

Identification of Nonformal Education Learners in Urban Areas: Their Nature, Characteristics, Attitudes and Preferences

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I. Pursuing the Initiative to Identify the NFE Learners in Urban Areas

The urban population uniquely and collectively stands out as one which is highly mobile and dynamic as it is highly influenced by fast technological change and competitive small to large-scale economies.

The initiative to identify and describe the nonformal education learners in urban areas would require one to understand and consider these changes and dynamics. The NFE learner's internal and external environments are multi-faceted and elements of which are inter-woven.

To best understand the urban learner would therefore need understanding his/her context as this greatly determine the content and process with which NFE would have to be delivered.

Thus, certain indicators within the weave have to be identified first to enable one to describe the urban dweller's nature and characteristics. These indicators are classified under socio-cultural, economic, institutional and political and ecological factors. The following are some of the more relevant indicators needed in identifying the urban NFE learner:

Contextual factors:

1. Socio-cultural

- * migration trends (rural to urban)
- * population growth rate (in -migration and

natural growth)

- * family or household size
- * access to basic services (esp. land and housing tenure, opportunities for education, access to water and health care)
- * dynamics of family and social units (e.g., female-headed households)
- * literacy rate (including Educational attainment of household head)
- * incidence of family/ domestic violence (e.g., incest, physical abuse)
- * cultural norms and beliefs

2. Economic

- * economic activities (informal sector)
- * opportunities for employment (e.g., unemployment and underemployment rate)
- * urban poverty incidence (household income level)
- * type and status of employment of household head

3. Institutional and Political

- * national and local government thrusts and policies (budgetary allocation and area/ program priority preferences for funds distribution, etc.)
- * presence of service agencies; and linkages between and among government, NGO's and communities
- * peace and order situation (crime rate)
- * community participation in governance

4. Environment/Ecological

- * conditions of the nature/physical environment (level of pollution)
- * presence of waste management facilities (garbage and human waste disposal

facilities)

* presence of natural resources

Fig. 1: The CONTEXT MIX of the NFE

Learner

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II. Approaches to Identifying the Urban NFE Learner

To be able to get close to the urban groups who may need and want to access and benefit from NFE opportunities, one (the researcher) should apply community-based of participatory approaches. The processes or the means in knowing one potential learner should be regarded as equally important as the desired end. This scheme needs enough quality time.

For rapid identification and assessment, however, researchers would need the assistance of key leaders and organizers of the community, of the group/sector or in the target area. Depending on the predicted number, researchers may organize focus groups (i.e., of not more than 5) scheduled on different days or time (e.g., weekends or evenings).

The methodology may be staged or phased: (1st) review of secondary data; (2nd) community visit or observations giving attention to knowing the community-or group-recognized leaders from whom relevant information may be acquired; (3rd) interview with selected potential learners as initially identified by key informants and leaders; and/or creative, informal group discussions (3-5 persons) in not more than an hour; and/or field questionnaire or use checklist; (4th) analyze and synthesize data; and (5th) conduct feedback sessions with potential target groups/individuals interviewed earlier.

SUGGESTED PROCESS FLOW CHART for IDENTIFYING NFE LEARNERS

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III. Guidelines for Identifying and Assessing Learning Needs

The sample indicators (section I. A.) may be used to formulate the guide questions to provide data on the basic context of the NFE learner. Indicators for assessing the learning "needs" may revolve around "life skills". However, the concept of "needs" must be able to go beyond its commonly known meaning. The "learning need" must approximate the "learning RIGHT" of the individual to live-able to survive decently, secured, assured of growth and development, able to participate and contribute to the welfare and development of his/ her own family, community, or group.

The NFE indicators may be developed based on the framework that incorporates SURVIVAL, DEVELOPMENT, PROTECTION and PARTICIPATION; i.e., patterned after UNICEF's framework for the Country Programme for Children.

