PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS IN THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive research aims to propose strategies to strengthen community participation in community learning centers (CLCs) in the Kingdom of Cambodia. This research study contains two phases of procedures: 1) to explore the issues of community participation in CLCs in Cambodia by conducting the semi-structured interview and doing observation with Cambodian experts and 2) to identify strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in Cambodia by interviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing previous and current policies, strategies, mechanisms and the discourses of the Cambodian experts. The study revealed the following results. There are many problems of community participation which are caused by two main actors such as government levels (the lack of facilities and transparency, conventional teaching curriculum, the limited knowledge of facilitators, and administrative staff, shortage of allocated budgets, no clear career pathway and deficiency of disseminating information) and grass-rooted levels (the lack of understanding about CLCs, trust, and sense of belonging, family's burdens, caring about their businesses, traditional cultures, and migration). Moreover, there are also many suitable strategies, such as monthly diagnosing needs with community people, strengthening leaderships and facilitator's capacity building, disseminating enough information, increasing resource mobilization, updating their teaching curriculum, linking one CLC to others, having a clear career pathway for participants, and putting the problems of community people into solution.

Keywords: Strategy; community learning centers (CLCs); community participation; non-formal education

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most powerful weapon to change the world, as stated by Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa (Duncan, 2013). This statement makes sense in this current situation, especially in terms of economy, society, and environment. The same is also true for the Cambodian context, as in the name of a developing country. Cambodia used to be one of the most potent imperial countries in the past, particularly during the Angkorian era (Ross, 1987). Unfortunately, there were a lot of civil wars, internal conflicts,

colonialism, and the genocidal regime, which destroyed Cambodian human and physical capital to almost zero levels (Ross, 1987). Education has played a crucial role in improving Cambodia's current situation and developing this tiny country through three main dimensions: economy, society, and environment to an upper-income country in 2030 and a high-income county in 2050 as stated in Cambodia's Education 2030 Roadmap (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS, 2019).

Education has played a prominent role in developing human capital in Cambodia. With proper education, Cambodia will be able to go over other neighboring countries in the future due to her continuously increased GDP growth rate by approximately 7% per year (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2019). In a very similar vein, the Royal Government of Cambodia has enacted a new policy, "National Lifelong Learning Policy in 2019," to ensure equitable quality education to everyone Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), 2019). Talking about lifelong learning in Cambodia, there are three forms of education: education, non-formal education, and informal education (Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE), 2014). Notably, lifelong learning is just an emerging concept in the Cambodian context, for it exists in terms of non-formal education and informal education. Based on the Department of Non-Formal Education of MoEYS, community learning centers (CLCs) are considered as the schools of non-formal and informal education (RGC, 2019). Many activities and programs are running the centers. Those programs are functional literacy, post-literacy, equivalency, re-entry, life skills, complementary, income generation, and health improvement program (DNFE, 2018). Those programs are established and implemented to meet the community people's needs and to put their problems into the solution. There are roughly 356 CLCs, which are run by the government and other relevant stakeholders (DNFE, 2018). Out of expectation, there are a few numbers of the centers which could run well, and the rest are in the progress, and some have closed or been dysfunctional (Pich, 2008). Notably, the predominant issue occurs because there are few numbers of community participation and engagement. Without community participation and involvement, there are many conspicuous problems, which are emerging to prevent CLCs from performing their functions. Those problems are the lack of human resources, shortage of finances, deficiency of facilities, and small numbers of participants (UNESCO, 2010). As a result, those centers become inactive and less sustainable, and it is one of the significant obstacles in implementing non-formal education and informal education in Cambodia. The future of lifelong learning in Cambodia is not so promising and may be difficult moving forward. It is because non-formal education and information are the fundamental to lifelong learning in Cambodia (UNESCO, 2011). Hence, once CLCs are not able to perform their function well, the implementation of non-formal education and informal education will be in vain (Hun, 2015). The same is also true for the destiny of lifelong learning as an umbrella of mainstream education, non-formal education, and informal education, which are in tremendous progress (UNESCO, 2015).

According to the Department of Non-Formal Education, the study on the issues of community participation in CLCs in Cambodia is needed, especially on the strategy and mechanism in putting those issues into solution (DNFE, 2000). Therefore, this research study aims to fill the gap by attempting "Proposed Strategies to Strengthen Community Participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia."

