

2nd International Seminar on Education for Rural Transformation (ISERT)

18-23 December 2017, Fontaine Blanche Hotel, Kunming, P.R. China

The 2nd International Seminar on Education for Rural Transformation
第二届教育促进农村转型国际研修班



SEMINAR REPORT

In partnership with

UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education,

Yunnan Normal University,

School of Education Science and Administration

of Yunnan Normal University,

Yunnan Agricultural University, and

Institute of New Rural Development

BACKGROUND

The importance of education and imparting the need to address and find a concrete solution in the many issues that hinders the economic growth of underdeveloped countries requires concerted effort from all stakeholders. The 2015 Framework for Action Education 2030 with a goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning for all 2030 was adopted during the May 2015 World Education Forum. With the promulgation of UN's Goal 4 of SDG's--an inclusive and life-long education for all—the framework will serve as a guideline in promoting further the rural education in the disadvantage areas.

Having attained the fruitful outcome of the first seminar on education for rural transformation conducted by INRULED in December 2016 with the aim of combating poverty, promote education and training for rural education, achieve social and economic growth, and implement the Mekong cooperation mechanism, 26 representatives from the Mekong countries, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka participated the event.

A follow-up seminar was held from 18-23 December 2017 at the Fontaine Blanche Hotel in Kunming, P.R. China. The seminar was attended by 35 participants who are researchers, government officials and from academe coming from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam who shared their experiences, learned from one another, engaged in discussion in identifying problem areas, and how to address these issues, etc.

The 2nd International Seminar on Education for Rural Transformation (ISERT) was a gathering of experts who have been responsible in implementing in their own countries and beyond, the education system that provided the needed change and transformation in rural areas especially those who do not have the means. It is still a long process to achieve the desired goals and a work in progress.

SUMMARY

It will be impossible to point out every details of the discussion due to the amount of ideas shared and only key points will be highlighted during the course of this report. Ultimately, the desired effect is to reach out to all specifically in the disadvantaged areas where skills are required in order to survive and/or find sources for their day-to-day sustenance.

With the offshoots of various CLC's of mostly government supported initiatives to help eradicate poverty, the move to educate the community specially the women and children will help greatly in the cultural preservation of each community and they not only become pro-active but as a community, it can generate income and provide more opportunities for everyone. With the information shared during the discussion on rural transformation from Mekong, China and South Asian region, the seminar has laid the framework for the next activity.

The 2nd ISERT was held over five days in the form of experience sharing, country presentations, discussions and field visits. Representatives shared good practices and applicable experiences in terms of rural education and poverty alleviation, as well as education and training for rural transformation. The discussion was geared towards identifying and finding a solution in the existing problems and ways to create holistic national standards for stakeholders in the field of sustainable rural development.

An expert group meeting was also held to gather potential partners and expected the researcher from the country along Mekong River to work together to get the outcomes in the form of developing a synthesis report under the theme on "Life-long learning for ethnic minority groups in the Greater Mekong Sub-region: Towards culture-responsive development at community learning centers". This meeting is expected to find out context and cultural-responsive policies and strategies as well as model practices of formal and non-formal education and learning for ethnic minorities.

The basic goal of the seminar is to enhance the capacity of key stakeholders, including government officials and education practitioners, and to effectively integrate the concept of education for rural transformation and learning villages into national development planning and programming as well as local practices.

The seminar aimed to (1) provide a platform for a diverse range of stakeholders to voice their observation, analysis and aspirations for sustainable socio-economic development and transformation in rural areas, and share good practices and experience regarding priorities and strategies to promote education and skills development in the context of rural transformation; (2) identify the needs in terms of capacity building for both trainers and trainees in the process of rural transformation and learning villages among the representatives from different countries and contexts; and (3) develop a country report on education for rural transformation, poverty alleviation and culture-responsive development at ethnic minority communities in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and beyond.

PRESENTATIONS

Several presentations were made throughout the course of the seminar from participants and invited presenters. The first session on day 1 was kick-started by Dr. Oliviera of UNESCO, Beijing, followed by country presentations in the morning and afternoon. Presenting their country reports were representatives from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam. Prof. Wang Li moderated the UNESCO presentation while the country presentations from Bangladesh, Cambodia and Lao PDR was moderated by Ms. Deng Yan, Vice Dean of the School of Economics and Management, Yunnan Normal University. In the afternoon session, a continuation of the country presentation from the countries of Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam which was moderated by Prof. Zhang Tiedao of Beijing Open University. Day two of the seminar was divided into two sessions under the theme “China’s Education and Society: Policies and Practices” and “Education and Learning: Looking from a Macro Perspective” for session 2 and session 3, respectively.

On day 3, the topic in session 4 was on Education and Learning: We are All in Action, while session 5 discussed on the Lifelong Learning for Ethnic Minority Groups in the Greater Mekong (GM) Sub-region followed by an expert group meeting and presentation of the exercise result from GM country participants.

Day 4 was the site visit to Chen Nong Ecological Park and Ji Guan Community. The last day of the seminar was a reflection of the week’s activities and followed by awarding of certificates and closing. The detailed program is in annex 1.

DAY ONE: 18 November 2017

The seminar started with the opening ceremony with welcome speeches from Prof. Jiang Yongwen, President of Yunnan Normal University, Prof. Li Yongzhong, and Vice President of Yunnan Agricultural University. Opening statements was given by Dr. Marielza Oliviera, Director and Representative of UNESCO Beijing Office and Prof. Wang Li, Deputy Director of INRULED. The ceremony was moderated by Prof. Li



L-R: Prof. Wang Li of UNESCO-INRULED, ____, Dr. Marielza Oliviera of UNESCO Beijing Office, ____, ____, and Prof. Li Jinsong of Yunnan Normal University.

Jinsong from the Yunnan Normal University.

Presentation from UNESCO PR China

SDG 4 and Education 2030: Contextualized Education and Training in Asian Countries

Dr. Marielza Oliviera, Director and Representative, UNESCO Beijing Office, PR China

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals was introduced with a focus on Goal 4 which represents “quality education”. The idea is to not leave behind anyone and aimed at producing a life-long education for all. Since education is key to rural transformation, some points are identified that makes for an effective implementation of Goal 4 i.e. to be a resilient community (1) there has to be opportunities, (2) skilled learning, and (3) empowerment of women -- young and old.