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NFE focus may depend, of course, on what each group think and express as their right/ need. For instance, the poorest or lowest-income groups may prefer NFE skills to ensure survival (e.g., health, food and shelter). The low-income groups may prefer development of their skills to further enhance their livelihood to attain normal standards of living. The average-income group may pursue continuing education to be able to increase their productivity and social standing.

Experience shows, however, that high-priority NFE needs revolve around how best the group can survive and enhance

their livelihood to be able to enjoy basic material amenities in life. NFE for ensuring protection and participation took second priority for most low-income groups.

IV. Trends and Challenges as Basic Considerations in Understanding the Context of the Urban Dweller

As mentioned in Section I, there is a need to know the urban dweller who may want and need an opportunity for NFE. The urban world as the bigger environment of the potential NFE learners must be understood as well.

Historical trends and probable future urban scenarios must be considered in the light of ever active competitive forces especially technology, politics and governance that significantly influence the value systems and norms of people. The following sections are case facts on urbanization and urban poverty in Asia.

Common urbanization trends especially in the developing countries of Asia are characterized by relatively high population density, population growth rate higher than national figures, multitude of various commercial and industrial establishments, presence of social amenities, slums and squatter colonies, street children, relatively high pollution, dense transportation and communication infrastructures and facilities, and relatively large number of educational institutions.

A. Land Use Plan and Zoning

Generally, most urban areas do not have a reasonably acceptable land use and zoning plan. Manifestations of such inadequacy include (1) mix of residential, commercial and industrial infrastructures as well as educational facilities often located side by side each other; (2) traffic congestion in commercial centers; (3) uneven distribution of amenity facilities (e.g., shopping malls).

B. Land Tenure and housing

There is gravity of the housing situation in Asia. In urban Asia, the average number of persons per room is 2.17 and nearly one-third of all dwelling have 3-4 persons per room. In more common cases, the urban poor live on pavements, esteros or near waste water beds, under transmission lines, and in crowded slum and squatter colonies.

The estimated urban poor population in slums and squatter settlements generally ranges from 30%-50%. The National Capital Region of the Philippines, for instance, has 44% (1990).

Land is still the top concern of most urban dwellers. Land prices have escalated so fast, narrowing down the right of the urban poor to access to land.

C. Transport and Traffic/ Road Management

In most developing Asian countries, transport and traffic have turned as twin problems influencing the urban poor to decide to relocate in places adjacent to areas of work. Non-air-conditioned public utility vehicles are the common transport of the poor. These transport facilities, however, are concentrated in the trading and commercial centers. Low-income communities do not have adequate access to these public transportation facilities. Standard buses are not allowed to operate in inner urban areas.

D. Water and Sanitation

Water is considered as the most essential to individual, family and community welfare. However, it is one need and right that the urban poor are not able to provide for themselves, especially those in squatter areas. The difficult task of accessing water in the urban poor areas is left mostly to the women and children.

Poor sanitation is experienced in heavily populated urban areas including slums and squatter settlements. Majority of Asian

urban poor areas lack sewage service or waste management facilities. Many have communal human waste and other solid disposal facilities.

Some countries like the Philippines, Korea, and Thailand, among others, have gradually resorted to waste recycling as one resource for the heavy volume of solid wastes.

Case studies have shown that garbage sorting are often done manually by children, such as in the case of Payatas and the former Smoky Mountain of Metro Manila.

E. Urban Population Growth

By the turn of the century, urban population in Asia is expected to range from 30%-50% of the country's population. For instance:

Bangladesh (30%), PROC (35%), Indonesia (36%), and Philippines (60%)

Urban population growth rate has been greatly influenced by rural to urban migration. Rural people have the common perception that urban areas offer job opportunities and security. Urban amenities also attract rural folks to the cities and urban towns.

V. The Urban Poor as Participants in NFE Initiatives

Developing East and Southeast Asian urban poor are in the midst of problems alongside urbanization such as: congestion, growing slum and squatter settlements, contaminated water, poor sanitation, unsafe shelter, high crime rate and additional social problems including the growing number of street children and increasing female-headed low-income families.

