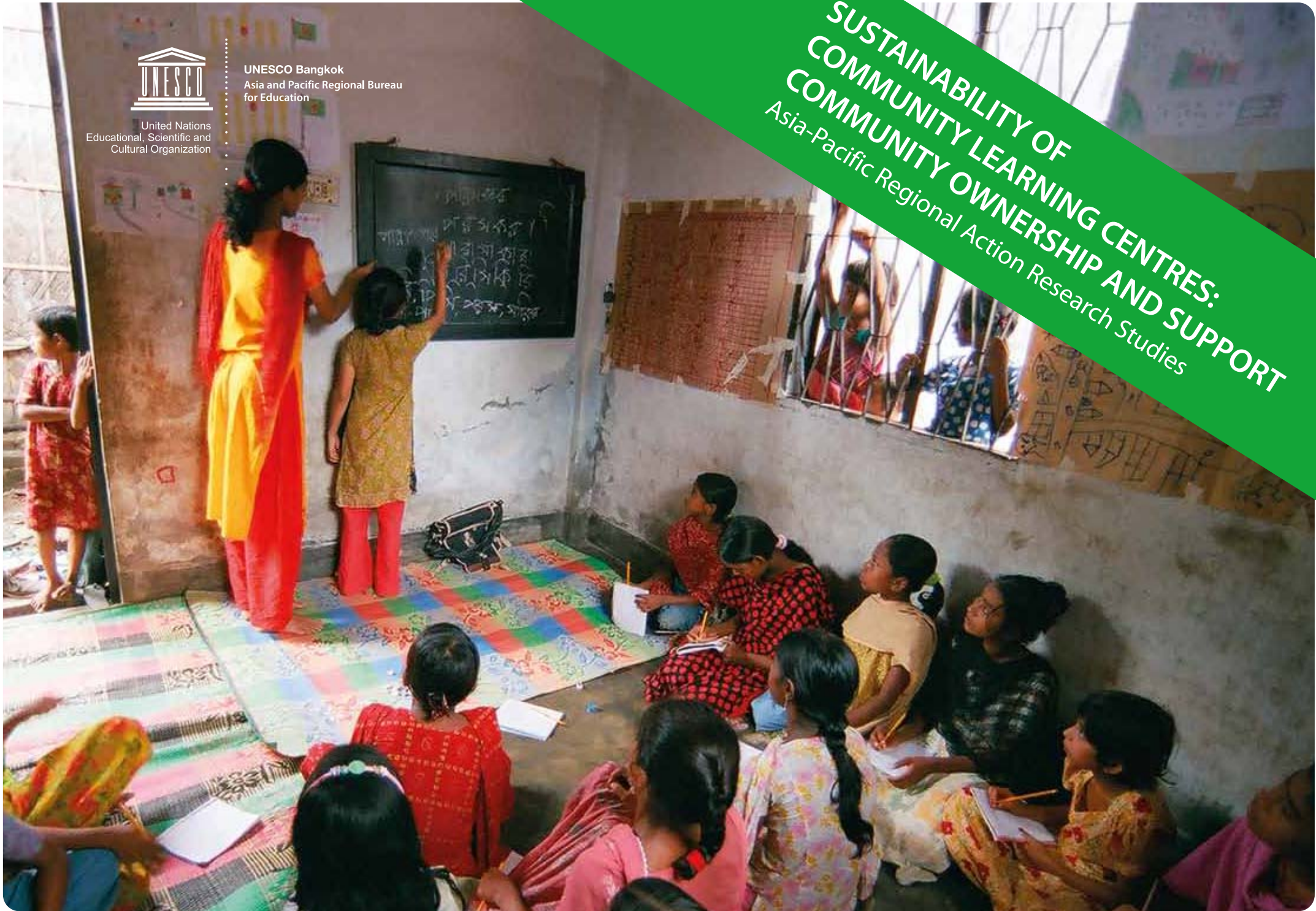




United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Bangkok  
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau  
for Education



**SUSTAINABILITY OF  
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES:  
COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND SUPPORT**  
Asia-Pacific Regional Action Research Studies

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Asia-Pacific  
Regional Action  
Research Studies

Published by UNESCO Bangkok  
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education  
Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building  
920 Sukhumvit Road, Prakanong, Klongtoey  
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

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ISBN 978-92-9223-382-2 (Electronic version)

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Copy editor: Clive Wing  
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Front cover photo: © Din Muhammad Shibly