UNESCO’s programme platforms contribute to rural transformation which can be adapted and applied in any program for learning in terms of:

- Education program – Capacity building of teachers for rural transformation, adult literacy and non-formal education programmes in rural areas, quality of education programmes etc. in rural areas, training of youth and formers in CLCs, education for sustainable development and research, etc.
- Science programme – Man and Biosphere (MAB) as protected area could generate income from tourism and protect biodiversity, building capacity of water Sector, Science technology and innovation in rural areas, renewable energy etc.
- Culture programme – Create industries in rural areas, world heritage, intangible heritage for rural empowerment and income generation, partnership with tourism sectors.
- Communication and information programme – transistor radio, ICTs for Knowledge society, etc.



A clear strategic approach in terms of strengthening policies, plans, legislation and in the overall system has to be put in place. Even if there exist policies and legislation to support rural development, a clear commitment is necessary. In order to implement the change in the rural community, funding from external partners and other sources who could help in the development of educators is essential in imparting the knowledge to create a pro-active and progressive community.

Participants observations and open discussions:

Pakistan: Conflict areas

To address the problem in those areas that are not easily accessible such as in war torn or conflict areas, the solution could be sheltering the classes in the refugee camps and/or provide a floating classroom. This is only possible with the support of international organizations who can provide the necessary resources. Internet and radio is also important to get the periodic information through.

China: It's role in rural transformation

Government supported initiatives has generated successful CLC's. China is widely involved in community projects that helps in the transformation of rural areas locally and internationally, forging partnerships and bringing the resources and expertise. Capacity building also played a big role in creating a sustainable community.

COUNTRY REPORTS: POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Lack of education, poverty and the need to transform a community to become self-reliant without further damaging its customs and tradition is a big challenge. The lack of resources and the limited capacity to enhance their livelihood also factored in the failure to get the desired result. Capacity building and the development of effective policies can assist in the proper implementation in coping strategies and achieve the social and economic goals.

Generally, the concept is to define the need of the community, the extent of the government's support and other resources necessary to provide the needed assistance to the community, dedicated educators who can impart the methodologies and skills to make it interesting for the community to learn and adapt to the changes, etc.

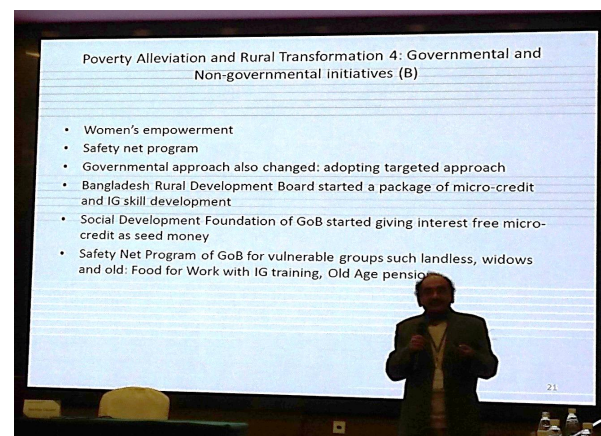
Under the theme on *Education for Rural Transformation: Status, Policies and Practices*, each country report provided the insights on how CLC's were able to cope and overcome these challenges. Lessons can be learned from the experience of others and the success stories can be taken as an example though it may or may not be applicable to some countries but it can be adjusted according to the context of each country's need and improve their systems and governance.

BANGLADESH

Dr. Monirul I Khan

*Professor, Department of Sociology,
University of Dhaka*

The presentation started with the introduction of Bangladesh with its policies, perspectives and components of rural areas and education system. With most families living on poverty lines or marginal incomes, the government needs to invest more and focus on education making it compulsory for everyone especially to the disadvantaged families. Existing policies needs to be changed. Most families in the



rural areas could not afford to send their children to school and it also is not a priority due to lack of resources. Child labor is also widespread and parents opt to send their children to work rather than to school in order to help support the family. These children are deprived of their education as the parent's themselves has the limited capacity to understand the importance of education. The LLC's in Bangladesh has not achieved much due to lack of qualified teachers, limited access to resources or materials, the education system needs to be changed as the averaged years for primary takes more years to finish, literacy problem is high. With these challenges, the government of Bangladesh needs to promote the program and make education one of their top priorities. There are a number of programs and initiatives designed to help the people obtain a good level of education regardless of gender or class.

There is, however, good progress in non-formal education. Since its inception in the 80's and concentrating in the rural areas, the government established the free CLC's providing a multi-lingual education that the community can relate to. Groups targeted were those landless households, slum dwellers, poor students whose parents could not afford the education of their children where majority are girls. The program was tailored according to their needs after consultation with the community.

With clear policies and a more defined programs under the GoBs ministries, the government can do more in the development and transformation of the rural areas. Improving the infrastructure can also increase the economic opportunities and social interaction in nearby villages.

CAMBODIA

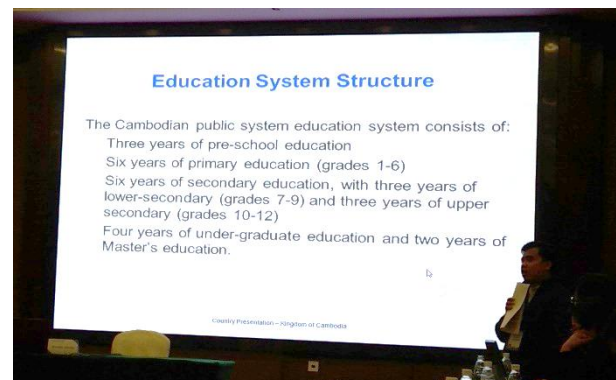
Dr. Mok Sarom

Deputy Director General, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

The presenter explained the basic demographic indicators and education system, policy for primary education, secondary and technical education in Cambodia. Based on the country's statistics, there is a need to increase enrollment in all school levels and reduce drop-out rates in high school and technical level, and to prioritize the poor and underprivileged families. To achieve this is to align with the SDG 2030 goals. There is also a need of modernization and industrialization in the rural areas in order to implement the strategies in reducing poverty.