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Education has been divided into four principal pillars: learning to know, learning to be, learning to do, and learning to live together in peace and harmony (Nan-Zhao, 2006). By definition, lifelong learning is learning from death to birth (Hürsen, 2016). Talking about education in the context of Asian countries, they failed to achieve the Karachi Plan, which was launched in the 1960s to make an assurance that all children have access to primary education. At that time, the Fifth Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and those responsible for Economic Planning (MINEDEP V) recommended launching APPEAL (Asia Pacific Program Education for ALL), which was held in Bangkok in 1987 (Saory, 2002). At present, non-formal education programs have served as a central device to promote primary education to all children, youths, and adults of the Asian countries, and the primary goal of it is to achieve education for ALL, which was endorsed to accomplish by 2015 (Yasunaga, 2014).

CLCs are seen as community-driven entities, which represent the promising initiatives, and their principles are to emphasize literacy and continuing education to foster Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO, 2008). It is the commitment to ensuring the 17 goals, including Goal 4 on Quality Education, which states "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO, 2017). CLCs are also mainstreaming in working on bolstering education in both forms, non-formal education, and informal education, as well as to ensure education for everyone. Furthermore, the main target groups of CLCs are the people who are considered as the grass-roots level, and CLCs aim to adopt an integrated NEF approach to deliver programs for the realization of "Life-long Education for All" (Kanno and Shrestha, 2006). Furthermore, all the CLC's activities are to benefit disadvantaged groups, minorities, women, and

seniors. It is because formal education alone is not able to fill this gap, and non-formal education is more flexible and informal in terms of delivering knowledge to the target groups. Notably, in the Cambodian context, CLCs were started under the supervision of the Department of Non-Formal Education of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport since 1994, and supported by UNESCO. At the other extreme, community based-learning approach, Cambodia has attempted to use this approach to accumulate people to learn in the community through formal education. For instance, Cambodia has applied this approach since the early 1990s through the cluster school system.

Nonetheless, the participation of the population in the cluster school system is still limited. Cambodia has applied for a new approach to non-formal education, namely "CLCs" in 1999. This project produced not only positive outcomes but also some drawbacks in promoting participation from the community people (Pich, 2008). CLCs in Cambodia are under the support of governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders since they are in the early stages, which lack maturity, ownership, and leadership. As Cambodia is a developing country that requires sophisticated technology and human resources enough to run the centers smoothly, the challenges merge. These challenges can become the factors to thwart CLCs moving forward. According to MoEYS, there are approximately 347 CLCs in Cambodia that are processing and implementing their activities in the rural areas (MoEYS, 2014). At the other extreme, not all the CLCs can perform and function well, and there are only around 296 centers were working. At the same time, the rest had no activities and became inactive due to a lack of community participation (MoEYS, 2014). Those problems are gradually impeding the centers in performing their functions to serve the community people. As stated in the Rung of Community Participation Theories by Shaeffer (1994), there are the rungs of community participation. The seven rungs of community participation contain the following, as the mere use of services, involvement of issues, attending the programs, consultation, partnership, implementation and making decision as shown in the Figure 1.
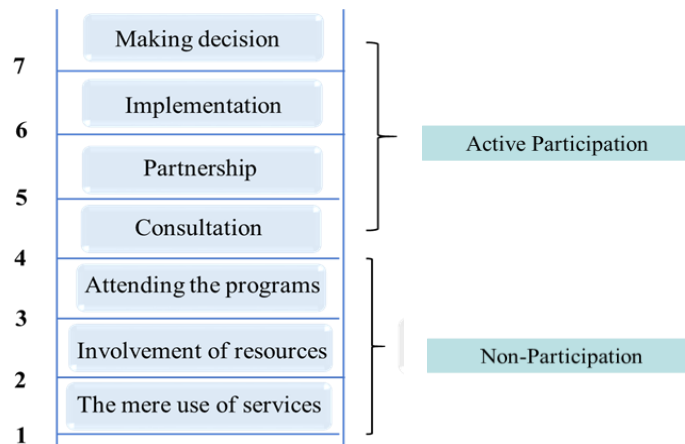

