Creating an institutional arrangement for community based socio-economic development activities is not a new phenomenon. However, viewing such an arrangement as providing an organizational structure for literacy and continuing education within the framework of life-long learning processes has emerged more recently. In particular, this has been operationalized effectively through the Community Learning Centres (CLC) programme of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL), UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP), Bangkok, Thailand. The CLC programme is built on the past experience of implementing various adult, non-formal and continuing education programmes in the region and has now been in operation for several years. This chapter attempts to capture the main features of the programme, delineate the major strengths of the programme and also point out some of the challenges facing the programme as it expands in size and is initiated in more countries of the region.

## Genesis and Evolution of the CLC as an Innovation

The CLC Project was initiated in 1995 by APPEAL with a view to shaping these Centres as potential grassroots-based institutions and as mechanisms for the delivery of basic literacy and continuing education, as well as other community development activities. One can observe that during the last five years, prompted by the UNESCO initiative and also based on the cumulative experiences of countries participating in the project, the CLC framework is emerging as an effective vehicle for lifelong learning and other community development activities in several countries of the region.

The Project is currently under implementation in 18 countries across the Asia-Pacific Region. The countries currently involved in the project are: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. It may be noted that the countries where the project is in operation widely differ in geographical, demographic, ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics. Keeping this in view, the main thrust of the project has been to promote contextual designs and adaptation to diversity that characterizes different countries in the region. Accordingly, the Project has allowed for a wide variety of activities to be carried out by community learning centres in different countries.

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1. This chapter is prepared by R. Govinda, UNESCO Consultant who is a Senior Fellow at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA, India). It draws extensively from the Case Studies of Implementation prepared by various countries participating in the UNESCO PROAP Project on Community Learning Centres; it is also based on the reports of the various Review Meetings held to take stock of the implementation of the Project in different countries.
Community Learning Centres: Evolving Concept and Changing Context

The central focus of CLCs in all the countries has been on learning linked to enhancing the quality of life of the community. With this objective, CLCs are emerging as multipurpose organizations where education becomes organically linked to all aspects of life – social, cultural, economic and so on. Also, a serious attempt is made in all the countries to ensure that the CLCs serve commonly agreed interests decided through collective action by community members.

CLCs are therefore viewed as facilitators of a life long learning process, and not consisting of just literacy or post literacy activities. They accordingly are designed to be integrally linked to adult life style and livelihood issues. Thus, CLC activities attempt to lead the deprived and marginalized towards social and economic empowerment.

However, by its very nature, the profile of a CLC has to be a dynamic one adapting itself to the changing needs and aspirations of the people at the grassroots level. Life at the local level is also influenced significantly and continuously by developments in the larger world outside. Two contextual factors therefore are very critical in determining the meaning of CLC. The first factor is that the information and communication technology revolution has made learning an open phenomenon. The traditional concept of learning as confined to formal institutional arrangements is giving way to non-institutionalized learning. A second contextual factor that is influencing education is the process of globalization. With the gradual dismantling of barriers for investment, trade and movement of products across national boundaries, the world has virtually shrunk in size. This has directly influenced the nature of skills and knowledge required in work places. It is easy to recognize that CLCs that focus to a great extent on the productive skills of the people, have to remain dynamic institutions which accordingly must adjust to the changing world.

Community Learning Centres: A Brief Overview

The broad guidelines issued by UNESCO formed the basis for drawing the framework for the establishment of CLCs in different countries. The guidelines specified that the overall goal of CLCs would be to promote human and community development through life-long education for all people in the community - adults, youth and children of all ages regardless of gender, religion and class. The guidelines also suggest the following points to be borne in mind when establishing a CLC:

- CLCs will be local educational institutions outside the formal education system;
- CLCs may be located in villages or urban areas depending on the needs of the people and the context in which the country concerned is placed;
- CLCs will be set up and managed by local people through appropriate bodies with adequate representation to the participating groups; and
- CLCs will provide a variety of learning opportunities for community development and improvement of people’s quality of life.
Establishment of CLCs