APL/11/OS/026-500

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

A&E	Accreditation and Equivalence	PEPT	Education Placement Test
ALS	Alternative Learning System	PO(s)	Provincial Offices(s)
ANFE	Adult and Non-Formal Education	QA	Quality Assurance
A-P	Asia-Pacific (Region)	SES	Socio-Economic Status
APPEAL	Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All	SMC	School Management Committees
BALS	Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
BNFE	Bureau of Non-Formal Education	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CBO(s)	Community-Based Organization(s)	US	United States of America
CCB(s)	Citizens Community Board(s)	VDC	Village Development Committee
CLC(s)	Community Learning Centre(s)	VEP	Village Education Plan
CMC(s)	Community Management Centre(s)		
CODI	Country Organizations Development Institute		
DEO(s)	District Education Office(s)		
ECD	Early Child Development		
EFA	Education for All		
EU	European Union		
FE	Formal Education		
FLEMMS	Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey		
HRD	Human Resource Development		
IM	Instructional Manager		
INGO(s)	International Non-Government Organization(s)		
LLL	Lifelong Learning		
MDG	Millennium Development Goals		
NFBE	Non-Formal Basic Education		
NFE(C)	Non-Formal Education (Commission)		
NFEC	Non-Formal Education Center		
NGO(s)	Non-Government Organization(s)		
NPA	New Plan of Action		
NRC NFE	National Resource Center for Non-Formal Education		
ONFEC	Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission		
PEDP	Primary Education Department Program		

## FOREWORD

The Community Learning Centre (CLC) Project launched in UNESCO Bangkok has been operational since 1998. UNESCO Bangkok has facilitated the exchange of experience about CLCs among the participating countries through several regional research and reporting forums. In the latest of these, UNESCO Bangkok has coordinated another round of joint research studies on CLCs in seven countries in the Asia-Pacific region. This continuing activity of UNESCO Bangkok aims to promote a regional understanding of what has been, and may be accomplished in the development of CLCs, for the benefit of educationally underprovided-for populations.

The UNESCO Bangkok Project promotes CLCs to support Member States in achieving Education for All (EFA) and Lifelong Learning (LLL) and, thus, to meet MDG goals. UNESCO Bangkok encourages the promotion of CLCs, with their proven record of achievement, with inter and intra-country activities. Emerging issues for CLCs in recent times have been the issue of sustainability and that of the interaction between external intervention and internal autonomy.

Many project reports and much documentation have discussed the 'participation and involvement' of community people, but not so much the process of 'community ownership' in the planning, implementation and assessment of activities. For example, community people are provided with activities designed and arranged by outsiders. Needs assessment surveys are often designed by 'experts' to identify the needs of a community, who analyze these results to identify development activities for community people. As regards the management of CLCs and their programmes, the participation and contribution of the local community and people are often limited to management tasks, especially finance and labour, but not the content of activities. In such cases, local wisdom, knowledge or skills are not fully used for designing and implementing activities in CLCs. The limited involvement and lack of exploitation of local resources are critical elements in the sustainability issue.

This publication listens to the voices of the countries themselves as they interpret the results of the action research studies they have undertaken with the support of UNESCO Bangkok in 2007. The focus of their reports is on community participation/ownership, the positives and limitations to external involvement, and the directions which need to be taken in the interests of the sustainability of their CLCs.

This publication comes in two parts. The first is a synthesis of the action research studies commissioned by UNESCO Bangkok. The synthesis provides a cross-country analysis of the findings leading to a regional perspective. The second part is a summary of the features of CLC operations in each country, focusing on the issue of community participation and ownership and external intervention, and the various recommendations for the future sustainability of CLCs.

A rewarding learning experience awaits the CLC-concerned reader in this publication.



Gwang-jo Kim  
*Director*  
UNESCO Bangkok

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**PART**  
**ONE**  
**A REGIONAL**  
**SYNTHESIS**

## Section 1: Rationale for the synthesis

In the Asia-Pacific region, the Community Learning Centre (CLC) has emerged as a viable model for the delivery of basic literacy and lifelong learning opportunities for adolescents and adults. The UNESCO CLC Project was launched in 1998 within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Program of Education for All (APPEAL). The CLC has served as a local venue for communities, adults, youth and children of all ages to engage in all forms of learning, through literacy and continuing education programmes. It has functioned as a mechanism to facilitate learning and to enable participants to acquire the knowledge and the skills essential for human development. As of 2009, UNESCO's CLC programmes have been introduced in more than 23 countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

The central feature of the CLC model is the emphasis laid on active community involvement in designing the organizational structure, formulating the curriculum and delivering the programmes. As the APPEAL CLC Project progressed, the national governments in the respective countries became important partners in promoting the idea of contextualized implementation of national policies and programmes through adult learning contributing to personal as well as community development. In some countries, well established non-governmental organizations took leadership roles in giving shape to the concept and operations. Also, as the concept and operations evolved within the framework of Education for All, it attracted active support from international (external) development partners. Thus the CLCs, though locally designed and managed, have attracted multiple partners and stakeholders in their implementation and sustenance in terms of technical and financial support.