The challenges faced are the lack of support for a better health care and a need to improve access to rural and urban water supply, sanitation and hygiene; and the lack of support for a better education and training skills—limited access to quality education in technical and vocational training.

The vision is that by 2030, there will be more upper-middle income families and to be a higher income country by 2050. Cambodia would then be transformed into a knowledge-based, peaceful and democratic society with increases regional and international



competitiveness. The overarching goal of education is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities according to the SDG 4 roadmap.

The policy priorities for 2030 is to provide access of both genders to quality ECCE and pre-primary education and to complete free and equitable and quality basic education with relevant and effective learning outcomes; complete the upper secondary school with relevant learning outcomes and a substantial number of youth who can have access to affordable and quality technical and vocational education; to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical and vocational education including university; increase life-long learning opportunities of all youths and adults; and improve the governance and management of education in all levels.

The framework for poverty reduction has been developed from 2014-2018 (RS III and NSDP), aimed at reducing poverty to 1% per year. Two multi sectoral strategies implemented in 2011 and 2014 was focused on poverty reduction of the poor and vulnerable, and food security and nutrition, respectively.

LAO PDR

Ms. Silinthone Sacklokhom
Interim Director of SEAMEO CED

She presented the information of rural area in Laos as an introduction. It has been noted that 75% of total population lived in the rural areas and the main livelihood in the country is agriculture. There has been a decrease in the labor force in this sector in recent years. She also explained about the education system in Laos including non-formal education system where it is developed to provide the education and training opportunities to all citizens especially the poor communities in remote areas.

II. Education System in Lao PDR

Formal Education

Table 6: Formal Education level in Lao PDR

Education	School/level	Grade from	Grade to	Age from	Age to	Years
Early childhood	Nursery school Kindergarten	-	-	3	5	3
Primary		1	5	6	10	5
Secondary	Lower secondary	6	9	11	13	3
	Upper secondary	10	12	14	17	4
Vocational	Technical/ vocational/training	After Gr 5, 9 and Gr 12		12	17	1-3
Higher	University	After Grade 12		18	21	4

The non-formal education system in Lao targeted three groups, such as children and young adults aged 6-14 who did not have an opportunity to attend primary school and are willing to follow the low literacy and education courses; adults aged 15-40 who are illiterate and are willing to continue their education; and youths and adult of age 15-24 who do not have definite vocations and are willing to follow basic training.

The legal framework for life-long learning or informal education will be submitted in June 2018. The non-informal education department has been trying to develop some policies and strategy including the expanding and developing CLCs as the centers for educational activities and information services to ensure equitable access to Non-informal education. The major achievements of NFE policies and strategies are that in 2015, Lao PDR declared the national eradication of illiteracy at primary education level and plan the eradication of illiteracy at the low secondary education level. More CLC's were also developed in 2016 for community learning and training. Teaching methods and training

syllabus for NFE have been developed, adapted and upgraded from the primary education to lower education level.

There are, however, challenges that prevents from reaching more communities such as lack of resources, dormitories for teachers, quality and quantity of educators, lack of information and promotion of the program, development of teaching materials, no proper place or classroom to conduct the training, remoteness of the community where road access or infrastructure is not yet developed, and management of community centers.

The Lao Government identified three levels of poverty and is determined based on cash income per household; accessibility, distance from school, health centers, and no access to road and water for a year for village; and a district with over 50% poor villages is considered poor. It has set up a goal of eradicating poverty by 2020. The ministry of Planning and Investment along with the National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication are the responsible agencies for monitoring and evaluation of the poverty in Laos.

The Prime Minister Office and National Committee Office situated at both province and districts level is also responsible for combating the poverty. Their main focus is the socio-economic development including education, health and agriculture in the poorest and poor districts. The challenge faced to poverty eradication and rural transformation are the remoteness and lack of infrastructure developments, threat of unexploded ordnance, low labor productivity and employment opportunities.

As a recommendation, there should be concrete policies in place to strengthen the community development; provide highly trained and skilled educators, better coordination between government and community and provide financial support to implement the changes in rural transformation.

MYANMAR

Dr. Soe Soe Myint

Professor and Head of Linguistics

Chair of YUFL Senate Committee for Research Projects Management

Yangon University of Foreign Languages

An overview of Myanmar, National Education Law, the implementation of NESP, the formation of National Education Policy Commission and its two communities was discussed. The policy aims to leave no students behind and the literacy campaign extension of alternative education for the whole year. To be effective, there should be more schools to accommodate the students, increase the number of teachers, employ only pre-trained educators and provide a budget to train unskilled workers. The National Standards Authority needs to cover all important jobs and that the NSSA to focus only for level 1 (semi-skilled workers) and level 2 (skilled workers). Ways to improve is by opening more schools, increasing the number teachers and recruit only pre-trained teachers.

The presenter also explained how poverty is measured in Myanmar. A household is determined to be poor if the annual income is less than US\$ 1200. To alleviate poverty is by expanding the technical vocational education and stablish skills recognition system and

implement SDG4. There should be several committees that can work together to combat poverty in Myanmar. There is less foreign investment, insufficient skilled workers and high school drop-out rate is very high.

The government needs to support programs that can transform the community to be self-reliant and also a better education system where young and old would be interested to pursue further education and help combat illiteracy, learn skills to reduce the unemployment rates and encourage the community to work together to be a sustainable community.

NEPAL

Mr. Dinesh Shrestha

Officiating Director of the Regional Education Directorate, Hetauda

The presentation of Mr. Shrestha began by discussing the national data and demographics. He explained the vocational and technical training programs in Nepal, aimed at providing certain professional and vocational skills to those unable to gain higher education or interested to gain certain skills for better professional career. The technical schools and training centers has been running vocational programs from 39 to 1,500 hours of short courses with topics on agriculture, engineering, health, tourism, management and computer. Likewise, the technical education programs—the CVET with affiliated schools offers various courses in health, diploma level or proficiency certificate in engineering and agriculture trades, while TSCL programs offered similar courses with addition of social mobilization and office management.