The urban poor is considered to be a vulnerable group whose rights for survival, development, protection and participation as a member of society must be protected and promoted.

Studies have shown that the urban poor portray attitudes and behaviour that are far too different from their rural counterpart in terms of coping skills for survival. This group, being highly mobile is virtually present in all areas where commerce and trade abound. Its "street smart" approach to coping with life's problems has proven to be beneficial as far as survival is concerned.

The following sections describe the Philippines' urban poor and of special concern are the Philippines' street children.

Philippines Experience:

The Philippines urban poor population as of 1990 was approximately 14 million or roughly 50% of the total urban population and 20% of the total population. Metro Manila has the largest urban poor population of 3.4 million.

The Philippines Social Reform Agenda reports a decrease by 300,000 in the number of urban poor households from 1991 to 1994.

A. General Characteristics, Attitudes and/or Preferences:

1. Large family size and many are female-headed
2. No permanent shelter or none at all: live in slum and squatter settlements, along esteros, under transmission line, under flyovers and bridges, in the streets and other infrastructures, and in the parks.
3. Daily wage earner and some beg for survival
4. Inadequate access to water and sanitation facilities
5. Poor health (as of 1995 across cities: IMR from less than 40 to as high as 96)
6. Growing number of elementary and high school drop-outs (e.g., 34% in 1980 to 44% in 1990). Drop-outs are forced to work and mostly go to the streets.
7. Mostly from the poorer regions of the country such as Regions VIII and V.
8. Highly mobile (adjust to place of work or area where income opportunities are

- problems)
9. Active and “street smart” (than rural counterpart, generally considered to be so by development workers)

*workplace is the street but home is still family
 *dependent by nature
 *may conceal abuse

B. NFE Needs (based on existing studies)

1. Of Filipino Street Children

The number of Filipino street children is approximately 200,000 and 75,000 of whom are in Metro Manila. (1990)

Reasons these children take to the streets:

- a. family problems, neglected or abandoned by either for the parents
- b. search for food and income
- c. peer pressure (to join friends with similar problems)
- d. repeated physical and sexual abuse by family member(s)
- e. want independence (independent by nature)

Manila case: (1996, Children at Risk, ABF)

- a. three groups of Manila street children
 - i. “liberty” children (children who stay on the street by choice)
 - * about 13,000 and mostly male
 - * most commonly physically abused
 - * independent by nature
 - *livelihood dependent on presence in heavy-traffic areas
 - *shop but ultimately refuse life in drop-in centers (boys try out nearly twice as many sites)
 - *children fight against control
 - *emotional links to streets
 - *desire for substance inhalants
 - ii. “compromised” children (children still living with families who are repeatedly abused and largely invisible to development workers)
 - *about 20,000 (virtual estimate)
 - *mostly female
 - *incest is the predominant form of abuse

- iii. street children still living with families but helping in livelihood about 40,000-60,000

b. types of services or assistance offered by NGOs to the street children (1996, ABF, sample size was 37 NGOs)

- i. temporary shelter (67%)
- ii. education (65%)
- iii. health and nutrition (59%)
- iv. income generation (47%)
- v. social activities (38%)
- vi. abuse identification (20%)

c. approach and thrust of NFE assistance
 *may be classified according to nature of groups

for “liberty” children

- i. street-based approach
- ii. need street educators and street health workers
- iii. implement street-based health care, legal advise, first aid, referrals, and counseling
- iv. training in peaceful dispute resolution
- v. livelihood skills training for children deciding not to return to schools

for “compromised” children

- i. community-based approach
- ii. education on physical and sexual abuse
- iii. legal advise and counseling
- iv. referrals
- v. preparing willing children for schools
- vi. community-based livelihood skills training for those who refuse to return to schools; training are extended to family members
- vii. protection from social workers

or police

Aspirations (of a sample of 120 street children from MM, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Baguio and Davao; KPPF, 199)

