



**MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION
FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES
IN THE PHILIPPINES**



Philippines



ROSE MARIE F. V. SAET

Director III, DepEd-BNFE

**March 23-27, 2004
Chiangmai, Thailand**

Country Report on Community Learning Centres

INTRODUCTION

The Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in the Philippines, particularly the pilot CLCs assisted by UNESCO have contributed much in the development of the community much more of the people in terms of gains in literacy skills, increased income and development of positive attitude, critical thinking, cooperation and unity in community endeavor. Thus, results were very encouraging, making it a point to plan for expansion and work on some policies to institutionalize the establishment and strengthening of the CLCs to make them totally responsive to the changing needs of the community members.

This country report will cover the significant activities and impact of the CLCs on ³the lives of the people, problems met and how they were addressed and some plans to do in line with the goals of Education for All (EFA) 2015 and United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD).

The following sites are the main focus of this report.

Region I	-	Barangay Barbaquezo, Carasi, Ilocos Norte
Region II	-	Barangay Namuccayan, Sto. Niño, Cagayan
Region VI	-	Tubungan, Iloilo and Dumarao, Capiz
Region VIII	-	Maasin, Southern Leyte, Soyo, Southern Leyte

The main sources of information and methods of collecting information were existing documents, results of monitoring and field visits in the CLC pilot and expansion sites, data gathered from structured and unstructured interviews, key informants, CLC officials, learners and community members.

Information gathered were discussed during debriefing and cliniquing activities after each monitoring. Data were analyzed to identify the critical gaps in the project implementation and provided possible solutions that would immediately address the problems. Documentation of proceedings and activities was done and feedbacks were given to all concerned.

Preparation of this report therefore was made possible through the collaborative and participatory efforts of NFE key officials and field partners from the national, regional, division and grassroots level (Annex 1)

³ A COUNTRY REPORT (PHILIPPINES) presented by Dr. Rose Marie F. V. Saet, Director III, Bureau of Nonformal Education during the 2004 Regional Seminar on Community Learning Centres, Chiangmai, Thailand, March 23 – 27, 2004.

Section 1: Background and Overview on CLCs

The Philippines is one of the world's largest archipelago. Mass population is concentrated on 11 of the largest, Luzon in the North, Mindanao in the South and Visayas in the center. The country is estimated to have a population of eighty – one million people categorized into three social classes based on income of the national wealth as follows: 1) rich class (10%), 2) middle wealth (20%), and 3) lower/poor class (70%). There are ethnographic groups which are distinct in economic social life and language. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population engage in agriculture, forestry and fishing. Income is supplemented by livestock raising and handicraft some are into trade and manufacturing. But still unemployed people and those engage in odd jobs part-time or seasonal work are prevalent often due to lack of education.

Like any other nations in the Asia-Pacific, the Philippines is still struggling to uplift the socio-economic conditions of its people. Poverty and illiteracy are two major problems and the more visible ones being addressed in the country's various medium term development plans for which the President had spoke of the template of the national agenda revolving on a modernized agricultural sector, a social bias towards the disadvantaged to balance the economic development plan, economic philosophy of free enterprise and raise the moral standards of government and society.

These are too hard to attain at this point where there are continuing threats to the stability of the county and only through our work in literacy promotion can we build a solid foundation for our country's growth and stability. Through education, we can eventually introduce new approaches for addressing the problems of society and one very potent factor was the establishment of community learning centers (CLCs).

In 1990 during the start of the EFA 1 decade, the simple literacy rate for persons 15-24 years old stood at 96.6%. The Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) conducted in 1994 showed that simple literacy for same age group rose to 97.3 percent. However, the year 2000 census registered a slight dip to 95.1 percent.

Gender	1990	1994	2000
Male	96.3	96.6	94.5
Female	96.9	98.1	95.7
Total	96.6	97.3	95.1

It could be mentioned that functional literacy rates are lower than the literacy rates in all regions which is only 83.8 percent.

