

20th Regional Workshop on Capacity Building of NFE Facilitators in Asia and the Pacific
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Capacity building of Non-formal Adult Education Facilitators: A summary of experiences from national training workshops

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Introduction

Since 1998, UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) has supported member states in the region to carry out 'Community Learning Centres' (CLCs) for generating grassroots based interest and participation in literacy, basic education and continuing education activities with particular focus on disadvantaged population groups.

Community participation and ownership have been seen as the key to the successful implementation of CLCs, however it is not realistic to assume that everything will run well once the community people have ownership and they are given initial project funds and framework. Through the implementation of CLCs, it has been found that development of human and material resources is also important to sustain the CLCs and organize activities effectively to respond to the needs in the community.

This paper presents a summary of implementation of national workshops on capacity building of NFE personnel focusing how the training activities were carried out using resource materials developed by APPEAL and Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) in cooperation with experts in the region. Also, the outputs and feedbacks from the workshops including ideas for follow up at the grassroots levels are summarized. A summary of country activities in a table form is attached as Annex 1.

1. The Project on Capacity Building of NFE Personnel

APPEAL launched in 1999 the project on capacity building and resource development for strengthening implementation of literacy and continuing education programmes. The main funding source has been the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for APPEAL. The overall objective of the project has been to strengthen Community Learning Centres through capacity building of NFE personnel including development of training manuals and materials as well as dissemination of experience through the existing network of APPEAL. The handbooks so far developed are:

- Materials development and Clipart in cooperation with ACCU
- NFE Facilitators

- Planning and management of CLCs
- Continuing Education

Using the above handbooks as resource materials, training programmes have been carried out during 2001 to 2002 at the regional, sub-regional and national levels.

In November 2001, ACCU and APPEAL organized the Regional Workshop on the Capacity Building for Trainers of CLC Facilitators in Rural Areas of the Asia-Pacific Region in Vietnam. The participants were from Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. There were two resource persons from Bangladesh and India. The workshop focused on the training of utilization of two handbooks; 1) Non-formal Adult Education Facilitators, 2) Adult Learning Materials Development at Community level and Literacy Clip Art.

ACCU, in cooperation with UNESCO, organized in February 2002 a capacity building workshop for NFE personnel from Literacy Resource Centres (LRC) to provide orientations and training using the two handbooks.

In follow-up to the above regional workshops, national workshops on capacity building have been organized in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR¹, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Uzbekistan and Vietnam as of November 2002². Iran is planning to organize the workshop before the end of 2002.

¹ The workshop in Lao PDR had two phases: one was on NFE facilitators (7 days) and the other was on Material development (7 days).

² The workshops in Nepal and Vietnam were organized in November 2002, the reports on which didn't reach APPEAL for the preparation of this synthesis paper.

2. Implementation of capacity building of facilitators

An overall implementation of the national workshops is summarized below regarding main focus, duration & venue, organizers, participants and external support:

Main focus of the national workshops

The implementation of the national workshops using the handbooks may be categorized into two: 1) Study and analysis of the handbooks, which includes Bhutan, Lao PDR (NFE Facilitator), Mongolia and the Philippines and, 2) Demonstration of training using the handbooks which includes Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR (Material development), Myanmar and PNG. Myanmar expanded the coverage including CLCs and continuing education. While the first group tried to validate the quality and relevance of the handbooks, the second group tried out the handbooks through the actual training activities to see the quality and relevance as well as the practicality and usefulness. Uzbekistan reported that the workshop combined the study of handbooks and some demonstrations of practical work and techniques.

Venue and duration

Most countries organized the workshop in an institution of a city, inviting participants from other part of the country. Since the workshops were national ones, this institution based training is the common choice for the countries. In the case of PNG, the workshop was organized at one of the CLC project sites inviting participants from both the local project sites and other provinces. The duration of the workshop was 3 days for the countries that focused on the study, which seems adequate time to study and analyze the handbooks. The workshops with demonstrations of training were conducted in 5 to 7 days in most countries and 11 days in PNG including field visits. Since this type of workshops require some time to develop materials and to demonstrate lessons, most countries reported that the time was not enough.

The organizer and participants

All the national workshops reported so far were conducted by government organizations. The workshops in Bangladesh and Nepal were conducted by NGOs in cooperation with the government. Participants were mainly from provincial/district levels working with NFE programmes. Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar and PNG had around 20 participants while Bhutan, Philippines and Uzbekistan had 40 – 50 participants. In some countries, there were participants from NGOs and UN agencies. LRCs played active role of the national level activities as the organizer in the case of Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar and Nepal. In the case of the Philippines, an LRC specialist served as one of the resource persons.