Figure 1: A Rung of Community Participation

According to the figure above, the first three rungs (the mere use of services, involvement of resources, and attending the program) show the low level or non-participation. On the other hand, the second four rungs (consultation, partnership, implementation, and make decisions) manifests the high level or active participation (Shaeffer, 1994). The main goal of government and other relevant stakeholders is to achieve high levels of participation, which are consultation, partnership, implementation, and make decisions. However, it is hard to achieve a high level of participation because there are many foible issues like the lack of transparency, trust and confidence, the apathy of community people's attitude, the family's burdens, and unattractiveness of programs and activities (Nop and Thornton, 2020). Those issues have slowed down the progress of CLCs, which could be harmful to the future sustainability of the centers.

In conclusion, the problems of community participation are critical points, in which every stakeholder and government should take into account to minimize and optimize those issues. Indeed, in the Cambodian case, CLCs are quite inactive and less sustainable due to various issues caused by community participation. The Cambodian governments and related stakeholders must identify those noticeable issues and come up with practical strategies and mechanisms to deal with community participation issues in CLCs. It is essential to do so to secure the future sustainability of CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research study aims to explore the proposed strategies and mechanisms to strengthen community participation in CLCs in the Cambodian context through two principal dimensions stated in the following:

1. To explore the issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.
2. To identify strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To accomplish those research objectives, aforementioned, there are two main research questions, as stated in the following:

1. What are the main issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia?
2. What are the appropriate strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia?

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To attain these research objectives and questions, the researchers have employed a qualitative research method, and those techniques are to conduct semi-structured interviews with Cambodian experts who are working in the field of non-formal and informal education and utilizing content-analysis and data recording form to study the relevant sources and documents. Furthermore, it is ideal to use the qualitative research method because it helps the researcher to understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experience (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The qualitative research method enables the researcher to explore the issues of community participation and to analyze practical strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

5.1 Population and sampling design

The experts who are studying and working in the field of non-formal education, especially in CLCs in Phnom Penh city and Tboung Khmoum Province, are the population of this study. Similarly, it is essential for the researcher to select some of those experts to explore the issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Along with that, some sources used books of non-formal education, policies, mechanisms in solving community participation, some well-known websites: UNESCO, UNDP, and other popular websites, articles, and journals. These resourceful data and documents serve as fundamental knowledge and information for the researchers to digest the information regarding the strategies and mechanisms in solving the issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

5.2 Sampling method

The researchers have employed a purposive sampling method to select two experts in the field of non-formal education and informal education to conduct a semi-structured interview. By doing so, the researcher can acknowledge the current issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Moreover, all of the policies, news, journals are enacted and declared by the government and well-known and international organizations such as UNESCO, UNDP, DVV, and other relevant organizations to assist the researcher in understanding the community participation issues. Furthermore, to identify strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in Cambodia, the researchers also used a purposive sampling method to select data and documents, especially policies, strategies, guidelines, and mechanisms related to the implementation of lifelong learning in CLCs in the kingdom of Cambodia to proposed strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs.

5.3 Research instrument

The researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with two Cambodian experts, who work in the field of non-formal education and informal education, especially in CLCs located in Tboung Khmoum Province and Phnom Penh City. It is to explore the current issues in community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Moreover, data collection form is one of the main instruments to analyze and study data and documents like policies, strategies, guidelines, and mechanisms related to the implementation of lifelong learning in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Observation is used as an instrument to gain more reliability and validity of the documents and data as well as to project the images of the current situation, policies, and mechanisms in implementing lifelong learning in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

5.4 Data collection

The researchers collected both primary and secondary data. For the secondary data, the researcher collected information from books, articles, journals, and other popular websites (UNESCO, UNDP, DVV, and NEP) of the current issues of community participation in CLCs. Also, policies, mechanisms, and guidelines to put community participation issues into solutions gathered to identify strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in Cambodia. Moreover, the primary data were collected through conducting a semi-structured interview with Cambodian experts who are interested in lifelong learning (non-formal education and informal education), and community participation in CLCs in the kingdom of Cambodia.

