

Community Participation in The Development of Nonformal Education Programmes in Community Learning Centres

A Case Study to Explore the Role of Community Participation in the Development of Nonformal Education Programmes in selected Community Learning Centres in Cimahi City Council West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study intended to *explore the role of community participation in the development of nonformal education programmes through community learning canters*. The researcher used a qualitative method and the design was a case study conducted in two selected CLC's of Cimahi city council, West Java, Indonesia. Data collection was done through; observation, interview, documentation study, and audiovisual analyses with the intent of establishing the kinds of nonformal education programmes, forms of community participation, categories of community members that participate most, and to ascertain the role of community participation in the sustainability of nonformal education programmes in community learning centres. Some of the findings are; the staff members at the two CLCs are aware of the kinds of nonformal education programmes, the CLC programmes are basically government programmes, the forms of participation are of three categories, that is; passive participation, information giving participation and consultative participation, the CLC staff conduct field analysis only during the socialization process of CLC programmes to the grassroot community, and the participants from CLCs are mostly from poor families with low economic background, but there were also those from well-off to do families,

The recommendations made based on the findings of this research are: Nonformal education Professionals should be ready to face the needed desire for change in the development, planning and implementation of nonformal education programmes, Governments should allow educational and development programmes to come from the grassroot with the active participation of the would be beneficiaries, people should be

encouraged to; improve their knowledge, Skills and attitudes with the aim of systemic change, and Government should set standards to be followed by community learning centres such that quality is maintained.

Key Words: Community Learning Centre, Community Participation, Nonformal Education, and Programme Development

Introduction

Nonformal education presents a challenging problem for today's education planners. The diversified nature of the activities included in nonformal education poses difficult questions for those wishing to apply systemic traditional educational planning procedures to the field. With increasing attention and resources being given to nonformal education in many countries today, the competencies of educational planners must be developed and expanded to include effective methods of working in this area of education (David R. Evans, 1981: 11).

Due to the importance of Education to a country's development, countries within the Region of Asia-Pacific launched the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) in 1987 by the help of UNESCO with the aims of promoting literacy and basic learning skills through three programmes. These programmes were set with widely diverging characteristics, to serve distinct purposes for different clienteles and also having different relationships with a plethora of government ministries and above all having varying degrees of relevance for the pursuance of public policy in a broader social development sphere or in a narrower education sphere (Wim Hoppers, 2006).

Since then, in Indonesia, the central government and the local district nonformal education offices have been and are still responsible for the development and providing of a major part of the funding requirements and ensuring execution, monitoring and evaluation of nonformal education programmes (UNESCO, 2008: 6). This makes many CLCs to depend on government programmes and above all government funds, as much as two-thirds of the total requirement. This denies the fact that society constantly encounters phenomenal changes. Certainly, people at the grassroot have been denied control of their environment but they have been made to be able to continually adjust to an environment imposed upon them by the government.

Nonformal education being any educational activity organized outside the established formal system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives, its programmes should respond to the needs and perceptions of community members, not those of experts or government targets. Fordham in the 1970's defined four characteristics to be associated with nonformal education and they still fit to today's situation, namely: (1) relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups; (2) concern with specific categories of people; (3) a focus on clearly defined purposes; and (4) flexibility in organization and methods. If proper programmes are to be developed in the field of nonformal education, continuing education, adult education, community development, social worker, health education, financial education and training among others, the policy makers, education

planners, adult educators, human resource development managers, social workers, development practitioners and curriculum developers of community learning centres need to take in consideration Fordham's four principles since they summarise what is needed by any planner, more so education planners in the development of sustainable programmes.

Though participation is highly recommended as described in this background, in most of the nonformal education programmes, community involvement in determining the future (Identification, Planning and Development and Implementation) of most programmes is still limited as revealed during the preliminary study in selected CLCs (*PKBM*s) of Cimahi city council, in the Province of West Java-Indonesia.

Problem identification

Based on the above background, the following are some of the identified problems faced by CLCs in the Cimahi city council as revealed in the preliminary study:

Though the essence of a community learning centre (*PKBM*) is to emphasize community initiative, involvement and support of people at the grassroot level for organizing and developing programmes of their own choice based on their needs, there is no creativity and there is limited engagement of the local masses.

This leads to dependency syndrome. Due to the dependence on government programmes, the mindset of most community learning centre managers and other influential staff members largely rely on government budget.

The strings attached to the funding and also due to lack of innovativeness and with limited community participation, most CLCs have ended up as centres for implementation of government programmes. In most cases, these programmes have not been able to respond to the exact community problems and needs. And with little or no participation of community members in most activities there has emerged a situation of lack of motivation amongst even those members living at the neighbourhood of these CLCs (*PKBM*s); thus, leading to a situation of 'half-hearted' local participation.