- a. education (55% want to complete a degree such as medicine, physical education or sports, police work, engineering, teaching, social work and entertainment work)
- b. financial success (around 40% wanted to be rich)
 - i. for the family
 - ii. for self
 - iii. to get back at apathetic kins or neighbors
 - iv. for charity
- c. renewed life
(to lead a decent life, reunite with family, get married and raise a family)

Felt and expressed needs (as reported by KPPF)

- a. food
- b. comfortable and secure shelter for sleep
- c. parental love care (esp. those from broken families)
- d. education (particularly, by street youth)
- e. skills enhancement for livelihood (also by street youth)

2. Of Other Urban Dwellers

Urban dwellers especially the adults (e.g., the potential NFE learner) are usually the migrants from the rural areas. These migrants, as mentioned earlier, have the notion that urban area offer great opportunities for improving life conditions.

The migrant workers generally belong to the urban poor sector - those whose livelihood activities are highly temporary and from which derived income fall below the poverty line (i.e., set by the government).

Migrant workers in the Philippines' urban areas are usually the laborers, construction and factory workers, house helpers and other daily wage earners, and micro-scale traders

in the informal sector or underground economy, among others.

Migrant workers usually live in slum and squatter colonies located more often than not along railroad tracks, esteros, under transmission lines or vacant lots near the roads and public highways.

Aspirations

Studies show that this group aspires for (1st) better and permanent jobs - thus, to increase income to be able to SURVIVE: acquire adequate and nutritious food, secure tenure of land/ housing, and adequate clothing and essential health care; (2nd) continuing training to further improve livelihood skills and schooling of children or members of family, thus to ensure continuing self and family DEVELOPMENT; (3rd) wholesome family relations and community relations to be able to contribute and PARTICIPATE in the development of immediate environment.

The urban dweller like any other citizen aspire for PROTECTION of human rights for his/ her own survival, to continue to live in a peaceful environment and able to contribute to nation building without fear for his/ her and family's lives.

Livelihood skills training to increase productivity

The urban poor including the migrant workers would usually avail of training programmes in developing livelihood skills preferably in areas that can be self of family-managed such as auto-mechanics, electrical and electronics technician course, food processing, establishing and managing community consumer stores, and handicrafts (needle, paper and woodwork).

Urban poor community projects in the past have dealt with producing export handicraft products: e.g., decorations, toys and toy parts, and garments, which were normally sub-contracted by local exporters.

Other Training Needed

NGOs have been capacitating the urban poor in other areas such as, but not limited to the following:

- a. land acquisition through the Community Mortgage Program and other socialized land acquisition schemes
- b. para-legal services
- c. appropriate shelter technology
- d. co-operatism
- e. strengthening community organization
- f. leadership skills development
- g. project management
- h. financial management
- i. product and service marketing
- j. primary health care (to include first aid)
- k. advocacy and lobbying
- l. conflict resolution and management
- m. construction of basic community infrastructure facilities
- n. trading
- o. restaurant management

3 Women

In the Philippines, a number of laws have been passed to protect girls and women from various forms of violence including sexual harassment, abuse and violence as well as laws that provide equal opportunities in education and work.

Training that are being made accessible to women cover most of the areas mentioned in #2. Others cover gender development and programmes to enhance women's role, status and participation in local and national development.

There are still a lot of Filipino women and girls being physically and sexually abused, harassed and exploited but such situation is less getting serious as the aggressive and increasing movements to protect and develop the Filipino women are slowly gaining ground. The Filipino women, especially those in the urban areas, are fast becoming more aware of their rights.

Nowadays, more and more abused women are coming out in the open, reporting and seeking justice for themselves. Notably, too,

there are more women than ever before who are occupying leadership roles in various private and public agencies including the legislative, executive and judiciary bodies of the government.

Therefore, because of the positive outcomes of women protection and development initiatives, training and education of girls and women should continue to revolve to particularly around protection and promotion of women's basic rights; and enhancement of their role and participation in nation building through governance and leadership skills development, and economic productivity improvement initiatives.