5.5 Data analysis

After receiving data from conducting a semi-structured interview with Cambodian experts who are in the field of non-formal education and informal education, the researcher studied the current problems of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia through interviewing information. The researchers used discourse analysis to recode relevant and credible information. All documents and data are analyzed and synthesized by using the content-analysis technique, which is one of the research instruments to validate the policies, strategies, guidelines, and mechanisms in strengthening community participation in CLCs.

6. RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1 First research objective: It is to explore the issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Based on the secondary data from books, articles, journals, and international websites, which mentioned the issues of community participation in CLCs, those ramifications of information are significant for the researchers to explore the issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. More importantly, the primary data from conducting semi-structured interviews with the Cambodian experts, who are working in the fields of non-formal education and informal education, are crucial for the researchers to acknowledge those arising issues. Therefore, factual information is described in the following table.

Table 1: The Information Regarding Current Issues of Community Participation in the CLCs from the Experts and Various Source

No.	Participants	Positions/sources	Current issues of community participation in the CLCs
1	Expert A	Head of Non-formal Education Office, Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport, Tbong Khmoum Province	- After completing the course, the learners cannot run their own business because they have no capital. - Lack of resources - Deficiency of physical infrastructures - Learners are busy to earn their living.
2	Expert B	Executive Director, NGO Education Partnership, Cambodia	- Limited interaction with parent and lack of ability to analyze their needs - Too much attention on traditional way to teach techniques - Clarity of the roles and responsibilities of CLC and what should be the roles of parent and private business set up around and the linkage to market and others - Leadership and technical issues in running the center
3	Books, articles, journals, polices, websites, etc.	The Department of Non-Formal Education, Lifelong Education Journal, UNESCO, UNDP, DVV, etc.	- The lack of ownership and commitment - Unattractiveness of the programs and activities - The shortages of facilitators and facilities - Family's burden and low living standards

Based on Table 1 above, it has demonstrated various issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Expert A, expert B, and other sources mainly mentioned the issues of community participation concerning the learners' career pathways after completing the training programs and courses. For example, expert A stated, 'After completing the course, the learners cannot run their own business because they have no capital.' Whereas, expert B said, 'Clarity of the roles and responsibilities of CLCs, and what should be the roles of parents and private businesses, are to set up around and the linkage to market and others.' Similarly, various sources pointed out that 'No career pathway for completed training students.' Hence, we can see that most learners are reluctant to participate in CLCs because they are hopeless for their prospects upon completing the programs. It leads to another problem that is the lack of confidence and trust with the committee of CLCs' administration.

Moreover, expert A commented that 'Learners are busy to earn their living,' and various sources mentioned about 'Family's burden and low living standards,' which implied that Cambodian people's living

standards are quite limited and in low levels. Expert B stated that 'Limited interaction with parent and the lack of ability to analyze their needs,' which shows the loopholes of need assessment between CLC Committee members and community people to seek needs and current issues. Expert A and expert B pointed out that 'the lack of resources, facilities and building' are the issues of resource mobilization. There are three forms of resource mobilization, which are finances, labors, and materials. Lastly, expert B and various sources mentioned, 'Too much attention on the traditional way to teaching techniques and unattractiveness of programs.' It manifested that their teaching curriculum is entirely out of date, and it does not meet the needs of community people as well as to put their problems into a solution.

In conclusion, the issues of community participation are one of the most critical points, which impacts the effectiveness of CLCs and their future sustainability. The problems of community participation are divided into two layers, government administration and grass-roots levels. The issues of community participation in CLCs are grounded in government administration levels, such as the lack of information dissemination, deficiency of facilities and physical infrastructures, poor teaching curriculum, unattractive and unresponsive training programs, unclear future career pathways, poor administration and lack of transparency. Notably, the issues of community participation are also logged in the grass-roots levels, seemingly the lack of their knowledge and understanding, low living standards, the lack of trust and sense of belonging, and their traditional cultures.

6.2 Second research objective: It is to identify strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Like many issues of community participation in CLCs in Cambodia, the researchers have studied the documents and data and conducted semi-structured interviews with Cambodian experts to identify possible strategies and mechanisms to enhance community participation in CLCs. Those possible strategies and mechanisms to strengthen community participation described in Table 2.