Regions where literacy rates are lower are areas characterized by the following:

- More than half of the population in rural areas (except Metro Manila) engaged in agricultural occupation characterized by:
 - Seasonality
 - Inadequate capital and credit
 - Poorly organized market and distribution process
 - Limited entrepreneurial management and technical expertise
 - Population growth is high
 - Big number of out-of-school youth and young adults
 - Half of the population is below poverty threshold
 - High rate of unemployment and underemployment

The Community Learning Centres given fund assistance by UNESCO are the following:

- Pilot Sites
 - Barbaquezo, Carasi, Ilocos Norte, Region 1
 - Brgy. Namuccayan, Sto. Niño, Cagayan, Region II
- Expansion Areas
 - Tubungan, Iloilo, Region VI
 - Dumarao, Capiz, Region VI
 - Maasin, Southern Leyte, Region VIII
 - Sogo, Southern, Leyte

Assistance for the pilot sites were intended for the strengthening and enhancement of the CLC's facilities, setting up of mini-libraries, capacity building and monitoring and evaluation. For the expansion areas in Regions VI and VIII, assistance given was earmarked as start-up capital for the establishment of CLC.

Community – based NFE programmes supported by the Department of Education, LGU and some NGOs are the following:

- Basic Literacy Program (BLP) through Literacy Service Contracting Scheme

Objective: Provide illiterate OSY and Adults from target barangay with educational program specifically designed to address their expressed needs.
- Literacy Cum Livelihood (LCL)

Objective: Integrate livelihood skills training in the literacy sessions in order to provide opportunity for the acquisition of employable skills to augment their income.

- NFE Mobile Program

Objective: Make education accessible to OSY and adults in remote and underserved communities.

- NFE Accreditation and Equivalency System

Objective: Provide learning opportunities that will empower OSY and adult learners to continue learning in any manner, anytime, and any place they want to achieve their goals in improving their quality of life.

Section 2: Policy and Legislation for CLCs

The Department of Education with the vast needs of the formal education to be addressed cannot provide for additional funds to the BNFE for the establishment of community learning centers. However, with the strong support of local government units who are endowed with proprietary powers to manage their own affairs for the welfare of their constituencies as provided in the Local Government Code of 1991 were able to start giving assistance in their modest capacity to establish community learning centers utilizing existing infrastructure or putting up new ones utilizing indigenous materials.

On the other hand, the Department of Education is mandated by the 1987 Philippine Constitution and the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan to provide access to quality education at all levels in any educational system that would respond to community people's needs. Community Learning Centres are proven to be a good intervention in the delivery of Alternative Learning programs and had taken its way in its inclusion in the National Plan of Action (NPA) EFA – ALS 2015 and as one of the specific programmes planned for the promotion of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), to wit:

- Life Skills Programmes through Multi-sectoral effort of the Local Government Units, TESDA, League of Mayors, League of Barangay Captains, etc.
- Coordinated programs for Senior Citizens, Young Parents, Differently-abled Indigenous Peoples, etc. with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).
- Establishment and Strengthening of Community Learning Centres.

In order to ensure that the interventions called for in the Philippine EFA-ALS Plan for 2015 are founded on an appropriate implementation environment, a number of policy measures are to be formulated and adopted in terms of establishing and strengthening the Community Learning Centres (CLCs) as a strong support structure to literacy effort towards a learning community.

A policy declaration made through a Department Order will be announced by DepEd in 2005 for the institutionalization of the CLC to help attain the targets for 2015 and the United Nations Literacy Decade as early as the current year.

The local government units will be encouraged to allocate a portion of their provincial, city and municipal development funds to support the CLCs and the ALS programmes that are being undertaken to raise the literacy level of the community and for the economic empowerment programs for women with emphasis on life-skills programmes. To further support the objectives of the UNLD and EFA 2015 through the CLCs, partnership will be forged with the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC).