Because of the 'half-hearted' local participation, there is a lack of maintenance and sustainability of most CLCs. Such a situation has also contributed to ON/OFF community learning centres (*PKBM*s). On/Off community learning centres only operate when there is government funding and after the project or after the funds are finished, there is no maintenance and at the end, there is no lasting impact of the programmes contributing to 'half-hazard' outcome and also leading to community mistrust towards some of the nonformal education programmes.

Lastly, even though most of the nonformal education programmes are government programmes and so government sponsored, their facilitation is still far from good as compared to the formal education sector.

Based on these findings, I intend to limit the scope to the participation of communities in the development of nonformal education programmes. Thus, I believe that the above problems are to be solved if the government promotes and supports community participation in most nonformal education programmes development through CLCs.

Problem statement

According to the mentioned problems as obtained during the preliminary study, the most pressing need for community learning centres (CLCs) in Cimahi and Indonesia as a whole are numerous, but the most out-standing relates to '**Community Participation**' in CLC activities. This is routed into the history of CLCs in Indonesia. Since they were started by the government, the top down approach dominated and continues to dominate the identification, planning, development and implementation of nonformal education programmes. Nonformal education being any educational activity organized outside the established formal system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives, its programmes should respond to the needs and perceptions of community members, not those of experts or government targets. Advocacy developing today around the issue of nonformal education in particular through the promotion of **Education For All (EFA)** goals has little chance of being heard (or realized) if it does not promote the implementation of reliable programmes development which allows the foundation to be laid for efficient nonformal education sub-sector by locals based on the localized content. The basis of this research is the belief that, for success to be achieved in most community learning centres, more so those of Cimahi city, there is a great demand for the promotion of community role in the development of nonformal education programmes which intend to affect the beliefs, values, needs, attitudes and self-experience of community members. In this research therefore, I intended to '**Explore the Role of Community Participation in the Development of Nonformal Education Programmes in Community Learning Centres (Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat-PKBM).**' For clarity, the following are some of the questions of focus in the research:

What are the kinds of nonformal education programmes in community learning centres (*PKBMs*) in which community members participate most?

What are the forms of community participation in the development of these Nonformal Education (NFE) programmes?

What are the categories of community members that participate in the planning and development of these Nonformal Education (NFE) programmes?

What is the role of community participation in the sustainability of these Nonformal Education (NFE) programmes?

Research objectives

The general objective of this study was to explore the role of community participation in the development of nonformal education programmes in a Community Learning Centre. The specific objectives were:

To establish the kinds of nonformal education programmes implemented in a community learning centre in which community members participate most;

To discover the forms of community participation in the development of nonformal education programmes in community learning centres;

To establish the categories of community members that participate most in the planning and development of nonformal education programmes; and

To ascertain the role of community participation in the sustainability of nonformal education programmes in community learning centres.

Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main dimensions to be studied, the key factors, or variables, and presumed relationships among them. Thus, frameworks come in several shapes and sizes. They can be rudimentary or elaborate, theory driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal (Miles & Huberman, 1984: 28; John W. Creswell, 97). Thus, in this research, the conceptual framework has been designed based on the problems which were identified during the preliminary study and also the theories discovered during the study of the various literature, which in turn has been developed to help in answering the problem of the research. This conceptual framework is therefore expected to act as guide in the development of nonformal education programmes. The framework is presented as follow:

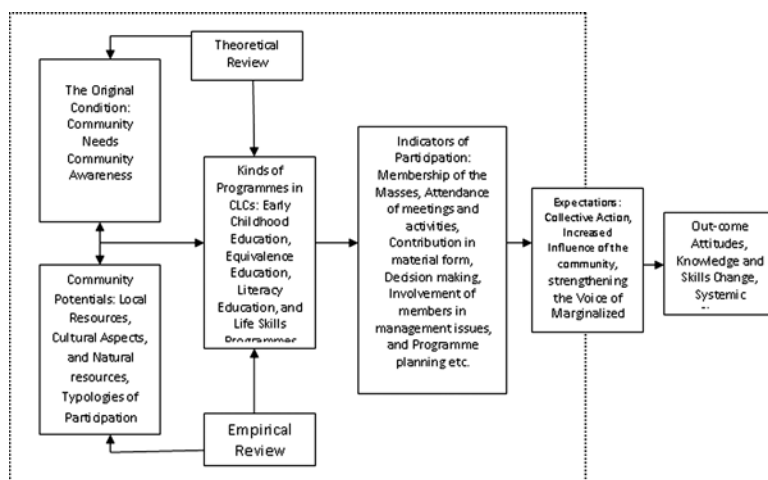


Figure: 1.1: research conceptual framework

The above conceptual framework is based on the belief that the philosophy of programming with communities should involve active participation of the people. This process is essential for effective programmes to evolve. It is only through this approach that a continuing education educator (or a nonformal education educator) is able to provide people with educational opportunities that relate to their needs and interests and contribute to resolving problems pertinent to economic and social-well-being of the entire society.