It should be reiterated that most countries participating in the CLC Project had had the experience of implementing community-based programmes in different sectors of development. These experiences, along with the suggestions of UNESCO, have invariably guided the establishment of CLCs in the participating countries. Following are some illustrations of how the CLC projects have come into operation in selected countries participating in the Project. For instance, the CLCs in Bangladesh, which are being implemented by the NGO called Dhaka Ahsania Mission, have evolved out of the long experience of the organization in working with adult community groups in different parts of the country. The CLC Project offered them a new opportunity to strengthen their efforts in the field. Cambodia introduced its CLC programme on the basis of three similar on-going projects, namely, the Centre Project on Community Temple Learning, the Education for Girls and Women Project, and the Community Learning Centre Pilot Project, and this enabled a ready initiation of CLCs with clearly defined objectives, thrust areas and operational strategies. In the case of China, the National Commission of UNESCO played a coordinating role with officials from two disadvantaged provinces of Gansu and Guangxi, respectively located in the northwest and southwest of the country. Six townships, with a wide coverage of ethnic groups, e.g., Han, Miao, Dong, Yao, Tibetan, Zhuang, were selected as project sites due to their unfavorable socio-economic status. From the very beginning, the Chinese Government extended full support for the Project. The CLC project in India has focused on girls’ education and women’s development, which is in line with the priorities set at the national level under Education for All. The emergence of CLCs in the Lao PDR could be traced back to the “Pilot Community Learning Centre Development Project” which had been jointly initiated by UNESCO-PROAP and the Government of Lao PDR in Vientiane in 1990. Myanmar first introduced the CLC initiative in 1994, and the project has now been extended to 45 villages. Papua New Guinea began its operations in 1998, again under the auspices of an NGO.

Structure and Management

It is difficult to draw any generalized conclusions on the structure and management framework adopted in different countries. This is mainly due to the fact that while in some countries, CLCs have been set up directly under the education department of the government, while in several others, they have been established with the assistance of an NGO.

In Cambodia, China and Lao PDR, CLCs form an integral part or an extension of the non-formal education system under the national education system. The management framework also therefore derives from within this arrangement. It is similar in Bhutan where CLCs have emerged as the main providers of literacy and continuing education to adults. The CLCs in Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam, on the other hand, are managed through specially constituted managerial committees at different levels that oversee the construction of CLCs and their operational processes. In some member states, professional institutions have played an important role in designing and...
coordinating the field interventions. For instance in China, the Gansu Institute of Educational Research has played an important role. The Indian case is different again. A CLC which focuses on evolving innovative prototype programmes for empowerment of rural women has been established and managed by a professional research institute, namely, the Indian Institute of Education located in Pune. Considering the vastness of both countries, India and China seem to have chosen to adopt a localized and somewhat limited operation for the CLCs.

A feature common to the management of CLCs in all countries is that all of them have attempted to involve the local community members in designing and managing the CLCs. This has been achieved in all the cases by giving adequate representation for local community members in the management committees. In some cases, depending on the nature of programmes, issues are largely decided by the participants of the CLCs. This has been done keeping in view the fact that the participants are all adults with their own social and occupational priorities. This is the case in Nepal, where the management is undertaken with the help of community groups, including the CLC participants. Such an approach has helped instill a sense of ownership among the participants and has also ensured the optimal utilization of the resources provided to the CLCs. In some countries such as India, there has been an attempt, albeit informally, to link the management of the CLC with the local self-government bodies, which consist of democratically elected representatives.

Some countries have attempted to achieve linkage and networking with existing institutions in the local areas. For instance, in Gansu Province of China, the project managers have attempted to make full use of local schools as CLC sites with teachers, together with local expertise, working as part time tutors for farmers. In addition, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region tried to utilize the existing adult training facilities for CLC activities. Several CLCs run by Dhaka Ahsania Mission in Bangladesh have also tried to bring together the CLCs and the local primary schools by extending the CLC facilities to teachers and students and by involving the school teacher actively in the management of the CLC. Such an attempt for integration can be found in several other countries also. This is a positive step, as it not only optimizes resource utilization, but it also paves the way for increased local participation and sustainability of the project efforts.

On the whole one can conclude that the management framework in each case has evolved according to the local context, and the involvement of the local community members has been a constant feature in all cases. The main concern seems to be in maintaining the non-formal nature and grassroots orientation of the CLC set up. Accordingly, there has been a deliberate effort made to keep it less rigidly structured.