The CLCs obtained support in different ways as follows:

BNFE Counterpart

- Technical Assistance
- Manpower
- Equipment
- Supplies and Materials
- Learning Materials

LGUs

- Manpower (District/Barangay)
- Materials/Supplies
- Building/Infrastructure
- Honoraria of trainers

DepEd – Region/Division

- Technical Assistance
- Manpower
- Learning Materials
- Equipment

Section 3: Main Activities of the CLCs

The Staff Development Division – Bureau of Nonformal Education spearheaded the conduct of the training activities on the Establishment/Strengthening of Community Learning Centers utilizing the UNESCO CLC Handbooks namely: Establishment of Community Learning Centers and Effective Implementation of Continuing Education at the Grassroots. Adult Learning Materials at the Community Level and Literacy Clip Art were incorporated to enhance the skills of NFE implementers in the development of local materials and at the same time addressing the problem of lack of learning materials.

Contents of CLC Training/Orientation

- NFE programs, projects and Activities as Inputs to the Operationalization of the CLC
- A Conceptual Framework of Community Learning Centers (CLCs)
- Sharing of Experiences on the Establishment and Sustainability of CLCs
- Innovative Approaches on Basic Education and Lifelong Learning for Gender Equality through the Community Learning Centres, a Research Study
- The Handbook for Nonformal Adult Education Facilitators
- Sharing on the Role of Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Implementation and Sustainability of the Community Learning Centers (CLCs)
- Role of Non – government Organizations (NGOs) in the Implementation and Sustainability of the Community Learning Centers (CLCs)
- Importance of Linkaging and Networking in the Implementation/Utilization of the CLCs for the Sustainability of Programs and Projects in the Community

The CLC training/activities focused on the following:

Skills Trainings Conducted	Number of Participants			Trainers
1. Mushroom culture	8	17	2	Mun. Agriculture Officer
2. Dressmaking and cosmetology	8	12	2 Saturdays	NFE District/TESDA
3. Food Processing	5	15	3 Saturdays	NFE, DA, RIC
4. Small Farm Machineries	3	12	4 Saturdays	NFE, TESDA, DA
5. Basic Literacy Class (LSCS)			4 months (155 hrs.)	NFE Facilitator and Coordinator
6. Literacy cum Livelihood (LCL)	7	18	4 months (155 hrs.)	NFE Facilitator/Coordinator

- Early Childhood Care and Education was implemented in coordination with the Department of Social Services and Development where the CLC was only used as a venue and mothers attended literacy classes while waiting for their children.
- The NFE A&E program was conducted by the Mobile Teachers/District NFE Coordinators and the CLC served as the venue for learning and repository of modules.
- Skills training on livelihood and income-generating projects were conducted in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture (DA), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).
- Medical missions and health services were provided by the Department of Health staff at the local level. Orientation and information dissemination on health and sanitation, HIV/AIDS prevention and family planning were conducted.
- Barangay sportsfest and cultural presentations sponsored by the barangay officials.
- Local wisdom in the use of herbal medicines and preservation of traditions and practices were integrated in literacy.
- Women were trained on small-scale enterprise to prepare them to assist in family welfare advancement. Knowledge in food preparation helped mothers improved the nutritional status of family members.

- Human rights and democracy were exercised by the people in making choices and decision – making e.g. voting wisely.
- Hardware like TV and computers are already part in some CLCs and OSY were given opportunity to be oriented on its importance.
- Ethnic minorities are considered special focus of education and some basic literacy materials were already written in their dialect/language.
- Caring for the environment is one of the major concerns of training in the CLC using the sample stories of barangays that were heavily-damaged by natural and man-made calamities.

Section 4: Effective Implementation of CLCs

The UNESCO assisted Community Learning Centers (CLCs) Project implemented in the Philippines were established in 2001 and had served as instruments in fostering strong cooperation and collaboration among the community members. It is worth mentioning that the CLCs are effectively and efficiently managed by the community members as a result of the participatory and comprehensive development process introduced through the concept of Community Learning Centres.

At the barangay/purok levels the CLC project made use of existing community development councils who then mobilize community people participation. Local CLC plan was cooperatively prepared. Roles and functions of CLC members were defined and orientation was further provided on how the CLC should be managed during the conduct of activities like when there are regular meetings/conferences, general assembly, skills training, medical missions, film viewing or social and literacy activities. Starting from the construction of the Community Learning Center, community people were encouraged to donate free labor or indigenous construction materials owing to the fact that local participation is vital to community development.