Based on this perception, programmes development is referred to as the art of designing, planning, and implementing a course of action to achieve an appropriate out come (which is attitude change, knowledge and skills development resulting to systemic change). Thus, programme development has been used in line with Boyle's definition. He defines programme development as a deliberate series of actions and decisions through which representatives of people affected by the potential programme are involved with a programmer.

In programmes development, there are planned consequences that follow a conscious and rationale course of action. The framework below suggests the importance of seeing

programme development in total reception and helps to represent an integrated approach through which the economic, psychological, social, cultural and political, and environment elements can be considered in programmes. These elements are also a representation of community potentials and on the other hand provide us with light on how CLC programmes should be developed. This implies that for any change agent intending to bring new forms of operation, s/he needs to analyse a given community's prevailing condition before embarking on the journey to change.

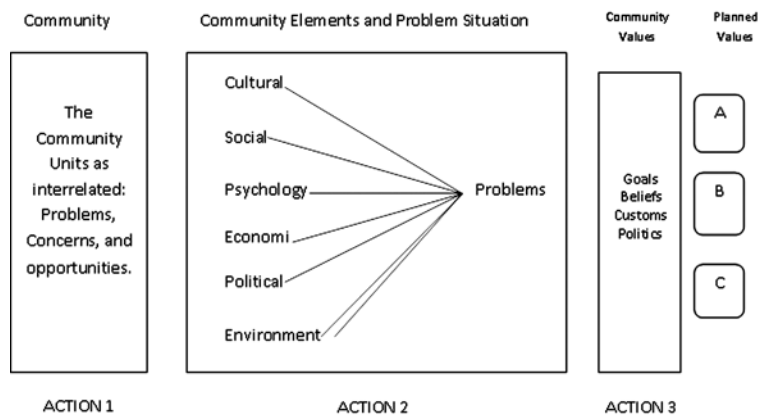


Figure 1.2: source: adapted from Patrick G. Boyle, 1981b: 170

The diagram above has been brought in since it describes a true society where all individuals and their needs are represented. This is the originating concept that makes me perceive a CLC (*PKBM*) as a true local educational institution outside the formal education system which is established and managed by local people based on the various learning needs of the local community. In other words, the idea comes from the community, it is developed by the community and it is meant to meet the needs of the community.

This therefore calls for full participation of the community as a whole, beginning from the environmental scanning to get aware of the community's condition by the community itself (community self-mobilization); to establish their needs and to create awareness on the need for change; to establish the community potential by identifying the available resources, integrating the cultural aspects and norms and understanding the entire social condition (Interactive Participation). It is only by such away, that the programmes determined are based on the empirical evidence of the community itself. For self-mobilization participation to take place.

Methodology of the study

The research applied a qualitative method with a case study as the design of the research conducted in the district of Cimahi one of the districts of Indonesia within the Province of West Java. I used observation, interviews, the study of documents, and audiovisual analyses as the basic as the main techniques for data collection.

The focus of my study was basically to explore the role of community participation in the development of nonformal education programmes in Community Learning

Centres, of Bina Mandiri, Cipageran and Miskatul Anwar in Cibabati both in Cimahi city council. The aim of the study is to stimulate and revive the community role in nonformal education programmes delivery and also to establish the fundamental aspects of communities in determining their future through nonformal education. The research also aimed at promoting and empowering communities through CLCs in contributing to the National Nonformal Education programmes which are of lasting impact to the society.

Findings of the research

The findings of the research in summary are as follow:

1. The findings revealed that the staff members at the two CLCs are aware of the kinds of nonformal education programmes. The programmes being implemented by the two CLCs are basically four, namely: Equivalency Programme which cover the three packages of A, B and C; Life Skills Programmes; Early Childhood Programme and Literacy Programme.
2. In the study, it was revealed that these programmes are basically government programmes. This is in line with belief harbored by the two heads; they believe that the government always develops programmes that fit the needs of the communities.
3. The findings also reveal that CLCs involve communities in programmes' development through '*Rukun Warga*' and '*Rukun Tentangga*' which when translated to Uganda's system; it is similar to Local Council II and Local Council I. It is these community leaders feeding the community learning centres with information on the needs of their respective communities.
4. It was revealed that the CLC staffs conduct field analyses in the process of socializing CLC programmes to the grassroot community. This is when the '*Rukun Warga*' and '*Rukun Tentangg*' are consulted on the needs of their communities.
5. The study also revealed that due to the perception of the leaders about the programmes, they are able to mobilize the members of their community who are hard to reach.
6. The findings revealed that there is no specific strategy by the local leaders in mobilizing communities and also there is no specific measure that has been taken to have their opinions heard in most of the community programmes meant for the grassroot, the leaders are following mostly CLC programmes.
7. The study revealed that most of the programmes are followed by youths and the adults and or old people mostly follow literacy programmes. All programmes in general are perceived important to both the youths and the adults. Both the youths and adults believe there is a change in their lives.
8. It was revealed that the categories of community members that participate most include '*Rukun Tentangga*' and '*Rukun Warga*', and also families with low income. The participation of families with low incomes is by sending their children to learn at the CLC since most of the families cannot afford formal education and wish their children a good future which is always associated to education.
9. The study finally reveals that the biggest number of the participants of CLCs is basically the youths. Moreso those joining those joining equivalence programmes.
10. The findings as summarised reveal that the staffs of CLCs work in close relationship with communities to make sure communities participate in most of the activities

11. Though discussions held revealed the different forms of participation, the forms mentioned are basically summed-up into three categories, that is; passive participation, information giving participation and consultative participation.

Conclusion

In general, according to the findings, I conclude that appropriate programmes development measures, should be put in place which aim to stimulate communities such that they are in position to determine which in line with their own needs and fit in their prevailing situation.

This is based on the belief that community members are not like burning objects which need rescue without their willingness. Communities are made up of people with reason and desire and above all they know what is good for them and what is bad for them, in this case, for any assistance, they need to be motivated and stimulated. In specific, my conclusion is focused on several issues as seen below:

1. Community participation should be seen in the perspective of community self-mobilization. Without communities taking on the biggest percentage in determining their own future every thing will be perceived with mixed filling. For instance as nonformal education practitioners perceive community members disadvantaged people, the communities will continue to disguise such that they are taken to be disadvantaged for their short term benefit.

2. The kinds of participation in the two CLCs are of three categories, which are: passive participation; information giving participation; and consultation participation. These forms of participation are the basic typologies of participation dominating in most of the activities of the two CLCs where I carried out my research. I have come to conclude that a new theory be developed which promotes and clarifies the words *mine* and *ours*. These two words are Indonesian words which imply that a CLC is more to 'Us' than 'Ours', by this it implies that we either come-up with a new theory or we revise the existing one CLCs.

3. Nonformal education should be seen as that form of education which in its ideal application can bring about a maximum of adjustment of attitude within society, to any new and changed situation in skills and techniques required and made necessary by the change.

4. The society has to learn skills that help them to live in the way they want and able to change their environment. In such a case, Nonformal education as a force for transforming the society should involve every person in decisions and among others. For the community to be involved, the following should be taken into account:

4.1 Prepare and build the people's capacity to better understand their situation especially the marginalized people of society, in order to allow them to contribute to the socio-economic transformation.

4.2 Increase community productivity and competitiveness leading to increased incomes, to improve the social and economic well-being.

4.3 Build capacity of the marginalized to challenge their subordinate position, self-confidence and self-respect and gain control over their lives and circumstances.

4.4 Stimulating the dynamism in human learning using the principles of andragogy in adult education.

Recommendations

Development is an idea, practice, or situation that is perceived positive by an individual or the entire society.

1. As change agents, we should learn to mobilize communities for active participation, socialize community learning centers as potential places for handling community needs, and ensure that all community members are the real stakeholders.

2. Nonformal education Professionals should be ready to face the needed desire for change in the development, planning and implementation of nonformal education programmes.

3. Governments should allow educational and development programme to come from the grassroot with the active participation of the would be beneficiaries of the programmes and activities to be implemented.

4. Government should act more on standard setting than planning, developing, and implementing of the nonformal education programmes. It should therefore set standards which will enable it to supervise, monitor and evaluate. In other words, communities should be empowered to take part in all the nonformal education programmes resulting to self-mobilization. With self-mobilization,

5. Innovativeness should be considered as one of the tools to a country's development through educational approach, that is; through informal (family education, mass or civic education in communities etc), non formal education (out of school time programs), and of course formal education which is carried out in schools (ranging from kindergarten to university education)

6. Through innovation, people should be encouraged to; improve their economic situations, health conditions, socio-cultural and among others. This is because all innovations aim at positive a result which is the objective of any National development.

7. Through nonformal education, there should be change in thinking and behaviour for any given community. If a group, an organization, a community or a given country embarks on any new venture, it should think of Nonformal education as an appropriate that needs support to change people's minds towards any given new development focus.

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