Asia and the Pacific, however, there are lessons that have been learnt on relevance:

- Knowing where job and work opportunities are and matching the programmes to these opportunities

- Collaborative programmes where CLCs work with district education offices, NGOs, employers/ business sectors, parents, local leaders and other relevant stakeholders depending on the type of learning programme
- Taking advantage of opportunities that will continuously improve the quality of programmes/ services
- Participation of learners, to include a feedback system that will integrate their recommendations for improvement and innovations in programme development and delivery
- Come out with dimensions of standards (recommendations for quality programmes) that apply to a variety of CLC services such as on health, livelihoods, arts, libraries, sports and daycare, especially looking at the contributions to the learners and communities (outcomes) of these interventions
- Creating learning environments and programmes for
 - Gender empowerment aspects
 - Civic participation
 - Community actions

Ensuring relevance is linking programmes to individual motivations for learning. In Australia, the government programmes to develop people's skills are linked to understanding incentives to the individual as well as to the community. What do people want to do at home and in their family? What is the motivation for learning and work of disengaged men? What social connections can promote participation?²

From the community perspective, a CLC managed by an NGO continues to engage the community to ensure that programmes fit local contexts and needs. All community members are invited to design CLC programmes. In pursuit of programme designing, a social analysis is conducted in the village to find out the following:

- What are the community needs?
- What do community people want to learn?
- What are the challenges faced by the community?
- What are the local contexts and conditions?
- What are the policies/regulations to support CLCs?
- What/who are the supportive agencies and stakeholders?
- What networks can boost implementation?

From the social analysis, the CLC will prioritise the kind of programmes that will be implemented with due consideration of opportunities and capacities in the community.

At the country level, in the Philippines, the integration of markets among other ASEAN members through the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 is viewed as both an opportunity and a challenge. Opening up the countries as an integrated market for jobs and

² Workshop on Transforming Education and Training Systems to Create Lifelong Learning System in Asia Pacific, 19-20 November 2015, Bangkok, Thailand.

investments can provide opportunities for people within ASEAN, as long as they have the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by the market. However, according to the International Labour Office, enterprises from sending countries such as the Philippines are concerned about the outflow of skilled personnel (Rynhart and Chang, 2014). At the same time, ASEAN employers surveyed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) see the greatest needs for training on leadership and management followed by vocational and technical skills and customer service (Rynhart and Chang, 2014). Also key are CLCs that have been working with marginalised learners with limited formal education or training. The huge demand for trainings on leadership and management, and the experiences of CLCs in providing these life skills to marginalised learners can be steps towards inclusive growth not only in the community but within the ASEAN region. Clearly, the relevance of CLCs can be defined as starting at the community-country level and in connection with larger communities such as the ASEAN countries.

Around what themes of learning can CLCs be provided to respond to the current needs of learners and communities? The November workshop identified job and work, gender and empowerment, civic participation, and community actions as key areas for interventions. Apart from these four areas, a broader competency framework proposed by the same experts and practitioners can be instructive. The Asia-Pacific Competency Framework sees the need for developing knowledge, skills and attitudes on 1) climate change mitigation and adaptation, 2) civic literacy, 3) global citizenship, 4) digital literacy, 5) health literacy, 6) jobs and livelihoods, and 7) culture and identity.

To ensure that education/learning programmes are able to promote these interlinked competencies, CLCs will need support from sectors outside of education. For example, health literacy can be a collaboration between the education and health sector; digital literacy can have the education sector work with the IT sector and so on. Inter-sectoral collaboration is not new to CLCs. In Viet Nam, the CLC in Dong Nai works with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in implementing its education programmes on culture and sports. In Quang Nam, the CLCs work with other organisations in training and the production of marine products. In Nepal, the CLCs forge partnerships with government and NGOs in developing programmes based on community themes such as women's empowerment, psycho-social counselling, and others.

CLCs, however, will have to build new partnerships to develop activities for relatively new themes. For example, for effective global citizenship, the ability to speak English is considered key, and for climate change, the need is for green skills. What kind of partnerships will enable CLCs to design quality programmes for global citizenship and climate change?