**Functions and Activities Implemented**

The functions performed and the activities carried out at the CLC are too varied and enormous to be captured in this chapter. They seem to have been fully determined by the local needs and demands. For instance, some countries seem to utilize CLCs for basic literacy classes along with other community development activities. In several other
countries such as Thailand and Malaysia, CLCs have essentially become centres for continuing education, focusing mainly on skill development and income generation activities. A broad classification of activities conducted in the CLCs could read as follows.

1. Education and training
   - Literacy classes
   - Library based activities
   - Provision of education and skills training
   - Promotion of lifelong learning
   - Training of non-formal education personnel

2. Community information and dissemination of resources
   - Community information and library services
   - Advisory and counseling services

3. Community development
   - Community development projects
   - Participatory future planning

4. Coordination and networking
   - Linkage with existing local educational institutions
   - Linkages between Government and NGOs
   - Linkage between traditional village structures and official administrative structures

It should be noted that the activities and functions performed by CLCs in participating countries vary widely and the above categorization does not fully capture all types of programmes conducted in CLCs. However, a study of country CLC reports reveals certain broad trends in the region.

All countries have focused on contextualizing the activities to local demands and conditions. They are also influenced by the traditional occupational patterns and preferences of the local community. Some countries have broken new ground and introduced new skills that link the lives of the people with the emerging market reality. This has led to the adoption of new work environments, and in rural areas of adopting new and more profitable agricultural practices. Indirectly, the effect has been the creation of avenues for enhanced earning. For instance, the CLCs of China have adopted rural poverty alleviation as the explicit and overriding goal of the CLC programme. This has significantly influenced the nature of the activities conducted in the CLCs.

**Supportive Role of Government and other Agencies**

The CLC Project is conceived as a long term, self-sustaining programme. It is expected that in the initial phase, CLCs will need continued support from Governments at national and local levels, as well as from NGOs and international organizations. However, when communities have become experienced and confident enough to feel a sense of
ownership, they will completely take over the management of the centres. The main role of organizations at national and local levels is to help develop the management capacity of community people, as well as local professionals through various training programmes. The review of country experiences reveals that the governments in most countries have shown a positive attitude towards the effort. However, there is much more to do to ensure that the CLCs get fully integrated into national non-formal and continuing education programmes.

**Overall Observations**

The above observations clearly highlight the varying contexts in which CLCs have emerged, and also the various strategies adopted in different countries. However, a few broad observations can be made about the establishment of CLCs and the objectives they are pursuing. Firstly, the CLC programmes in all the countries focused on adult learning linked to enhancing the quality of life of the people. In particular, one can observe that the primary emphasis has been on poverty alleviation and promotion of quality of life, especially of the rural poor. Secondly, CLCs have clearly developed into multipurpose organizations where education gets organically linked to all aspects of life – social, cultural, economic and so on. The third important feature is that the CLCs serve commonly agreed interests decided through collective action by community members. Programmes and activities are not forced on the community members merely because they have been designed as common inputs for all the Centres at the national or provincial level. Decisions on the nature of the CLCs have invariably been taken at the local project level.

Three characteristics seem to distinguish CLCs from many other educational establishments. First is the fact that establishing a CLC is not like establishing a school. This is because, right from the beginning, it is ensured that CLCs do not get stuck with an externally prescribed, standard curriculum. Also, CLCs avoid being rigidly linked to any specific age group. The second distinguishing feature is that the CLC is not a part of a supply system based only on the availability of funds and based on a nationally prescribed project framework. Rather they are all established in response to the demands of the Community. Such an approach to designing and establishing CLCs have given them a dynamic character, allowing them to continuously adapt to changing socio-economic settings. Thirdly, by not limiting the access to any specified age group, the CLC has been an educational centre and an *open house for community dialogue and interaction*. Thus, it has brought the core problems and issues of community development to the centre stage of the CLCs. Though not uniformly effective, this has also thrown open the possibilities for more meaningful coordination between different sectors of development and community life such as education, health, culture, economic activities and so on.

Synthesizing the experiences across different countries of the Asia-Pacific region, one can discern three broad strands of activities. The first set of countries are those where the CLCs focus on basic literacy and post-literacy activities along with some vocational training. This is the case in countries with relatively low literacy rates and slow
economic growth, such as Bhutan and Bangladesh. The second set of countries are those which are newly industrialized and which have relatively high literacy levels. In these countries, the focus is mainly on income generation, employment related and entrepreneurship oriented activities. Several countries of East and South East Asia present such examples. The third broad trend is represented by those countries which have high literacy levels and are in the process of political transformation to a liberal democracy. CLCs in these countries focus on re-skilling the people to adjust to the changed framework of economic operations and communication patterns. The countries in the Central Asian region could broadly be classified under this category.