Table 2: Synthesizing Experts' Ideas and Various Sources Regarding the Strategies to Strengthen Community Participation in the CLCs in Cambodia

No.	Strategies to strengthen community participation in the CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia	Expert A	Expert B	(DNFE, LLL, UNESCO, DVV, UNDP)
1	Disseminating the significances of CLCs to stakeholders and community people	√		√
2	Holding monthly meetings with the district of education, school directors, and other stakeholders to do a SWOT analysis	√	√	√
3	Training CLC members and technical teachers on how to do planning to improve CLC committee members' administration	√		√
4	Conducting monitoring and evaluation with the CLC committee members' performance.			√
5	Strengthening CLC management and leadership		√	
6	Extending the scopes and roles of DNFE by not just focusing on CLCs (DNF should link informal education and non-formal education with formal education, marketing, social, and sustainable environment)	√	√	
7	Linking one CLC to another CLC to exchange their successful knowledge and experiences		√	√
8	Addressing the local needs and community people's problems	√	√	√
9	Providing clear career pathways for participants to better their livelihood	√	√	
10	Proper disseminating information to community people	√		√
11	Updating teaching curriculum and training programs and activities			√
12	Increasing national budget plan for enhancing non-formal education and informal education	√	√	

In Table 2, it has elucidated the possible strategies to enhance community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia by synthesizing the ideas of Cambodian experts and other sources (DNFE, LLL, UNESCO, DVV, UNDP, etc.). Mainly, there are twelve strategies, which have been mentioned. For instance, holding a monthly meeting with the district of education, school directors and other stakeholders to do a SWOT analysis, and addressing the local needs and community people's problems were mentioned by expert A, expert B and other sources (DNFE, LLL, UNESCO, DVV, UNDP, etc.). As a result, they are the most prioritized strategies to push forward to strengthen community participation in CLCs. Furthermore, there are some strategies, which have been pointed out by expert A and expert B. Those strategies are extending scopes and roles of DNFE by not focusing on only CLCs. Moreover, DNFE should link informal and non-formal education with formal education, marketing, social, and sustainable environment to extend career opportunities for community

people. The government should increase the national budget plan for enhancing non-formal education and informal education. The experts want DNFE to enlarge their scopes and roles in order to integrate informal education and non-formal education with other fields like marketing, social, formal education, and a sustainable environment. By so doing, DNFE can expand the participant's knowledge, skills, and employment. In the same manner, augmenting the national budget plan in implementing LLL is crucial to enhance community participation through increasing diverse programs, activities, and facilities.

Furthermore, the strategies were stated by expert A and other sources (DNFE, LLL, UNESCO, DVV, UNDP, etc.), such as disseminating the significances of CLCs to stakeholders and community people, training CLC members and technical teachers how to do planning to improve CLC committee members' administration, conducting monitoring and evaluation on CLC committee members' performance, and accurate disseminating information to community people. They concentrated on how to assist community people and stakeholders to understand the importance of CLCs, building on CLC committee members and facilitator's capacity, monitoring and evaluating their performances, and providing all primitive information to community people. On the other hand, linking one CLC to another CLC to exchange their successful knowledge and experiences is mentioned by expert B, which emphasizes building rapport and having good relationships among CLCs to improve community participation in terms of their knowledge, experiences, and opportunities. Lastly, strengthening CLC management and leadership is said by expert B, and updating teaching curriculum, and training programs and activities are mentioned by other sources (DNFE, LLL, UNESCO, DVV, UNDP, etc.). These two points focus on building the CLC leader's capacity and modify their popular teaching program to strengthen the quality of programs and activities.

In a nutshell, we can see that there are many suggestive strategies to enhance community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The strategies are number two and eight, which are the most prioritized things to be promoted. It follows by one, three, four, six, seven, nine and twelve. The least prioritized strategies are number five and eleven. The governments and relevant stakeholders should have taken those strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in Cambodia as well as to ensure the sustainability of CLCs.

7. DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the research study, it has manifested that there are many issues pertaining to community participation in CLCs in Cambodia. The research results are also reflected in previous studies and literature reviews, which mentioned the issues of community participation in CLCs. Moreover, there are various strategies which have been mentioned in the literature review. It has justified the research finding.