Nepal also has the alternative schooling programs namely; school outreach, flexible school; and open schooling. Non formal schooling is also provided to adults especially for women who could not continue their education earlier for various reasons. The non-formal scheme offers short-term courses and awards certificates equivalent to formal schooling.

There has been an increased in literacy in primary level in 2013 at 67.2% compared to 2011 which is 65.9%, with the highest literacy rates among males. As expected, there are more literate people in urban areas which is 83.1% compared from rural areas which is 63.9%. The Kayastha caste is 87.3% and Dom is 20%.

There are CLC programs that provides literacy and functional skills for ages 15-60 yrs. It also provides skill development and income generating trainings so that they can start their own micro-business as a group using local resources.

The policies and strategies in place to promote education is mandated by its right to get a compulsory and access to free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the state. People with disabilities and those financially incapable to support their own education will be entitled to a free higher education in accordance with the law. Provision is also extended for the development and empowerment of its citizens including the socially and culturally backward women and other minorities. Strengthening of NFEs by expanding flexible and open programming skills that can develop and generate income targeting the under privilege families. CLCs can expand skill oriented education that promotes employment and self-employment; skill oriented education, programs that

can eradicate illiteracy and enhance reading and learning habits among the young and adults.

Setting-up the CLC program has seen an increase in enrollment, reduce drop-out and repetition rate. Literacy has also improved. The increase in employment and people establishing their own businesses have helped reduced the percentage of people living in the poverty line.

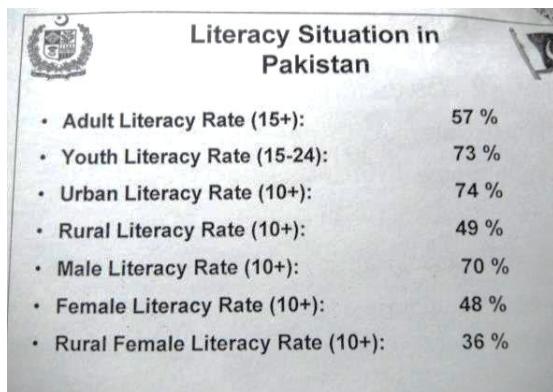
PAKISTAN

Mr. Iftikahr Ahmed Babar

Secretary-General of the Pakistan National Commission for UNSECO

The presentation started with geostrategic position and facts and ethnic composition of Pakistan. He then discussed the educational structure and policies, some cases as an example and challenges, etc.

Pakistan is pursuing their national standards to meet SGD 4 in 2030. Strategies that have to be implemented would be to invest on quality teachers to encourage more enrollees and decrease drop-outs. The school facilities and infrastructure is also important for easy access for students to want to go to school and provide a good environment for learning. There's a big gap of literacy in males compared to females especially in the rural areas. Also, there are more literate youths than adults. The gender equality and diversity should be increased, provide opportunity and empower women so that they can contribute to the development and sustainability of the community.



Literacy Situation in Pakistan	
• Adult Literacy Rate (15+):	57 %
• Youth Literacy Rate (15-24):	73 %
• Urban Literacy Rate (10+):	74 %
• Rural Literacy Rate (10+):	49 %
• Male Literacy Rate (10+):	70 %
• Female Literacy Rate (10+):	48 %
• Rural Female Literacy Rate (10+):	36 %

It is noted that Pakistan's vision encompasses a long term approach to development and poverty alleviation in terms of providing a national curriculum framework which is under process, skill programs that could shape the future of the youth, and incorporating ICT's in education system among others. A pro-active approach to non-formal education where basic education and training is provided to community schools, setting-up of governing institutions and training centers for quality

education.

External sources have also contributed to the increase in enrolment especially among girls in remote areas. Literacy programs for women in rural areas provides reading comprehensions in local language, composition of simple letter, numeracy skills up to 3 digits and use of literacy skills in their day to day life. There are also others programs that advocates capacity building in the community in order to identify their own priorities, resources needed, and solutions in ways to promote good governance, accountability, and participative representation.

In assessing the performance level between urban and rural areas, those living in progressive community (urban) is synonymous with getting better education, good

facilities and infrastructure, more advanced school materials, and quality teachers as opposed to the conditions in the rural areas where communication is poor, lack of proper sanitation and healthy environment, etc. so the social gap is more evident. Addressing the problem is a big challenge and poverty is such a multifaceted concept that the government needs to provide concrete measures in order to alleviate the poverty level in Pakistan.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is a framework of regional connectivity, will be aiding in the economic development in the country as communities living in remote areas will have access to social services, better education and modernization. With the industrialization of the rural areas, technical and vocational learning centers can focus in providing quality education at par with international standards, establishing centers of excellence in ICT in the provinces, increasing the number of trainees from 1% to 5% by 2025, organizing job fairs and national skills competitions twice a year, introducing reformed apprenticeship system, activating sector skills councils, training of instructors overseas, etc.

THAILAND

Mr. Yothin Sommanonont

Teacher (Senior Professional Level)

San Pa District Non-Formal and Informal Education Centre

Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education, Ministry of Education

Mr. Yothin presented the country information including the total area, number of province, population and minority groups in Thailand. He explained that the organization structure of Ministry of Education and the office of the non-formal and informal education is under MOE in Thailand. This department offers non-formal and informal education services and education opportunities for youth not over age of 15 and out of school youth and adults who have missed and lacked formal education. He presented the types and number of organizations and institutes under it. He also discussed the three types of CLCs under ONIE, the policies for all CLCs and programs such as literacy programs, equivalency program, life-skills training programs, income generating programs, and non-formal vocational training programs.

Moreover, he explained about the policies for CLCs in the villages which has the support from the community, the administrative structure of provincial ONIE and NIE district center and polices for rural transformation. All CLCs have common policy which is to promote the sub-districts centers for both in normal and highlands as a hub of educational opportunities for the locals. CLCs in the hill tribes are only supported by the community while Tambon or sub-districts CLCs gets the funding from the government.

He also discussed the projects initiated by HRH Princess Sirindhorn promoting the learning opportunities for the minorities in Mlabri located in Nan province and the preservation of their tradition, culture and way of life. The children are being taught basic Thai by phonics instruction and for adults, communication in Thai language to help them improve their quality of life. He concluded his report with the working process for teaching Thai languages for adult literacy using phonics instruction.