It should be remembered, however, that no country is homogenous across all regions and population groups. Even the most developed countries have specific geographical pockets and population groups that do not fit the general characterization of the country. For instance, large countries like China, India and Indonesia have diverse populations with a variety of needs and aspirations. Therefore, the above broad statements should be regarded only as an indication of the evolving trends in the region, and not as a clear-cut characterization of any particular country.

Strengths of CLCs: A Review of Positive Signals from the Field

The CLC Project began as a pilot innovative initiative to develop a workable model for learning opportunities for the vulnerable sections of a country’s population. A review of the experiences from different countries points to several important features. This section attempts to summarize and emphasize some of the strengths of the Project implementation process.

Field Level Operations Begin with Mobilization of the Local Community

The CLCs have made people's involvement paramount. A traditional approach to creating adult learning facilities can be characterized as a supply-oriented arrangement; people’s involvement begins only when the project is initiated. Alternatively, CLCs begin with mobilizing the people, raising their motivation and awareness and assessing the needs and aspirations of the community members.

A review of the processes adopted under different projects seems to adhere to the principle that local conditions and demands of the people determine the nature of CLCs. In order to achieve this, it is ensured that community members' involvement is made a prerequisite. Thus, the CLCs operate under a demand-based paradigm rather than as a supply-oriented initiative.

Community Decision Making

A second feature that emerges from the review is that CLCs have made community based decision making the backbone of the programmes. Community members, often the learners participating in the CLC activities, get involved in decision making at all the stages of designing and implementing the CLC programmes. For instance, community members identify the location of the CLC. In many cases, the space required for the
CLC is provided by the community. It may be noted that in many government sponsored programmes, finding a suitable place to construct the learning centres is one of the major problems.

Involvement of the community members is ensured, even after the establishment of the CLC, as the management of the CLC is also participatory. Community members get involved in designing a locally relevant curriculum, and in mobilizing local resources to ensure the activity is successful. This approach has undoubtedly generated a sense of ownership among the people. Community involvement has also ensured that the utilization of CLC facilities is maximized and is linked to the life style and core problems faced by the community.

No Imposition of Uniformity— a Typically Homegrown Phenomenon

One often finds that projects initiated through national and international agencies bring with them a package of programmes and activities to be implemented by all the learning centres. Such external impositions have been completely avoided in the functioning of CLCs. Each CLC is a home grown phenomenon, addressing the interests and problems of the local people at the micro-level. In some of the project sites, detailed micro-level resource mapping exercises have been undertaken to determine the nature and focus of the programmes to be carried out in the local CLC. For instance, as already noted, some CLCs continue to focus on basic literacy training, while others deal mainly with skill development for enhanced earning capacity and community development. The main consideration when designing CLC activities is their ability to improve the ‘quality of life of the people’, in particular the underprivileged sections of the society.

Catering to the Needs and Interests of All Age Groups

An important feature of the Project is that the CLC is not just an adult education centre. It is conceived and implemented as a broad based learning centre that caters to the needs and interests of all sections of the local population. The age of the beneficiaries, the types of programmes to be organized, the people who will act as facilitators, the kinds of material to be used - all of these factors are viewed with an open mind. Many centres cater to the learning needs of all age groups and categories of individuals, for example, out of school children, youth, as well as adults. Consequently, the emphasis has been on allowing for more variety and flexibility in designing CLC activities. It is based on the principle, “the wider the range of activities, the greater the participation and therefore, the greater the sense of collective participation and ownership among community members.”

Cultural and Entertainment Activities are Integral to the CLC Functioning

It is recognized that if CLCs develop as truly community-based organizations, they have to be integrally linked to the social and cultural life of the people. With this in view, CLCs in most of the countries have allowed for a variety of cultural and entertainment activities to be part of the regular functions. This seems to have had several positive
effects on the functioning of the CLCs. In many poor villages, CLCs have become the central place for community dialogue and interaction. It has also attracted local leaders and educated youth to be associated with the functioning of the CLCs. Further, it has facilitated better linkage between education and other sectors of socio-economic development. In summary, CLCs are becoming effective multi-purpose centres for community development, which significantly enhances their sustainability.