External support to the workshop

UNESCO and ACCU provided financial support of US\$ 4,000 – 7,000 for organizing the national workshop except Bhutan that organized the workshop as part of the annual

training of NFE personnel under the regular budget of the government. Lao PDR received assistance from Kashiwa UNESCO Club, Japan, to adapt and organize a workshop on Materials Handbook. PNG reported that YWCA covered travel costs of their participants.

In terms of technical support, UNESCO arranged the services of international resource persons to Cambodia and Myanmar to assist in organizing the workshop. APPEAL staff also participated in the workshops in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam.

3. Content, approaches and immediate feedback of training

This section provides substantive part of the national workshops highlighting handbook adaptations and what and how the workshop sessions were conducted. Immediate feedback from the workshop is also summarized.

Adaptation of the materials

Bhutan and the Philippines used the original English version of the handbooks since the participants understood English (At the same time, Filipino participants recommended that the NFE HB be translated into the local language for the grassroots level personnel). Other countries translated into their own language and adapted the handbook to the local context, prior to the workshop. Accordingly, draft national versions were prepared in each country to be tried out during the workshop. With additional funding support from ACCU, Clipart in CD-Rom has been adapted in China, India and Nepal while some other countries adapted the booklet only. Iran is currently adapting the video on NFE facilitators using a copy of the master tape which is available with APPEAL.

Most countries reported about the handbooks positively, e.g. 'comprehensive, useful and simple to understand' (Bhutan), 'very useful for NFE and CLC personnel' (Philippines).

Lao PDR and Nepal reported that the handbooks are too difficult for the facilitators to understand since most of them are part time personnel with little education background and experiences. Accordingly, simplified versions of the handbooks are currently being developed in Lao PDR.

There were several suggestions for improvement. The workshop in Myanmar found that methods on accessing local needs and decision making process in the group need to be included. PNG suggested that the Handbooks should include more information such as background of the sections, objectives/expected outcomes and assessment tasks at the end. These are important component particularly when the handbooks are used for training programmes. Contextualizing the handbooks by using the local names and stories was also suggested by most countries.

Approaches of the training

The main approaches used during the training may also be summarized in the two categories discussed in the overall implementation: one is study & analysis of the handbook; and, the other is demonstration through actual sessions.

1) Workshops on study and analysis of the handbooks

Under this category, most countries used ‘jigsaw’ type of techniques that combined individual study of the materials, group discussions and sharing the knowledge obtained from the study and discussions. This resource interdependence among participants is common to efficiently go through heavy volumes of handbooks. As the outputs of the workshop, participants made specific suggestions for adaptation and use of the handbooks.

The workshop in **Bhutan** organized the sessions in 6 groups using ‘key word’ approach. In this approach, each group studied one particular Module of the handbook and identified key words and translated them into the local language. The key words and results of analysis were shared by all the groups. The group also prepared questions to ask one of other groups to clarify the content of their Module. This approach was found to be very useful to understand the content of the handbook through a lot of interactions between the groups.

Uzbekistan reported that ‘opposition groups work’ was a very innovative and effective approach to understand the handbook. In this approach, one group is assigned to study one particular module and make a presentation on it while another group makes critical remarks on the presentation. It was reported that this dialogue enables to deepen the understanding of the content of the handbook.

Lao PDR (on NFE HB), Mongolia and the Philippines used presentations of resource persons to go through the content, which was followed by open forum for Q & A and discussions or group work to further study the content.

2) Workshops on demonstration of handbooks

Most countries which demonstrated the handbook through actual training activities, used a modified version of the workshop structure of the one used in the Hanoi regional workshop organized by ACCU and APPEAL. A common structure of the workshop is as follows:

1. Needs assessment in communities through field visits using the NP method³;
2. Preparing lesson plans using the findings from the needs assessment;
3. Preparing curricular units (specifications of materials) and material development;
4. Preparing assessment tools; and,
5. Demonstration of lesson plans in the class, then in the field.

³ New Participatory Methods (introduced in pp. 26-28, Chapter 2 of Material Development Handbook)

Cambodia, Lao PDR (on Material HB) and Myanmar followed the above structure. While the Hanoi regional workshop was 10 days long, the above national workshops were for 7 days except PNG that organized an 11 day workshop. The main difference between the Hanoi regional workshop and national workshops was that there is no need to translate the materials developed during the workshop into the local language for trying out in the community except PNG that has diverse languages. It was responded by most countries that the time was not enough to fully demonstrate the sessions of the workshop.

