

NRC-NFE/ ARTC Nepal in promotion of NFE/ LLE and CLC in Nepal

National Resource Center for Non Formal Education (NRC-NFE), Nepal was established in 1995 with the aim of promoting Non-Formal Education (NFE)/ Life Long Education (LLE) and Community Learning Centers (CLCs). Since its establishment it has been working for community empowerment by providing literacy and NFE programs. It started CLC program establishing first CLC and additional 3 CLCs in Kavre and later 6 CLCs in Lalitpur. The CLCs were established as community based mechanism to empower the village people through education and development process in the villages. Seeing the effectiveness of the CLCs, the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ) helped NRC-NFE to start 6 CLCs 3 each in Rupendehi and Kapilvastu districts and 6 more CLCs in the same districts in second phase. So, in total, NRC-NFE has 6 CLCs in Rupendehi and 6 in Kapilvastu and one Guide CLC and Training Center in Lumbini.

The effort of NRC-NFE on CLC promotion has resulted in expanding the CLCs and NFE programs through CLCs in Nepal. The Government of Nepal was convinced that the CLC is a very useful mechanism for community empowerment and local development. So, the Government has decided to establish 205 CLCs one each in each constituency. But later, the public demand is so much for the CLCs that the Government has expanded CLCs up to 1831 CLCs and also made a policy to set up one CLC in each Village Development Committee (VDC) and each ward of each Municipality. That way very soon, Nepal would have about 6000 CLCs.

Although there has been a rapid expansion in number of CLCs in recent years, majority of the CLCs are not being able to function well. The recent assessment of Conditions of CLCs in Nepal done by UNESCO Kathmandu mentioned that 44% of the CLCs surveyed have rated their own CLCs as average in terms of quality. From the study, it is found that 23% of the CLCs surveyed are running 2 or more programs and performing well while 43% CLCs have no programs and 34% are running only one program. This indicates achieving expected outcomes on CLC program and sustaining quality CLCs is a difficult task. Program quality depends on the social mobilizers, motivators and leadership of the CLC management committee members. So, their capacities should be enhanced on planning and management of CLCs.

In this context, the NRC-NFE/ ARTC Nepal has set up one Guide CLC and Training Center in Lumbini for technical guidance to the CLCs and others who are interested in CLCs. The center has been providing trainings with video show and study visit to model CLCs set up by NRC-NFE in Lumbini for the CLC personnel from Government promoted CLCs and NGOs promoted CLCs. These Guide CLC and model CLCs are also visited by different high level personnel from different organizations such as Nepal Government, Ministry of Education (MOE), Non Formal Education Center (NFEC), Regional Education Directorate, District Education Offices (DEOs) and other GOs, NGOs, schools etc. The visitors have highly appreciated the NRC-NFE's effort for developing model CLCs and providing opportunity to learn about effective management and operation of the CLCs.

The NRC-NFE has been working very closely with the MOE, NFEC. Many training programs were jointly organized by NRC-NFE and NFEC for CLC personnel and government staff. Similarly, experts from NRC-NFE have been serving as resource persons in the trainings/ workshops/ seminars organized by the government at central level as well as in regional level and district levels. But difficulty is our limited source and reach. So, NRC-NFE has suggested the Government that there should be at least 3 such Guide CLCs and Training Centers one in Eastern Part, one in Central Region and another in Western Region. NRC-NFE also expressed its willingness to work for the Central Region.

The Government has started developing 5 CLCs as model CLCs providing them financial support for construction of CLC building and computer. NRC-NFE feels that these model CLCs could be expanded as Guide CLC and Training Center to cover all districts of Nepal. The Government has to increase allocation of its budget in NFE because the existing budget allocation of only 1.6% of education budget is inadequate for NFE. Moreover, capacity of the NFEC of the Government should be enhanced to undertake such needful task.

The most common literacy programs being implemented by the CLCs are basic and adult literacy, literacy campaign, income generation and women's literacy with the support of the Government. National Literacy Campaign (NLC) classes for three months are neither adequate for making them literate nor it teaches the essential skills for adults. NRC-NFE has been telling the Government that the period for the campaign should be increased. The national campaign is the political decision and quality of the education is not considered. It is difficult to increase the literacy rate of Nepal.

On top of that there are equivalency literacy programs like Flexible Schooling Program for children and NFE adult schools for youth and adults. Besides, there are income generation programs through groups, saving and credit programs in groups, skill development trainings for groups were also organized in the CLCs. Similarly, various awareness raising and community development activities, health programs, environment promotional activities, issue based learning activities in CLC resource centers etc. are also organized by the CLCs.

The above mentioned equivalency programs are based on formal school curriculum with condensed only and not based on local context. So, NRC-NFE believes that there should be NFE programs based on NFE curriculum and equivalent to various levels up to secondary level. Therefore, NRC-NFE has initiated to revise the existing NFE curriculum to make it more practical, productive and useful to the learners. The teaching learning package will also be developed accordingly.

Non Formal Education is only the alternative way to provide education for those who can not get education from formal education system and CLCs have been effective delivery mechanism for NFE and LLE. So, it is urgent to upgrade non formal education which is provided through CLCs. Otherwise, it will be late to achieve education for all and poverty alleviation goals. So, the NRC-NFE has been advocating for promotion of NFE/ LLE programs through CLCs. It has been organizing national seminars, interaction and

discussion programs, experience sharing workshops, coordination seminars etc. with the MOE, NFEC and different line ministries at central as well as district and local levels. It has published a collection of articles on NFE and CLC. It also publishes articles in literacy magazines of the Government.

This way, the NRC-NFE as an ARTC member, has focused its activities in capacity building of CLC personnel and concerned government personnel including NFE personnel for developing quality CLCs in Nepal and providing technical support to the government and CLCs through advocacy, material support and trainings.

The major activity areas of NRC-NFE/ ARTC Nepal for 2011-2016

- Advocacy
- Technical Support to the Government for developing quality CLCs
- Capacity building of the CLC personnel and government staff
- Revision of NFE curriculum
- Development of teaching learning package for self learning level based on revised NFE curriculum
- NFE programs of self learning level
- Material development on CLC/ NFE