Linked to the Economic Life of the People

Core CLC activities are closely linked to the economic life of the people - the conditions in which they live, the infrastructure and other facilities available, the occupations they have traditionally pursued, the skills they have already acquired through informal learning processes, and the potential the local setting holds for faster socio-economic transformation. An important part of this is that the needs, interests and aspirations of the people, and the available resources that can be mobilized are all identified through participatory exercises. This linkage with the living conditions of the people and their economic life has ensured that the programmes and activities of the CLCs gain acceptance among the community members.

Attempt to Network CLCs within the Country

An essential component in the establishment of the CLC project has been the creation of a network of CLCs and also the establishment of close relationships with other similar initiatives in the local area. Many countries have made an earnest effort to establish such inter-linkage and networking arrangements. It should be acknowledged that this is a difficult part of the exercise in many countries. With CLCs emerging with localized concerns and problems, and with other projects pursuing pre-specified goals and strategies, uniting through networking has been a slow process. However, wherever progress has been made in this direction, it has provided tremendous scope for sharing and replication of innovations.

Inter-country Planning and Review Exercises

As part of the global framework of the Project, the UNESCO has been bringing together project managers from different countries on a periodic basis. The central purpose of these meetings had been, through joint exercises, to present an overview of the activities implemented, review the progress made and plan for the future. In addition, there has also been an attempt to facilitate on-site interaction among project implementers and field functionaries through study visit programmes. This has had two advantages for the participants. First, it has promoted shared learning among the countries and the examination of experiences in varying contexts. Secondly, it has helped maintain a high level of visibility and accountability. Indirectly, these exercises have become effective tools for monitoring the progress of CLCs and generating case studies of success stories.
Emerging Interface between CLCs and LRCs Supported by ACCU

It may be noted that the UNESCO CLC project has been operating in close collaboration with the programmes of the ACCU, which has been implementing literacy development activities in many of the CLC project countries. In particular, there has been a close interface between the CLC project and the Literacy Resource Centre (LRC) initiative of the ACCU. The LRCs focus on creating resource centres for literacy and non-formal education that are fully equipped with modern information and communication technology and an online literacy database. The linkage with these LRCs have, therefore, made it possible for many of the grassroots based CLCs to access modern communication technologies and also a dynamic data base on literacy status and activities.

Development of CLCs: Meeting the Challenges

Many countries have had no facility within the local community environs to provide continuous learning opportunities for the people. In many places, only the local school, designated as a centre for education of young children, has been available. In many cases, even the local schools have been dilapidated and ineffective in spreading literacy and learning among the people of many remote rural pockets. Under these circumstances, the CLCs have come to effectively fill the vacuum and provide an institutional framework for life long learning and community development.

This euphoria regarding the success of CLCs may be short lived if they fail to adapt to the changing socio-economic reality in the larger world. Also, many processes initiated under the programme need closer examination for their continued effectiveness and sustainability. It is therefore pertinent to point out some of the critical points regarding the CLC project, some of which are highlighted below:

Sustaining the Participatory Process

Participatory thrust among the community members is the backbone of CLCs. In the initial phase there has been tremendous enthusiasm, not only among the community members but also among the project functionaries, to maintain a participatory spirit. Participation is not just a set of actions involving the people. Rather, it represents an attitude or mindset which has faith in the capacity of the people to determine their own life and future. This does not apply only to the people managing the project but also to the people themselves. It should also be noted that mobilizing and organizing people is not a one-shot affair. It has to remain a permanent feature throughout the project implementation process. Therefore, the challenge facing the CLC project is how to maintain the participatory thrust beyond the initial phase and make it a regular feature of the CLC planning and management framework.
Transcending the Limits of the Small World of the Local Community

While participatory decision making has to be emphasized, it is possible that the local community is unable to see a larger scenario beyond the confines of the small world they live in. It is easy to recognize that this will not do in the long run if the purpose of the CLC Project is to transform the socio-economic reality of communities and improve the quality of life of the people. It demands placing before the local community a larger vision of progress and prosperity beyond their traditional styles and means of living. It is essential that CLC programmes help open the eyes of the local people to the larger reality of the world, which is changing so fast that it is difficult to correctly assess its impact on the life of the common people. Globalization and free market orientation, which have direct implications for the productive life and capacities of the people, are knocking at the door of every country. This is even changing the nature of access to new knowledge and the processes of knowledge generation and transmission. CLCs cannot remain oblivious to this emerging reality. However, it is also not desirable that fanciful activities and programmes are introduced, ignoring the immediate needs and aspirations of the people. Therefore, the challenge is how to balance between the emerging demands of the larger reality and limited local vision and aspirations.