VIETNAM

Ms. Thi Thu Phuong Chu

Senior Officer of the National Commission for UNESCO of Vietnam

Ms. Chu presented the overview and basic information of Vietnam and explained the informal education which includes the CLCs, in-service training, symposium, self-study with instructors, E-learning, evening school and short courses. She presented a flow chart on poverty reduction involving various programs and agencies responsible for implementing the projects that benefits the poor, near poor, ethnic groups, people with disability, young and old women, coming from remote and mountainous areas.

Major achievements so far are the formation of 11,057 CLCs was established since 2000, cultural and sports center for the community and government supported capacity building activities/programs. The poverty index decreased sharply from 37% in 1998 to 8% in 2014. A good practice example was the program in Hoa Binh province where diversified farming transformed the planting and breeding of agricultural products and also planting high value crops.

Also, the SEAMEO Regional Centre for life-long Learning (LLL), established in 2013 signed an MoU with the government aimed at providing relevant programs and strategic alliance to educational practitioners and policy-makers towards improving LLL practice in Southeast Asia through research and development, capacity building and information exchange.

She pointed out the challenges such as the quantity and quality of CLCs, survey of people's needs, methods used in organizing survey activities, capacity of trainers, the lack of learning materials, diversity of learning programs, slow mobilization of local education and the sustainability of the CLCs. She also discussed the proposals for creating a good learning environment and the promotion of activities that can help the community to become pro-active.

She also presented how poverty was measured in her country. Moreover, she explained about the national master program and initiatives to fight poverty which gives provisions for agriculture and livestock, investment in irrigation systems, building modern toilets and health care centers, bio gas, provide a good environment, and technology transfer. MOET, MOARD, MOCST, MOLISA, MOH, DOETs and local units are the agencies responsible to combat poverty. The challenges in reducing poverty include the budget limitation, bad customs and the inaccessibility of remote areas. Finally, she proposed some options to solve these challenges and the proposals include allocation of budget, partner with international agencies who can help provide the funds needed to support the community programs, projects from NGOs, INGOs, widespread promotion in order to raise awareness and involvement of local units.

CHINA

Informal Education and Capacity Building for Rural Development in Yunnan Province

Prof. Zhao Yaqiao

College of Economics and Management, Yunnan Agricultural University

Prof. Yaqiao presented the dynamics for a successful rural transformation based on his personal experience through research. He explained that knowing what constitutes a community requires personal knowledge and that education is not limited to a classroom setting but actual exposure provides better understanding which could lead to proper implementation of programs and strategies according to the community's needs.

He has observed that informal education plays a vital role in rural development and key to this are the people--their family core values and teachings, the community's approach in preserving traditions, application of rules within the village which requires collective action from the community, the group's values and how they can sustain and protect the natural resources. Everyone has a role in rural transformation. It is what you can do and what not to do should be practiced. But in order to reflect the changes in the community, there has to be a key person whom the village can look up to that can command respect.

He suggested that there should be a "space" for informal education in the formal education system, and to understand and believe that informal education plays a positive role in rural development.

Participants observations and open discussions:

Bangladesh points out the policy priorities in the country. For education to be all inclusive. How to improve quality of education in a shrinking resources?

Pakistan on how to strike a balance—matching the policy with the existing infrastructure in the rural areas. NGOs cannot go to problem areas where parents want their children to be educated and trained. To provide education to both gender, young and old to thrive.

For Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam

- actions in promoting education in the country so that students become interested in going back to school.*
- ensure that those who do not have formal education can have ready access to basic education.*

Thailand – difficulty in convincing the students to study. Survey has to be done. To train teachers to understand behavioral changes. Promote life-long learning. Government support as well as external collaborations to acquire funding is important in order to implement the programs.

Laos – decentralize the activities in the village; shift between formal and non-formal education; district support in terms of assisting the community.

Pakistan on performance parameters – limited resources offered; quality of sources-where there is more money, wastage should be minimized, proper reporting and efficiency of the operations.

China – CLC should be more flexible and more structured; Teacher's should also be well

Participants observations and open discussions:

trained to attract the students to go back to school; diversified teaching methods; work closely with the community; meet the needs of the community.

Vietnam on poverty alleviation – training needed; teachers needs to be well equipped and knowledgeable to teach.

Bangladesh on China's country presentation – is a good example of an informed understanding on rural life; on economic development and the different perspective in reaching the goals; and emphasis on quality.

Moderator's summary of the country presentations:

Topics presented were all informative and the experiences shared provided a clearer understanding of the issues. Each country presented the status of rural development and challenges faced where common issues such as the education of the disadvantaged, more concerned in poverty alleviation, promotion of income generating activities, that the target groups needs are not met, that basic learning is not sufficient, for the government to take initiatives, lack of funding and infrastructure, cost of materials, etc.

Good practice for best implementation of projects—There were cases presented as an example but what is needed is more pilot projects and not just cases. Some presentations focus on family and the preservation of culture and traditions, but in order to break the poverty cycle, parents should encourage their children to go to school.

Factors to consider in overcoming the challenges:

- *community capacity building—planning for sustainable projects and for communities to work together*
- *cases—can it sustain? can it be expanded? can it be distributed? is it enough and justifiable?*
- *Theoretical challenge: what is needed for rural transformation? can it provide more income and opportunities to the community so that the youth/children opt out from migrating to the city and help support their family?*
- *The role of education: by training? through literacy programs? is it poverty reduction oriented?*

Issues:

- *what are the roles of industry in rural transformation? This has not been touched upon during the presentation.*
- *what are the new ways of learning? Suggestion varies from face-to-face, onsite, and use of ICT for non-formal learning...*
- *how to rearrange the peer group learning?*
- *capacity building → project planning → human resources for rural transformation.*

There has to be a common understanding in order to promote rural transformation.

DAY TWO: 19 November 2017

National Education Development: Focus More on Rural Areas and People (Policies, Practice & Experiences in China)

Prof. Wang Li, Deputy Director, UNESCO-INRULED

Prof. Li started his presentation with the information and review of the declaration in 1999 on Education for All: Meeting the Basic Learning Needs. The framework helped shape the implementation of programs which builds on the MDG strategies that include educational goals and other goals that complemented education and poverty eradication.