Access and Participation

In Viet Nam, there are about 11,000 CLCs in the sub-districts and more than 2,000 adult literacy centres. Many of them face challenges in their operations (MOE, 2013). In Thailand, there are about 8,674 CLCs and 761 adult literacy centres (MOE, 2013). Access to programme in CLCs was in a large extent determined by the participation in learning opportunities in the physical centre. From the long experiences of CLCs, the key considerations to make the CLCs accessible to the community are as follows:

- CLCs should be accessible to people in terms of location, language use and costs
- Mothers who come with small children should be provided a place where children can stay
- Knowing and addressing barriers to participation of target learners
- Flexibility of the programmes in addressing differentiated needs and contexts of learners
- Disseminating information on what programmes the CLCs offer to the community
- Using information technology for off-site/distance learning to reach out to learners in remote areas

With the advent of online learning and sharing, access is now also defined in relation to access to how the CLCs are able to reach out to wider communities through digital content and collaboration. This redefinition of access and participation is well-recognised by the indicative strategy for SDG 4, which envisages to “make learning spaces and environments for non-formal and adult learning and education widely available, including networks of community learning centres and spaces and provision for access to ICT resources as essential elements of lifelong learning.”

Effective use of ICT in CLCs

How can CLCs bring together people in the community and across communities to create and exchange knowledge through ICT? Four key strategies on ICT use have been raised by experts:

- Open learning, distance learning, online courses
- Access contents from different digital networks
- Collaboration in digital platforms – knowledge use and production
- Rethinking participation (who are the participants) in CLCs through use of ICT

Networking and coordination is one of the functions of CLCs. Networking will now have to include working with digital platforms or forums that will support and enrich the programmes of the CLCs. At the same time, the CLCs will have to acquire knowledge and skills to be able to facilitate exchanges between the users of digital platforms as well as how to develop and disseminate digital contents.

ICT is a tool to bring together people, provide access to digital content and allow them to interact. How can senior citizens use the ICT to interact with others? How can they access opportunities online? CLCs can also use the technology to engage disengaged men and women who mostly stay at home. In developing countries where many parents leave home to work in the cities or outside the country, the CLCs can reach out to children or youth who would need recreation or varied interactions with people.

Different countries have different objectives and ways of setting up and maximising ICT use in the CLCs. In Nepal, a CLC in a remote area has set up internet services to help people connect with others and earn income as well. Through the support of UNESCO, the CLC installed solar power for electricity and the needed computers and laptops. To ensure the effective use and maintenance of the equipment, the CLC personnel were trained on the use of ICT devices-both in the technical aspects and how it can be a tool for education and other programmes. The CLC was able to provide internet services to people, along with the use of email, Skype, Google and

other essential online tools. While the CLC has embarked on this adoption of new technologies, it continues to use traditional ways of disseminating information such as through radio, television, newspapers and calendars.

In Thailand, the government in September 2016 announced that it has set up ICT networks across the country as learning centres for people where they can use digital technology for occupational development and income generation. This presents an opportunity for CLCs to connect its work to the current thrust of the government's policies and build its capacities to use ICT effectively. Before a CLC can evolve into a "digital community," it should collaborate with the Ministry of ICT, seek permission or enact a policy that recognises its vision to be a part of the digital community and then set up the necessary equipment in the CLCs.

To ensure the effective use of ICT, the staff of CLCs in Thailand should first have full knowledge on ICT laws, understand the ethics in the cyber communities and have the necessary skills for using the ICT devices as well as for identifying and exploring the use of specific software and apps that will be useful for learners. The CLCs also forged partnerships with the telecommunications sector in training the staff and teachers.

Using ICT for education, the CLCs have connected with online markets for skilled vocational learners. They have also used the Ministry of Education's online tools for basic education curriculum such as e-exams, digitised books and exercises. ICT has also been used for "edutainment" such as developing literacy through songs (karaoke literacy) as well as the use of social media for education.

In the Philippines, the ICT has been effectively used in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) programme of the Department of Education (DepED). The ALS provides "second chance education" or an opportunity for Filipinos to complete their elementary and secondary education through the use of self-learning modules and with a learning circle that meets at least once a week. The Functional Literacy and Mass Media Survey 2013 reported over 3.2 million out-of-school children and 6.9 million 10-64-year-old people who are functionally illiterate. Through the use of ICT, the ALS has been designed to reach out to this huge population of Filipinos who missed out on formal education.