According to Shaeffer (1994), the issues of community participation, include the lack of transparency, trust and confidence, the apathy of community people's attitude, family's burdens, and unattractiveness of programs and activities. To reflect on the research results, the experts also talked about the lack of trust, confidence, and transparency, the unattractiveness of programs, unclear career pathway for the participants, shortage of resources and facilities, insufficient information, and diagnosing people's needs, and conventional teaching curriculum and administration. Furthermore, those problems are from the governments and CLC committee members because they are the main actors who manage those learning activities (UNESCO, 2011). On the other hand, there are some issues of community participation, which are caused by the community people. Those issues are their cultures (not giving much value to the learning), busy with business and family's burdens, immigration, and inattention to integral parts of the CLCs. Consequently, we can divide the leading causes of community participation in CLCs in the Cambodian context into two main actors, such as government and other relevant stakeholders (implementing levels), and community people (grass-rooted levels) (DVV International, 2018).

In the same token, there are twelve strategies, which have been synthesized from the Cambodian experts and other sources (DNFE, LLL, UNESCO, DVV, UNDP, etc.). There are some strategies, which are more significant or prioritized compared to others. For instance, holding a monthly meeting with the district of education, school directors and stakeholders to do a SWOT analysis, and addressing the local needs and community people's problems were mentioned by expert A, expert B and other sources (DNFE, LLL, UNESCO, DVV, UNDP, etc.) (UNESCO et al., 2015). To burgeon community participation, the government and other stakeholders should put more emphasis on diagnosing the needs of community people and study the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the CLCs and participants. It follows by focusing on disseminating the essences of CLCs, improving CLC committee members' administration, conducting monitoring and evaluating the CLCs' performances, extending the scopes of DNFE in order to increase chances of participants in terms of knowledge, experiences, and employment opportunities, linking CLCs to other CLCs to exchange

their successful experiences, providing a clear career pathway, disseminating information to community people, and augmenting national budget plans to enhance LLL and NFE.

Hence, there are a lot of issues of community participation in CLCs, which have been found in the studies (UNESCO, 1999). It is also inconsistent with previous research and literature review. Most of the issues are critical, which they should have paid heed to alleviate the impacts of those issues and make the centers more active. To end those issues, this research study also comes up with various strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in Cambodia.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research has addressed two main research objectives such as the study on issues of community participation in CLCs in Cambodia and identifying strategies to strengthen community people in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The first phase is to explore the issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The researchers have studied previous documents such as books, articles, journals, policies, and popular websites. To validate the information, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with Cambodian experts in the field of non-formal education and informal education. Those issues come from two main actors, namely the government (unclear career pathways for participants, conventional teaching curriculum and facilities, the lack of disseminating information, and corruption) and community people (their traditional cultures, busy with their businesses and family's burdens, immigration, and lack of understanding the essence of CLCs). The second phase is to identify strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in Cambodia. To attain this research objective, content-analysis was used to synthesize information from the experts and other sources (DNFE, LLL, UNESCO, DVV, UNDP, etc.). Those strategies contribute to solving the issues of community participation. For instance, they should hold a monthly meeting to diagnose their needs, conduct monitoring and evaluation regarding CLC committee member's performances, upgrading CLC leaders, administrative staff and facilitators' capacity, disseminating enough information, linking one CLC to another CLC and increasing national budget plans in implementing CLCs.

In conclusion, according to conducting the semi-structured interview, conducting observations, analyzing and synthesizing all essential information, this research study proposes the following strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs in Cambodia into five parts: policy, management, professional development, curriculum and career pathway development as in following:

• Policies on Strengthening Community Participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia

Design policies on strengthening community participation to ensure everyone, regardless of their genders, ages, and religions to attend CLCs, and have access to equitable quality and free education. Particularly, it is an ideal measure to augment numbers of CLCs as they are schools of non-formal and informal education. There should be policies to enhance and disseminate information of CLCs through social media, advertisement programs on televisions, leaflets, brochures, and flyers. By so doing, community people will understand more about the great significance of CLCs towards their lives and communities. As a result, the numbers of community participation in CLCs will increase because of their knowledge of CLCs, which makes CLCs more sustainable and active.