China has over 1 billion in population and majority of the disadvantaged people live in the rural areas and there is economic disparities among regions in both urban and rural areas. But with the government's introduction of the open door policy in 1979, more opportunities become available and programs (Spark, Prairie Fire, Two "Three Combination, and Sunshine among others) that targeted rural areas provided education and training in order to promote economic and social development. The establishment and promotion of centers in rural areas helped improve the education system but reform is needed in terms of maintaining rural primary and middle schools, salary and training of rural teachers to encouraged them to stay and teach, funding to support compulsory education, etc.

Setting the standards and prioritizing the goals necessary to transform the rural areas is the way to go forward.

Contextualizing Interactive Teacher Learning in China: A Review of 30 Years of Field Work (1987-2017)

Prof. Zhang Tiedao, Beijing Open University, PR China

The presentation of Prof. Zhang made an example of his experience while studying overseas and further research on how to be an effective educator and how teaching can impact the lives of students. He observed that an educator has to have the dedication to impart his knowledge, knows how to motivate and meet the children's needs in the classroom, the ability and competence in relaying the knowledge in order to effect the change, can provide a learning atmosphere to inspire the students, etc.

He cited some examples on how pre-schoolers viewed their teachers and what characteristics they thought makes for a good teacher. It appears that to them, teachers not only limit their involvement in the classroom but also on a personal basis, developing a teacher-student relationship provided positive implications academically and in their social development.

Basic learning needs ...

- to be able to survive,
- to develop their full capacities,
- to live and work in dignity,
- to participate fully in development,
- to improve the quality of their lives,
- to make informed decisions, and
- to continue the learning.

(World Declaration on Education For All, 1990)



The presentation also illustrated the importance of understanding and meeting the needs of the students and for teachers to be highly trained and skilled to be effective in the classroom and improve school learning.

Policies and Practices Review of Formal and Non-Formal Education for Ethnic Minority Groups in Yunnan Province, PR China

Prof. Li Jinsong, Yunnan Normal University

The presentation of Prof. Jinsong covered three topics which includes review of Yunnan's ethnic minority education, the review of Yunnan's non-formal education in the ethnic minority region, and blueprint of Yunnan's formal education development.

Yunnan's ethnic minority lives in the countryside. He informed of Yunnan's diverse culture, provided the statistics, and the number of ethnic students enrolled in schools. Yunnan also implemented the community learning center projects of multi-learning targeting women and children teaching basic education, capacity building for the community and young generation for sustainable development. Demo projects were undertaken that focused on urbanization of farms and how it can improve the villager's livelihood. The villagers were provided the farming skills, carry-out onsite visits to further acquire skills and knowledge to apply in business and farming methods, etc. Involvement of families (parents and children) helped in fostering a common understanding on how things are done in accordance to the CLC's purpose and objectives and in preserving their culture. The programs need government support as well as from external sources helped established. His last topic on Yunnan's formal education development "13th Five-year plan" which covers the period from 2015-2020, sees a projection of 85% increase of gross entrance rate for 3-year preschool education, 80.1% increase of gross entrance rate for high school and 45% gross entrance rate for higher education.

Participants observations and open discussions:

- *How to enhance the mindset of teachers?*
- *How respect is earned by teachers from the students?*
- *In China, teachers are well respected. Students have high regard of their teachers.*
- *Rural area teachers try to raise their status by having more experience as trainers and educators. They also need support i.e. improve their living conditions, a better working environment and learning facilities for children so that both teachers and students are motivated.*
- *Based on China's experience, how are the produce from the villagers marketed?*
- *in the community, there's a person assigned to dispose the products and handle the sales*
- *most of the farmers are entrepreneurs*
- *the government also participated*
- *set-up cooperatives*

Equitable Access to Lifelong Learning for Indigenous Peoples:

International Policies and Practices

Ms. Rika Yorozu, Program Specialist of Literacy and Basic Skills, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Germany

Ms. Yorozu introduced the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, its programs and activities. She discussed the SDGs and UN policy frameworks put in place that supports the provisions for the protection of the rights of the disadvantage people, that they be given equal rights and opportunity, and that education for all ages be made accessible. Lifelong learning is important to the indigenous communities especially the children and youth because they are the most vulnerable and need to acquire the knowledge and skills to survive. The framework supports the inclusive and equitable quality of education at all levels.

She also discussed the limited funding to support the education programs in many countries but despite the lack of resources, there has been an increase in CLCs which may be supported by external sources or the community. These CLCs should be accessible to all as it can help in the transformation of indigenous communities as the programs are more supportive of their needs, their socio-economic development, cultural and environmental preservation, health, etc.

She ended her presentation with the various publications and sites to learn further on the CLC programs in different regions.

SEAMEO and Priority#2: Addressing Barriers to Inclusion

Dr. Pattama Punthawangkul, Programme Officer, SEAMEO Secretariat, Thailand

Dr. Pattama's presentation details what SEAMEO is all about, the centers, their priority areas and programs and activities. SEAMEO and its centers are committed to provide quality and equity in education, regional cooperation on education, social development, poverty alleviation, information dissemination, etc. The topic on priority areas gives emphasis on nos. 2, 6 and 7 which addressed the barriers that hinders the inclusion and access to basic learning opportunities of all learners, promoting harmonization in higher education and research, and adopting a 21st century curriculum, respectively—part of a commitment of 2030 agenda that “no one will be left behind”, which SEAMEO will cover from 2015-2035. Among the number of programs implemented by SEAMEO is the Star Village program aimed to develop a community-based sustainable development model that reinforces community involvement program—a program to improve capacities of teachers, students, officials, parents, school learning facilities and more; another program that targets the remote areas is the SIERRA program that allows students to learn by accessing learning materials in form of video, audio and ICT in education where they can access offline site by using their smartphones or computer even without internet. Overall, SEAMEO's centers and partners carries-out all their programs and activities in Southeast Asia.