Computer-based instruction through eSkwela, a flagship project of the Commission of Information and Communications Technology (CICT), created interactive modules that provided attractive graphics and texts for specific subjects in the ALS curriculum. The eSkwela programme is designed for distance learning, whereby learners can use the e-modules at their own pace and in their own time on their home computer. There have been efforts by DepED to work with computer centres to make these modules accessible to youth and adults in the community.

The radio-based instruction of ALS translated the contents and subjects of the ALS modules into informative scripts that can be used for radio programmes. In some municipalities, the DepED, together with the local government, collaborated with a local radio station to provide air time where the CLC staff or ALS mobile teacher can read the scripts on air. The learners are informed of the airing time as well as the schedule of face-to-face sessions that are set aside for further discussions on the subjects discussed on air.

Management

The CLCs, while they run primarily through volunteers, should be able to set up a management system that will provide information on the impact of its work and sustain the work of the CLCs. The experts and practitioners identified key strategies in aid of effective and sustained management:

- Setting up metrics of expectations also to show evidences of success:
 - Number of programmes
 - Number of learners' assisted
 - Kinds of programmes
 - Learners' expectations and needs
- Ensure data gathering, monitoring and evaluation to show evidences of success and to inform continuous planning and implementation
- Transference of skills to manage CLCs, addressing staff turnover to sustain quality of programmes
- System of motivating teachers, educators and other staff, ensuring decent pay and continuing professional development
- Ensure community participation, not only in accessing the education programmes but also, more importantly, in the whole programme management cycle

Lessons on building linkages for CLCs from Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, CLCs are fully managed by the community and the government through the District Bureau of Education. They are supported by political commitments from government at different levels, namely from provincial to district to commune level. A few lessons from its practices generated from the workshop include:

- CLC curriculum and learning programmes must be contextualised based on local needs
- There should be cooperation between CLC personnel and teachers from the commune as well as linkages with networks such as the Vietnam Learning Promotion Association
- Collaboration both with government and NGOs
- Establishing ties with other government agencies apart from the MOE

Thailand: Community management of CLCs

Thailand provides a good case for community management programmes that place community members at the centre of decision-making processes through the seven steps in managing the CLCs.

1. Establishment of CLC in Thailand

- Train teachers and community leaders on how to set up CLCs

Community members who want to be involved in the management of the CLCs are equipped with knowledge and skills on how to incorporate insights from the community into the CLCs, how to design education and other programmes, and how to manage the programmes within the CLCs.

- Create community awareness on CLCs

Before setting up the CLCs, teachers and community leaders organise dialogues with the different groups in the community to discuss with them the importance/relevance of the CLC in helping improve the education and overall well-being of learners and the community. They seek the advice of the community on setting up the CLC.

2. Establish CLC committee and CLC

The members of the CLC committee and the staff encompass different stakeholders from the government, school, community, volunteer groups and even education/community experts. They can come from:

- Local leaders nominated by community members (such as heads of villages, monks, respected persons, etc.)
- Local Administration Organisation
- Other local government agencies (public health, agricultural department, etc.)
- Private sector (local wisdom experts, individuals, etc.)
- Teachers

In Thailand, the total number of committee members is 9–12 persons, with the teacher serving as secretary. To ensure the smooth operation of the CLC, committee meetings are conducted regularly to thresh out issues and agree on key decision issues.

3. Planning by the committee

- Identify target learners and learning needs

For the CLC, it is important that the programmes are recommended by the community people themselves, generated from their perception of what they think is important and would motivate them to learn. Identifying specific learning needs can also come from an analysis of the situations in the community and what knowledge/skills/values or actions community members want to learn, master or undertake to change these situations.

- Design and develop programme activities

Programmes are designed and developed based on the perceived needs and wants of the people as well as on the overall development goals of the community. Evaluating these needs relative to the capacities and available resources of the CLCs, the programmes will be designed and developed with the help of community members.