Financial assistance was provided by the town mayor, barangay officials and reading materials were donated by various government agencies and NGOs as local counterpart for the funding assistance given by UNESCO in the amount of \$ 1, 500 each for the two (2) pilot CLCs and \$ 500 each for the expansion areas in the Visayas region.

Several meetings/orientation and advocacy and social mobilization activities during the initial stage of implementation were conducted by the team composed of NFE implementers on the GOs, NGOs and LGUs responsibilities for the dissemination of the CLC project objectives rationale and expected outcomes. Topics on Social Preparation, Community Organizing, Needs Assessment, and Preparation of Action Plans highlighted the focus of discussion which is on Establishing and Strengthening of Community Learning Centers in the Philippines.

Skills training activities conducted at the CLCs were:

- Food Processing
- Mushroom Culture

- Livestock Raising
- Buying and selling of farm supplies and products
- Dressmaking
- Cosmetology
- Handicraft making

Intensive collaboration and networking activities were conducted. Local government units were motivated to provide financial assistance from the Local School Board Budget – Special Education Fund (LSB-SEF). Commitment/pledges from the different government organizations (GOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) were also solicited in terms of material or technical support. Civic – spirited people from the community also donated some materials cash and reading materials. These various agencies also shared their expertise during trainings/practicum and in the management of the different activities in the CLC. On the other hand, the committees sourced out funds to finance their own project. They met regularly to discuss and identify strategies that would realize their objectives in the action plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation were done in order to identify the flaws in the implementation of the project and provide corrective actions thereat. Status and progress were also assessed and determined if they are in accord with the set plan. Team/participatory monitoring and evaluation were done composed of representatives from the BNFE, Regional Office, division and district levels together with some GOS, local government officials using questionnaire and spot monitoring tools. Other techniques include: interview, dialogues, group discussions, observations and scanning and analysis of CLC records/reports. NFE field implementers, Literacy Service Providers, CLC members, learners, key informants, mobile teachers, barangays leaders and school administrators were also involved in the monitoring and evaluation to evaluate the internal efficiency of the project implementation thereby immediately addressing the loopholes that required modification in the plan.

Skills in information dissemination and systematic documentation of CLC activities were also developed/enhanced among CLC project implementers. The Secretary of the CLC Management Committee at the national, provincial, municipal and barangay levels keep the records and prepare reports on a quarterly and annual basis copy furnished the BNFE. Flow of reports follow the cycle from the barangay level to the municipal level, then to the division/provincial level where it is summarized and submitted to the regional office copy furnished the BNFE. Activities being undertaken in the CLC were properly documented and minutes of every meeting taken and recorded.

BNFE staff validated reports through site visits and interviews and provided feedback to concerned committees/implementers.

Section 5: Strengths and Future Challenges

Implementation of the Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in the pilot and expansion areas varies in terms of innovative styles introduced by the local government units CLC Committee Members and even by some support institutions.

They were just too enthusiastic to pursue their planned activities and even surpass them. The CLC_s even brought honor and/or recognition to some local government executives who participated in the National Literacy Awards conducted by the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) and community development processes took place and strong partnership and camaraderie were bonded for the benefit and welfare of the community people. To mention a few, following are the strengths of the CLC_s.

- Team spirit
- Reading started to become an activity of the people as they got to appreciate the value of education, thus improving the literacy skills of the people
- Community members became aware of their roles and responsibilities as they developed sense of ownership of the CLC.
- Paved the way to the transformation and development of good values, (life-skills) e.g.,
 - Wise use of time
 - Respect for one another
 - Self-esteem/self – confidence
 - Care for the environment
 - Love for work
 - Health consciousness
 - Sensitive to the needs of others
 - Improve economic motivation as members were able to augment their income through profitable activity or income-generating projects, e.g., food preservation, meet processing, handicraft making, etc.
- CLC_s served as a multi-purpose venue for activities like:
 - Session hall for literacy efforts
 - Venue for training/film viewing/meetings
 - Display center for finished products
 - Recreation and socialization center, information and data center

The Community Learning Center Project yielded good results so that despite the absence of financial assistance other barangays already started similar CLC project utilizing existing infrastructure and committees to be able to undertake community activities that will hasten development and raise the quality of life of the people.