Dr. Pattama concluded the presentation with an observation that, even with the intent of providing quality education, training, facilities, etc., there is not enough scholarships offered and that parents have to find ways to supplement the cost.

Participants observations and open discussions:

- *On finding the qualified teachers to teach especially in the rural and remote areas*
- *in some places not enough teachers*
- *it is a challenge to motivate the teachers*
- *the government has to do surveys where most number of teachers are and topics taught*
- *shortage of teachers to work in mountainous areas*

- the ministry of education built the accommodation and facilities for teachers to stay but still, they are not interested to work or stay in remote areas

- On why less students go to school

- according to survey done (Thailand), due to laziness

Further study will be done to determine the cause why out of school youths are not interested to study...

Community Learning Centers for Rural Education in Vietnam: Good Practices, Impacts and Challenges

Mr. Mai Hong Quan, Deputy Manager of Research and Training, SEAMEO CELL, Vietnam

The presentation started with the information of the establishment of SEAMEO CELL which covers not just the Southeast Asia but also China with a vision of providing relevant programmes and strategic alliances to educational managers, practitioners and policy-makers towards improving LLL practice in Southeast Asia through, research and development, capacity building and information exchange. As a center, it is also focused on implementing the education agenda and priorities of SEAMEO in providing better education for everyone. The LLL program in Vietnam has produced a collection of national reports on successful LLL policies and practices from ten countries, a SEA LLL online portal, and compendium of country reports on good practice in lifelong learning in Southeast Asian countries

Mr. Mai also provided the statistics on the number of CLCs in Vietnam which totaled to 11,057 as of 2016. He also informed of the CLC program carried-out in Xuat Hoa with main activities on education and training, community development, and provided information and consultancy.

Participants observations and open discussions:

On the success rate of CLCs

- each centers have governing board*
- each centers have a set of criteria being followed*
- regular reporting of activities to governing board*

Has SEAMEO CELL done analytical research on CLCs?

- further research and study requires funding*

Has there been a case where a CLC is not performing well and was there a comparison between a good and bad CLCs?

- there are exemplary learning centers but the success rate is dependent on the community.

How many staff working in centers and is there support for the staff? Is there a motivation for working in centers?

- voluntary work done by the community*
- Government provides certificates*
- staff are given incentives*

Does SEAMEO CELL only provide skill development?

- a CLC is given an outline to help design their own courses. They can ask help/assistance from MOET
- cost is case to case... could be complimentary but depends on the board-- if the community needs support

Who supports CLCs? What are the provisions in Vietnam?

- the government provides initial budget for education and training

Summary:

The success of CLC is dependent on how it was established and implemented. Key is sharing of information and transparency. Challenges faced are the lack of experts, funding, and facilities.

DAY THREE: 20 November 2017

Ethnics and Education: Experiences in Lao PDR

Dr. Silinthone Sacklokham, Interim Director of SEAMEO CED, Thailand

The presentation started with the introduction of SEAMEO CED, and as a center, is also following on the education agenda and priorities of SEAMEO. The center is focused in providing a strong foundation of education to the community, enable the active involvement of people from the disadvantage groups so that they get the knowledge and skills to take initiatives, and to help build-up the capabilities of teachers and educators, community leaders and train them to be able to keep-up with the rapid social and economic change.

The study conducted in 2013 by MOES and AusAid on the education and schools of the ethnic minority groups in 56 districts in Laos was discussed. These districts were identified as educationally disadvantaged and have the most significant ethnic minority populations. The study illustrated the lack or absence of education and opportunities for the ethnic minorities compared to people living in the urban areas. There is also gender issues where less girls attending school because of demand and distribution of labor in either family or community. To some families, they do not see the importance of education and there is less support from parents also. Due to economic hardships, girls prefer to work in order to earn. The ethnic minorities also need their learning structured to suit their needs. Issues ranges from languages, lack of facilities, local materials and books, distance from the school that offers quality education, no sufficient financial capabilities of parents to support their children's education, etc. Community learning centers could not provide regular training sessions also due to lack of funding.

To promote the education in the ethnic minority group, an understanding of their culture and offering more opportunities to women, young students, and also their families is important in getting them motivated and interested in going to school.

Good Practice: Establishing Community Learning Center in Nong and Sepon District, Savannaketh Province

Ms. Dokkham Xomsihapanya, Project Managers for CLCs and Rural Education, DVV International Regional Office South and Southeast Asia

The presentation discussed on the program supported by DVV International in two districts of Savannaketh Province in Laos. The demo projects were implemented to these districts where majority of the population are the poor ethnic groups who live in extreme poverty and no available facilities for learning. The initiative was also supported by various agencies which has seen a coordination from village to district and to national level in terms of preparation management structure and construction. The construction of pilot CLCs was a community effort with some resources provided by the community (wood, sand and labor).

Start-up support was provided by the project. The center offers basic education and training to the community depending on their needs. They are taught farming for income generation, vocational skills (appliances repair), and livestock raising—a learning by doing approach.

Challenges faced are the limited or lack of competent staff who knows how to manage the centers from provincial and district levels, and at community level, issues from language and cultural barriers, lack of skills, management/personnel, shortage of teachers, lack of learning materials, curricula, lack of funding and external support, etc.—all important components of operating a successful learning center.

Overcoming these challenges requires training at all levels, provide non-formal education system and financial support in order to implement the necessary changes.

With the success of the pilot project, 24 CLCs were established and other development partners became interested in the concept. The government's awareness on the situation of the ethnic minorities and what was achieved in their community has resulted to a higher attention in the policy framework.

Participants observations and open discussions:

Regarding ownership of CLC, why is it not getting more funding?

- DVV only supports start-up and development cooperation and the community takes charge in the operations and other initiatives that could bring in some resources.
- CLC has to be income generating in order not to rely on external sources

How CLC maintains funding?

- DVV supports by training them how to plan for the future

Best practice in Bangladesh:

- the government support the center to become self-sustaining.

On life-long learning

- more budget to support the centers

Is there any analysis in the girl's education?

- girls tend to stay at home
- some girls marry young and have children so education is no longer a priority
- if parents have the resources, all children are sent to school
- boys are provided more education as future provider in the family

They can also join the non-formal education.