Most approaches used in these workshops are similar to the ones in Hanoi regional workshop, i.e. presentations, group discussions, three stations, brainstorming, NP method, role plays, etc. **Myanmar** reported that the demonstration of teaching using participatory approaches was the most successful method. **PNG** emphasized the usefulness of a whole language approach as well as the NP method.

The workshop in **Bangladesh** was organized in two parts: one is on material production in relatively large groups; and the other is on lesson plan preparation and demonstration by pairs. This approach allowed the training closer to the real situation i.e. the material production using Clipart is done by group work, while lesson is prepared and implemented individually.

One new thing for the national workshops was the use of videos. Since the video on NFE facilitators became available in early 2002, the workshops organized mid 2002 and after, used this video package for providing visual images as well as using it as discussion materials.

Lao PDR and Uzbekistan reported that use of computer is not easy for the participants that prevented them from using Clip Art as part of the workshop activities. In the case of PNG, due to lack of funding and infrastructure, there were following constraints: no use of video or computer for presentations, not enough photo copies or no professional artists.

4. Impact of training workshop

APPEAL asked the countries to undertake a quick survey on the impact of the training workshop after several months. The survey tried to see whether any changes occurred after the national workshop with regard to the follow up initiatives in different levels and the changes made in the real practices of the work of NFE facilitators after the exposure to the national workshop.

Myanmar reported that NFE facilitators who attended the workshop, become more interested in the quality of NFE and asked more materials, handouts and handbooks. It is also reported that they become more confident after being exposed by demonstration of participatory learning approaches. PNG reported that the NP method changed the understanding and practice of participants in material development to make more need based and participatory.

Other countries responded that it was too early to measure the impact of the training at the grassroots level.

5. Future directions

All the training workshops in the countries were concluded with recommendations and future action plans. Most countries proposed to disseminate the national version of the handbooks widely and provide training to CLC level personnel. Some countries have managed to find other donors to support, e.g. Mongolia received funds from World Vision to publish 1,000 copies each of the two handbooks. Lao PDR has already organized a follow up workshop under the government budget inviting NFE personnel from 2 provinces. Since the project funds of APPEAL and ACCU are limited, it has been encouraged to mobilize other funding sources for mass production and dissemination of handbooks.

Through the implementation of national training programmes, it was found that the capacity of trainers at the national level is still weak in many countries and so they need a certain guide to conduct training programmes effectively. In response to this feedback, APPEAL organized a workshop in September 2002 to orient a group of experts in NFE to serve as a resource person for regional and national capacity building workshops. As concrete outputs of the workshop, draft training guides were developed covering the following three contents: basic training skills; training techniques; and, specific guides for NFE trainers and CLC management. These guides will be finalized and disseminated to NFE practitioners in 2003.

Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is also another potential to deliver resources and training effectively to the grassroots level. Within the framework of APPEAL, Asia-Pacific Literacy Database and Literacy Clip Art have been developed in cooperation with ACCU. The digital information can be disseminated more easily and economically through internet if one has access to the technology. As the expansion of such technology has been rapid over the coming years, APPEAL has started to digitalize some of the resource materials such as NFE facilitators handbook in CD-ROM including texts and videos. The APPEAL's proposed project on ICT for NFE which will commence in 2003, will explore effective use of ICT for community empowerment through NFE and also capacity building of personnel through efficient information dissemination and collection of the feedback.

Conclusion

Very often, NFE personnel at the grassroots level are recipients of training that are provided by the trainers from central or provincial levels. The ultimate goal of this capacity building project is to enable NFE personnel at the grassroots to identify the training needs and plan and implement district/CLC based capacity building activities using home grown handbooks and guides.

In that sense, the regional prototype handbooks are not the goal but the start of the overall capacity building strategies in NFE. The real value of the handbooks will be

found through the actual use at the CLCs and NFE programmes. APPEAL and ACCU plan to support field level adaptation and use of these materials mainly through CLCs. The feedback from different CLCs in the region will be drawn up as inputs for revisions of the handbooks and as resource materials to be disseminated to practitioners.

These resources and experiences should be managed systematically, otherwise NFE programmes will be time-bound and project based interventions as is often the case in many countries. Government should allocate necessary human, material and financial resources for institutionalizing NFE under the national EFA action plans. Within the context of decentralization which is recent trend in many countries, the role of the government should be shifted from direct service providers to capacity builder, resource developer and supervisor to support community based activities. APPEAL has initiated policy level discussions on this matter with member states by tabling the CLC experience as NFE delivery mechanisms for community development and various resources for capacity building of personnel.