Challenges encountered by the CLC_s at the grassroots and national levels were the following:

- Lukewarm attitude of community members
- Lack of financial counterpart support from the government
- Lack of knowledge as the benefits of CLCs to the community
- Ningas cogon attitude of the government officials
- Indifferent attitude of community members towards literacy programs

Possible solutions to overcome the challenges:

- Conduct survey and feasibility studies
- Conduct similar trainings tapping the technical expertise of selected BNFE, Region and Division NFE Staff
- Documenting and disseminating best practices and success stories
- Conduct training needs assessment and prioritization of needs
- Intensive advocacy and social mobilization activities at the grassroots levels
- Involve the different stakeholders in planning
- Conduct workshop on literacy materials development
- Conduct team – building activities
- Exchange visits in the CLCs sites
- Conduct debriefing activities after monitoring
- Prepare and submit project proposals to funding agencies and local government executives for consideration
- Expansion of CLC Projects in Regions I and II and establishment of CLCs in Mindanao Region (at least 2 barangays)
- Upgrading the capability building program for committee members and NFE field implementers for phasing in (\$ 8, 000 – proposed by BNFE for said training)
- Enhancing strategies in networking and collaboration with NGOs, LGUs and Civil Society
- Integration of CLC project activities in the local government development plan
- Development of appropriate/indigenous reading/literacy materials
- Increase in community people participation
- Maximum utilization of local resources (human and material)
- Enhancing cooperation and communication between and among community people
- Policy direction for sustainability

Plans to strengthen CLCs as part of National EFA Strategies

- Issuance of DepEd Memoranda, Orders for the Establishment/Strengthening of CLCs and organization of learning groups in the community for Basic Literacy and NFE Accreditation and Equivalency
- Introduce life-skills programs to develop a learning society
- Adapt/develop an integrated plan for functional literacy and continuing education program
- Develop/enhance entrepreneurial skills of women
- Utilize multi-media materials in training out-of-school children, youth and adults in cooperation with the formal education system
- Empower community people by addressing their education/health concern e.g., population education, environmental management, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender disparity, raising the literacy rate of the community, etc.
- Packaging of distance education modules in various modes (interactive print, computer assisted instrument or multi-media where power is available
- Revival of the Rural Service Program required of government workers focusing this time on literacy and NFE endeavor defined by local communities where this form of service is rendered.

- Implementation of the National Service Law have to focus less in military training but more on community development and services orientation, green revolution, environment education, values formation and conflict resolution.
- Push for a mandate/law for the continuation of local government literacy program that have been started by previous administration especially those that are efficiently and functionally operating already.
- Profiling of existing CLCs in the country
- Capacity building for CLC Managers

Suggestions for UNESCO, other UN agencies, NGOs agencies to support CLC

- Provision of funding assistance to establish/improve the barangay MIS through purchase of computers, TV and other hardware:
 - Conduct capacity – building activities
 - Expand CLCs in the Mindanao region
 - Develops indigenous learning materials
 - Invite/fund participants from the grassroots level to attend international seminar on CLC

Key lessons Learned

- Change in administration in the Department of Education or in the local government unit tend to diminish support to the CLC project
- Economic difficulty/problem seems to affect volunteerism among the community people
- After the conduct of skills training, the need for a seed capital becomes a problem
- The inadequacy of fund for monitoring and evaluating the CLC project is a deterrent to the sustainability of the project
- The formal education teachers cannot fully cooperate with the NFE implementers to be able to mainstream the out-of-school children and youth who are completers of the NFE literacy classes
- Sustainability depends on the degree of involvement of the community people
- Effective CLCs require direct participation of the target group
- Common needs of the people have to be addressed to attain active participation