Lifelong Learning for Ethnic Minority Groups in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

Ms. Ge Yi for UNESCO Bangkok

The presentation discussed UNESCO's work plan in 2018 and the E9+ forum on education and rural development in April 2018. A background of the Mekong and the groups that comprised the ethnic minority community living in the area was also discussed. The indigenous people are often marginalized and in providing them the education, it is important to understand their cultural identity that they do not lose their heritage, traditional practices and own language, so that they have the sense of belongingness in their group. With no economic alternatives in the rural areas, they look to migrate to urban areas to find work and economic security. In improving their lives and prevent them from leaving their territories, coordination with relevant agencies and the local indigenous people is essential to avoid long term consequences. Providing them the education and learn fundamental skills, facilitate their development to be life-long learners could motivate them to be more pro-active. The establishment of formal and non-formal education, and learning centers that offers programs in capacity development to teach them skills to help them generate income. Access to information and other services should be made available to them also in order not to isolate them from mainstream society.

The outline and timeline in preparing the research project and expected outcomes was also discussed. A group work discussion followed by presentation participated by Mekong region participants was done in the afternoon.

Participants observations and open discussions:

Bangladesh on small ethnic group

- indigenous community lose their identity
- good students does not necessarily become good teachers so training the educators enhances their experience
- motivation and interest is good to get good teachers

Thailand's case on teacher selection

- normal hiring and open to everyone
- the teacher program requires new graduates to teach in the rural areas
- there's also rotation of staff
- establish a distance learning or correspondence courses
- promote the education courses in school so that incoming students would want to pursue to become teachers

Pakistan, language is not an issue for students. Priority should be on the teachers—conduct teacher's training and development to enhance their capability as educators

On social constraints – boys are required to work while girls are restricted

On monitoring issues – there's budget limitation

Vietnam on languages and access to information

- textbook/ materials written in ethnic languages
- TV channels for the ethnic minorities
- videos to teach language to children
- teacher's language proficiency – should be specialized in one language

Participants observations and open discussions:

Nepal on language barrier

- *if language is preserved to the ethnic minority only, it will be difficult to merge with others*
- *some ethnic groups prefer English language*
- *English language included in curriculum*

China

- *Chinese language is bilingual and multilingual in context*
- *textbooks translated into different languages*
- *more flexibility and diversity in China*
- *actual experience, exchange of ideas, develop the existing resources, and create profit*
- *preservation of cultural ethnicity*

Cambodia

- *multilingual system of learning is in primary school or bridging program only as the main language is Khmer.*
- *teacher policy implementation to improve quality of teachers*
- *uphold teacher career standard*
- *school-based management reform helped improved the school system*
- *promotion of education to attract students and for teachers to be interested to teach in rural areas*

Laos – incorporate lifelong learning in curriculum

Ms. Rica – working conditions of teachers is important...financing mechanism for teacher development



Field Visit to Chen Nong Ecological Park

The Chen Nong Ecological Park was established in 2009 by Chen Nong Enterprise Group. It is 16 kilometers from the municipal government and near the transformation hub. The park was initially founded in 1992 and has since updated its technology and offers complete facilities. With an area of 200 thousand Mu, it has created many vegetable bases and helped 150 thousand households venture into commercial farming.

Located in Chen Nong Hong New District, the park has beautiful scenery and it brings leisure farming ventures. As the provincial-level demonstration enterprises, it is designated by the government to be the foreign reception site. Visitors can enjoy sight-seeing, obtaining scientific knowledge, eating delicious food, experiencing farming, and doing exercises. The park offers accommodation, visits to agricultural and fruit museums, conferences facilities, playing cards, children entertainment planting and/or picking vegetables, horse riding, and making flower cookies.



Field visit to Ji Guan Community

In 2007, Ji Guan Village was transformed into Ji Guan Community as a result of taking part in the government's program of "changing villages to communities". The community has an area of 1.5 square kilometers with 703 households and more than 3,160 in population.

In the beginning, the villager's source of income was from agricultural produce but as they lack the land to farm, it only generated low income. But in recent years, under the support of the Party and municipal government as well as the program of integration of urban and rural areas, Ji Guan Village has fully developed into a modern community. The living and thinking patterns of the residents have changed a lot and their living standards has been raised. With the modernization of Ji Guan Community, it now provides amenities for recreation, library, computer facility, primary schools, and a fully functioning main office that oversees the community's business operations.



The community followed specific measures such as uphold the leadership of the Communist Party of China; stick to the principle of serving the people and improve their living conditions (e.g., bring about innovative programs and help people increase incomes, establish the security system, and provide opportunities); enriched cultural and spiritual life; make the budget and expenditure transparent; and implement democratic autonomy i.e. by letting people manage and govern themselves.

Follow-up by UNESCO INRULED

Following the Mekong discussion, the agreed timeline for the project is in April 2018.

- submit the first draft version of the country report by 15 March 2018
- attend the expert group meeting in April 2018
- revision of draft report in light of the feedback – three weeks after the group meeting.

Lessons learned

- The importance of Sustain Development Goals (SDGs) especially the 4th SDG on education and how each country has formulated their national policies to be in line with the SDGs “No one will be left behind” in terms of equal access to education.
- All participating countries mentioned the importance of formal and non-formal education, particularly long-life learning centers (LCL).
- Country’s information data such as poverty index, education system, namely: formal and non-formal educations.
- China’s rural transformation:
 - Rural infrastructure policy support which is very supportive for community development
 - Educational support, particularly life-long learning for rural people including ethnic groups in Yunnan Province
 - China’s model in respecting the culture and traditions of ethnic groups in Yunnan Province
 - Three components to achieve the rural transformation, namely: strong support from the Government, particularly national policies, Strong commitment of heads of CLCs and responsibilities of community members to make a change. For instance, the Ji Guan Community that before 2009 this community was known as the slum of waste. Today, the livelihood of community members has improved significantly and was transformed into a modern community

Gaps of the seminar

- The seminar should invite participants from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and Ministry of Industry and Trade so that the seminar will have comprehensive information about rural transformation and development.
- There should be more field visits in rural areas in order to have in-depth studies about how China has achieved its rural transformation.