• Management on Strengthening Community Participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia

The concept of management concentrates on 4 Ms: Men, Materials, Money, and Management structures. It is essential to put people to work in the right places and skills with a suitable position, which could help us to save time and money, significantly to enhance community participation in the CLCs. Moreover, to optimize community participation, the wise budget allocation should be fostered and promoted because, without proper budge management, CLCs will not be able to perform their functions well. Alternatively, seeking alternative donors can be done through resource mobilization, which refers to finances, materials, and labors from the community people by building trust, transparency, and a sense of belonging. Once community people have more trust, confidence, and a sense of belonging in CLCs, they are willing to participate in CLCs.

• Professional Development on Strengthening Community Participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia

Regularly conduct training for CLC committee members and facilitators to build their professional development and capacity building; it is one of the most effective ways to strengthen community participation in CLCs. Once CLC committee members can advance their management and administrative skills, they are able to serve the community people better in terms of providing services, information, and organizing activities. The same is also true for the facilitators who teach and train community people with competent skills and

knowledge. It can help them build community people's confidence and trust; as a result, community people see the benefits of CLCs, and they will take this opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills through participating in the training programs in CLCs without hesitance.

• Curriculum Design on Strengthen Community Participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia

Initiate and establish a modern and suitable curriculum to teach and train community people, and the curriculum should be annually updated and made more flexible to fit the participant's schedule and interests. By so doing, community people will have more chances to participate in the training courses, which are organized by CLC committee members and facilitators. Similarly, the programs should be able to captive and arouse the participants' interests, especially put their problems into the solution. For example, they should enhance some attractive and popular programs, such as income-generating programs, functional literacy, complementary program, and vocational training skills. In this sense, the facilitators must demonstrate the purposes of their teaching to learners and link what they have learned to the real application. Hence, the learners will be able to use their knowledge to apply in their real-life situations, which is the authentic point for them to participate in CLCs.

• Career Pathway Development on Strengthening Community Participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia

Develop a conspicuous career pathway for participants is an approach to improving community participation in CLCs. The governments and other relevant stakeholders must pay attention to provide a clear career pathway for participants upon completing their training courses or programs. For instance, there should be a training course to help them improve their budget management and problem-solving skills because they can use those skills to prepare themselves for their future careers and businesses. Furthermore, the CLC committee management should expand their career opportunities by linking their CLCs to other CLCs to exchange knowledge, skills, and opportunities for the participants. In a similar vein, the participant can exchange skills with other participants in different CLCs and work together to solve their common problems. CLCs should extend their roles and functions by not focusing on non-formal education and informal education but on other fields like marketing, social, formal education, and a sustainable environment, which one of the alternative ways to enlarge their career pathway development.

8. IMPLICATION

This research study provided implicative and informative information regarding the problems of community participation and suggestive strategies to strengthen community participation in CLCs to the governments, practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders.

As in the result of the research study, there are many predominated issues of community participation, caused by two main actors (the government-top level, and community people-grass-rooted level). In this sense, the research study also comes up with many possible strategies and mechanisms to ameliorate those problems as well as to enhance community participation in CLCs. Those resourceful strategies will contribute directly and indirectly to Cambodian governments and other related stakeholders in designing and establishing any policies or guidelines to enhance community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Recommendations from the research results

The results have provided resourceful information through two main research objectives as follows:

1) The information on the first research objective is recommended to government and grass-roots levels (community people) to understand and acknowledge the current issues of community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Those groups of people can learn from the information to adjust and modify their actions and activities to solve or alleviate the issues of community participation in CLCs.

2) The information on the second research objective is recommended to governments, practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders. They can utilize these strategies as mechanisms and guidelines to strengthen the community participation in CLCs in Cambodia through enhancing community participation policies, strengthening management, improving professional development, redesigning curriculum, and fostering career pathways of community people. These pieces of information are general guidelines for them to come up with practical actions and measures to strengthen community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

9.2 Recommendations for further studies

Due to time constraint and research barriers as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19, this research study was conducted on a small population. Hence, the researchers recommend to the prospective researchers and scholars to study those issues of community participation in a broader scope and try to build any models to enhance community participation in CLCs in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

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