4. Implementation of programmes

- Mobilise community resources (4Ms: money, materials, manpower and management)
- Networking to support CLCs
- Capacity building for CLC facilitators

Important resources need to be available for CLCs to effectively implement its programmes: community resources, networks and capacities of CLC facilitators. Of all the three resources, it is the training of the CLC facilitators that is often overlooked. The practitioners noted that given the turn-over of staff and volunteers in a CLC, the continuous training of the pool of volunteers and staff is crucial. It ensures that sustainability of the programme implementation and helps expand the expertise that can be tapped by the CLC.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

- Data collection
- Assessment

A systematic collection of data provides information on the impact of the CLC and insights on how it can be more effective in its work. In Thailand, as in other countries, the CLCs collect data on learners and the kind of programmes they implement, submit these data to the NFE Districts, which then pass on the data to the Central NFE – MOE. Regular data collection is important to provide lessons for the CLCs.

6. Dissemination of results

- Promotional materials
- Exchange experiences between CLCs

Sharing evidences of its work and impact on the learners and the community fosters ownership of the success of the CLCs in the community. This can also provide important feedback from the community on how to improve the programmes and what new programmes can be created in the CLCs. Sharing good practices across CLCs can also be instructive. Apart from being inspired by the different innovations, exchanging ideas on the work and reflections on success and challenges across CLCs can also lead to policy and programme recommendations that can be presented to the government.

Recognition, Validation and Accreditation

According to the Synthesis Report on Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning in UNESCO Member States, “recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) refers to the establishment of arrangements to make visible and value all learning outcomes (including knowledge, skills, and competences) against clearly defined and quality-assured standards. RVA covers the whole process, including identification, documentation, assessment, and accreditation of learning outcomes from different settings” (Yang, 2015).

The arguments for recognising prior learning or competencies acquired in the work place have been debated in education circles, especially in light of lifelong learning frameworks. Now, with

the relatively easier access to information due to ICTs, there is an increasing acceptance of the need to recognise learning acquired in different education settings. The CLCs at the forefront of education activities in the community can start documenting and systematising its work towards RVA. The recognition of prior learning or experiences can very well serve people in the informal sector (usually with limited formal education) who would want to have their experiences certified for formal work or further training.

The workshop recommended the following steps for CLCs to work towards RVA:

- Have a certificate of participation for every participant and for every programme
- For some programmes, link them to formal education such as MOE or registered training organisation to provide equivalency for learners
- Working collaboratively with different education settings to ensure a seamless path, aware of what programmes are being delivered in these settings
- Tapping expertise needed in setting up equivalency/qualifications framework
- Setting up quality assurance recommendations depending on the kind of programmes
- Partnership between central and local governments in setting up RVA
- Role of the private sector in setting up equivalency paths, particularly in identifying skills for specific work and trainings needed

Migration and need for RVA

In Asia-Pacific, there is rapid urbanisation and a trend towards “youthful cities,” where youth and adults comprise the largest population in cities. At the same time, in many countries, it is the young people, both women and men, who search for work as migrant workers in both developed and developing countries.

Given this demographic trend, it is important to position the CLCs as hubs for learning as well as in recognition of prior learning and addressing upward mobility of the working-age population. What can be explored are in the following areas:

- Possibility of CLCs issuing certification or equivalency of skills according to national qualification standards; certification or qualification standards can also be a basis for measuring quality of provision in CLCs
- CLCs providing continued training to upgrade the knowledge and skills needed for changing work requirements
- Recognition of knowledge and skills as workers move from one work to another and from one country to another
- Role of host countries in recognising or certifying skills of workers
- Role of host countries in providing learning for cultural integration

- CLCs in both sending and host countries can promote learning programmes on the rights of migrant workers
- Transnational qualifications framework such as in relation to the ASEAN Economic Integration

Sustainability

How can the CLCs continually exist as a centre for learning and exchanges in the community? How can they continue to cater to the needs of different learners and members in the community? How can they strategically provide innovative programmes that can serve the community to overcome current challenges and deal with emerging issues in the future? These are key questions for CLCs related to sustainability. A set of key factors were identified that can help sustain the breadth and depth of work in the CLCs. This includes not only finance resources but importantly also social resources:

- National laws and regulations on CLCs
 - Structure within the government that support CLC
 - Regulations and need mechanism that not only to regulate and support CLCs
- Ensuring sustained financing from different sources – from national, local governments as well as external funding partners
- Financing benchmarks to implement fully-costed quality CLC programs (e.g. teachers/educators, learning materials, community activities, etc.)
- Community participation and ownership (not only in contributing resources) but in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the programmes in the CLCs
- Linkages/engagement with private/business sector (employers)
 - Number of sponsors from private sector
 - Number of partnerships with private sector on hands-on training or apprenticeships
 - Use of skills standards developed by industries

Financing Strategies

The financing of CLCs remains a challenge for most countries. CLCs receive support from the national government and are expected to mobilise resources from the community. In Thailand, depending on the programmes being implemented by the CLCs, they receive a budget from the national government. For Continuing Education, the budget allotted for 1) vocational skills is US\$33 per year for trainer fees and facilities, for 2) life skills US\$200 per group per year, and for 3) community development US\$200 per group per year. For Informal Education, a budget of US\$122 per CLC per year is given to cover reading, promotional activities and materials such as newspapers.

To mobilise resources from the community, the CLCs employ strategies such as:

- Teacher as fundraiser
- Collaboration with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) department of private sector for contributions on equipment, construction of building and other materials

- CLC as a platform for other government agencies to jointly promote their activities
- Funds and loans at CLCs generated and managed by learners
- CLC products produced, marketed and managed by learners

In Lao PDR and the Philippines, CLCs receive support from the government but they also need to mobilise resources from external sources such as international NGOs and partners. CLCs also mobilise domestic resources by linking up with corporate foundations for monetary and non-monetary resources such as in equipment, infrastructure and other materials. A key strategy that worked well for the Philippines is working with state universities and colleges, in particular collaborating with the community extension offices. These offices are mandated to work on development projects, mostly with the communities near the university or college. The CLCs use this mandate as an opportunity to put forward their programmes where the community extension office can make better positive impacts for the community.

In Indonesia, there are many financing strategies that CLCs have employed to sustain their work. One key strategy is to work with policy makers as they can bring about systemic changes or reforms in government that support CLCs. Indonesia has used annual budget deliberations to encourage policy makers at the national and local level to invest more in CLCs. It has proposed the use of the national database on CLCs as a basis for budget allocation. To influence policy makers' priorities in education, Indonesia does advocacy and lobbying to show that non-formal and informal education are as important as formal education. These activities include testimonies from community members to demonstrate the excellent work and impact of CLCs on the lives of learners and the community.

In Nepal, CLCs have developed different strategies to generate support for their programmes. From their long experiences in working for sustained support, the key lessons are:

1. Transparency

- Identify problems, plan and implement with community people
- Provide to the community/public finance reports and information on the operations of the CLCs
- Use resources wisely and effectively
- Invite policy makers and government representatives to show work of CLCs

2. Celebration

- Demonstrate impact of CLCs, publicise success and celebrate it
- Use social and cultural events as venues for disseminating success and challenges faced by CLCs

3. Continuing staff and volunteer development

- Tap technical expertise from community as support
- Leadership development
- Develop capacities as well as confidence in work

4. Institutional development

- Close cooperation with government and use policies as leverage
- Cooperation with NGOs
- Government recognition of CLCs doing excellent work
- Develop social enterprises linked to the education programmes of the CLCs

Inter-sectoral Approaches

Working with other sectors is crucial in ensuring effectiveness of programme implementation. From the experiences of the CLCs, there is a positive correlation between the participation and completion of learners in education programmes and effectiveness of implementation. It also has a positive correlation with sustainability of CLCs.

In Viet Nam, there are five learning models at the grassroots level where sectors intersect to support programmes at different levels; namely 1) Learning family, 2) Learning clans, 3) Learning units/organs, 4) Learning communities at villages, hamlets and residential units, and 5) learning communities at commune level. At the same time, the Local Committee of the CLCs needs to work with different organisations and sectors in developing and implementing programmes. Such agencies include but are not limited to Agriculture, Justice and Information and Communication; the organisations include the Fatherland Front and local associations of men and women. Within the education sector, CLCs work with different offices such as the District Department of Education, vocational institutes as well as experts and trainers from different fields.