Capacity Building at Local Level

A critical component essential for the success of the CLC Project is capacity building at the local level. The functioning of the CLC in a sustained fashion depends on the ability of the local level organizers to continuously assess the needs of the community, and design activities that meet the changing demands of its socio-economic life. In the initial phases of the project, many countries took a proactive step in this direction by providing external expertise and guidance to the local functionaries. However, this is not sustainable on a permanent basis and therefore should be replaced by local capacities that can design and implement innovative programmes in a continuous fashion. The experience of many education project initiatives shows that unless conscious efforts are made to replace external expertise with local capacities, the project activities remain superficial and will not continue beyond a point of time. This is another challenge facing the CLC Project; how to ensure continuous capacity building processes at the local level so that the dependency on external expertise and guidance can be minimized.

Financial Sustainability of the CLC Initiative

The CLC project entered the non-formal education scene in many countries as a UNESCO pilot project. Accordingly, funding for the initial project initiative has come from UNESCO. However, if the pilot project has to be taken to its logical conclusion, the project initiative has to be expanded within the country and adapted to the changing local conditions. Obviously, the financial input required to sustain and expand the programme is large. It is heartening to note that some countries have succeeded in mobilizing funds from the national budget or other sources. However, several other countries may not be able to do so. How to ensure the availability of financial resources for continued and
expanded implementation of the project is a serious question in many countries. There is a
danger that the project may disappear from the scene if resource mobilization for the
project beyond the pilot phase is not addressed well in advance.

**NGO-Government Interface**

Currently, the Project is being implemented in different countries through different
agencies - NGOs as well as government agencies. It is important to reflect on the role of
the NGO or the government in the long run. This is particularly important when the
project goes into an expansion phase. It is well known that NGO implementation has
several advantages in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. However, the outreach and
access of any NGO is always limited. It may be easier for further expansion and
adoption of the CLC project within the national programme framework in places where
the government agencies are directly involved. However, experience shows that large-
scale implementation by government agencies tends to bureaucratize the activities and
reduce the effectiveness of the project initiatives significantly. Should the NGOs
transfer the responsibility to the government agencies in a gradual fashion in order to
spread the processes on a large scale? Or, should the project be essentially managed by
the NGOs in order to maintain higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness? These and
several other related questions have to be dealt with in the years to come.

**Sustainability does not Depend Only on Availability of Funds**

Often, sustainability questions are limited only to the availability of finances. However,
we have to recognize that in a project such as the CLC, continuous change and renewal
in the nature and contents of the programme is an essential component for sustainability.
This requires progress through cumulative learning and feedback. The challenge is how
to set up a programme of empirical research, documentation and dissemination that
promotes change and renewal on a continuous basis. It is, of course, important that two
features characterize the research and documentation efforts. One is that the focus is
placed on the impact of the activities and the approach is not merely evaluative in nature.
Rather, the focus should be on the process dimensions of implementation and should not
be unduly judgmental. The second feature of the research and documentation
programme is that it should be simple and participatory, involving the people themselves,
and that it be embedded in the grassroots reality in which the processes of change and
transformation take place.
Conclusion

In conclusion it may be said that the CLC project has not provided a definitive model for emulation. Rather, it has set in motion a new initiative for providing learning opportunities to the people hitherto unreached and empowering them to transform their own lives. The future course of action is obviously dependent on the way the larger education establishment views this initiative and allows for its incorporation into national policies and programmes. The main strength of the CLC effort lies in its flexibility and openness. Each country has to reflect its own questions and determine unique solutions relevant and workable in the local context. The synthesis of experiences presented above facilitates this process of reflection by highlighting the positive features of the CLC initiative and the challenges that have to addressed in the years to come.