In Indonesia, the CLCs work with the following agencies and organisations on specific programmes:

- Ministry of Education in the functional literacy and equivalency programmes
- Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration on migrant workers' rights and pre-departure trainings
- Ministry of Agriculture for livelihood skills training and agriculture extension services
- NGOs and business association for the cooperative, microfinance, leadership trainings and relief aid and humanitarian work and others
- Community volunteers, internship and student volunteers

Decentralisation

Decentralising the planning, implementation and other decision-making process will enable CLCs to operate more effectively and be more responsive to the situation and needs of the communities. On this aspect, the experiences from Thailand and the Philippines can provide lessons for CLCs in Asia and the Pacific.

In Thailand, the decentralisation approaches are in three areas; namely 1) General management – the community together with teachers and other volunteers oversee the whole management processes in the CLCs, 2) Financial management – the provincial government allocates funds to the CLCs based on the expressed needs and planning done by the CLCs, and 3) Networking and partnerships – the CLCs are mandated to build partnerships with organisations that can support the vision, mission and work of the CLCs.

In the Philippines, many of the CLCs have been established as a collaboration between the DepED's ALS programme and the Local Government Unit (LGU) at the village, municipal or provincial level. These ALS have developed innovative programmes also in cooperation with NGOs and corporate foundations. Learning from the successful experiences of CLCs in the country, the key strategies for decentralisation that supported very well the development and operations of CLCs include:

1. Positive policy environment – The Local Government Code, passed in 1991, explicitly articulated the role of the Local Government in supporting education initiatives at the community level. At the same time, the passage of the law on the National Coordinating Council in 1990 provided the institutional support for policy-making, coordination and implementation of programmes to universalise functional literacy.
2. Mobilising funds for education from government at national and local level – There are three sources of funds from government which are mandated by law and that have been tapped by CLCs.
 - The Local Government Code mandated LGU heads such as mayors to devote 1% of the real property tax to education. This fund is called the Special Education fund, which partly support the CLCs.
 - The Women in Development and Nation Building Act mandated a Gender and Development (GAD) budget requires government agencies to devote 5 % of their annual budget to programmes for gender mainstreaming that will support women's empowerment, both at the agency and community level.
 - The Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) is the share of revenues of the LGUs coming from the national government. This has a development fund that can be used for education.
3. Partnerships with universities and colleges through the extension services and with corporate foundations.
4. Close cooperation with non-government organisations and the self-help community organisations, especially in programmes that reach out to hard to-reach communities and communities in vulnerable circumstances.
5. National Service Training Programme (NSTP) – students who are graduating from their bachelor courses are required to do community immersion as an alternative to military training in school. These students who have been trained as teachers, nurses, social workers, etc. to lend their knowledge in the service of the CLCs.
6. Recognition of community initiatives provide incentives for the government to invest in excellent education programmes being implemented by CLCs. Examples of these award-giving bodies are National Literacy Awards that recognise the excellent functional literacy and education programmes of the local government and the *Galing Pook Award*, an award given to local government units that have done exemplary work.

In conclusion, the lessons learned from the practices from different countries in Asia and the Pacific defined five crucial factors to consider in evaluating and improving the CLCs. These are 1) Relevance, 2) Access and participation, 3) Management, 4) Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA), and 5) Sustainability. The important strategy of ICT and CLCs has been integrated in access and participation. It is anticipated that there will be rich experiences and lessons learned from this arena in the coming years to make it a key factor on its own. The five key areas are not exhaustive but can be starting points for defining the drivers for transforming the CLCs into vibrant hubs for community learning and activities in the 21st century.



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ANNEX I

List of Participants
Regional Expert Meeting on Transforming Education and Training Systems
to Create Lifelong Learning Societies in the Asia-Pacific
19-20 November 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

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**Consultation Meeting on Regional Guidelines on the Role of Community Learning Centres
and Adult Competencies for Lifelong Learning**

13-14 September 2016, Bangkok, Thailand

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