The interaction of community ownership and external intervention, therefore, lead to a range of interesting questions concerning their relationship and, eventually, the most important issue of the sustainability of CLCs. The questions include:

- How can these two aspects be balanced to make CLCs effective and sustainable?
- To what extent has the CLC succeeded in mobilizing and involving community members in its design and operations?

- Does the community that a CLC serves really feel a sense of ownership?
- What are the challenges and difficulties encountered in CLC ownership?
- What is the impact of the involvement of external agencies on sustainability of CLCs?
- Is there a balance between local community ownership and the involvement of external agencies?
- Does the relationship contribute to enhancing the sustainability of the CLCs?

These are complex questions demanding empirical investigation into the actual experience of establishing and running CLCs. UNESCO decided to carry out the research with partners.

Seven countries are involved in this study, namely Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand. The specific objectives of the studies are:

- To analyze the nature and means of community participation and identify good practices or models of CLCs which demonstrate community ownership;
- To study the state of balance between community involvement and external support and intervention, and the implications for the sustainability of CLCs; and
- To identify key issues in community participation and ownership, and explore effective strategies for future action at regional, national and CLC levels.

On the completion of the studies, APPEAL organized a forum to discuss the results. Contracted parties revised their reports and UNESCO set about their dissemination. This report is one outcome. It provides a synthesis of the seven country reports and details the main features of each of them.



## Section 2: The Country Studies

### 2.1 Methodology

The methodology adopted in these action studies involves documentary analysis, structured and unstructured interviews, and observation. This triangulation of research provides firm validity and reliability bases for the studies in all countries.

### 2.2 Sampling

Sampling of CLCs proved difficult. The range of CLCs in pure numbers is considerable, from 13,057 in Thailand to seven in Kazakhstan. In terms of documentary evidence, common complaints were the lack of records and a weak system or no system, for collection and collation of data. In the case of Kazakhstan, the responsibility for these omissions was firmly given to the supervising NGO. Country recommendations for sustainability suggested that these omissions be rectified.

The number of case studies was necessarily small given the usual restraints of time and costs faced in research. It does seem, however, that the sites selected by country managers for the research were representative of the range of CLCs, providing valid information through interviews and observation. One exception was Pakistan where the political situation limited the studies of CLCs to urban poor areas. In all cases, it was noted that the most remote citizenry was unlikely to be serviced with CLCs, given problems of access, the limited number of possible participating persons and cost. In terms of general education, Indonesia has addressed this question with its “the teacher follows the student wherever” practice.

### 2.3 Reporting

In terms of reporting, participating countries followed the guidelines set down for the studies. These guidelines provided a framework within which

countries could vary their research according to the local situation while, at the same time, providing a set of studies from which a regional synthesis could be drawn. One omission noted in the guidelines was the question of monitoring and evaluation. This issue was taken up by several participating countries and was included as a recommendation in terms of the future sustainability of CLCs. Not overlooked in the reports was the question of the capacity of CLCs to undertake self-monitoring, the need for external agencies, where they exist, to include this in their functions and for them to provide the capacity-building required to undertake monitoring and evaluation in CLCs.

### 2.4 The optimistic/pessimistic attributes

The country reports ranged from optimism to pessimism in terms of the situational analysis of CLCs. The Philippines and Thailand might be described as the most optimistic: Bangladesh and Kazakhstan might be described as the most pessimistic. This judgement is based on the content of the reports, particularly with regard to indentifying the limitations of CLCs. The former two had little to report in this respect, the latter much. Nevertheless, even in the more gloomy analyses, the case studies reported on benefits participants received from their involvement in CLC operations.

### 2.5 The descriptive and prescriptive content

The country reports also ranged from the descriptive (“what is”) to the prescriptive (what ought to be), both within and between reports. Sometimes it is difficult to determine which is being reported. This is particularly so when the functions of CLCs are being described and when countries are determining what is required for future sustainability. For the former, reference is often made to the APPEAL definition or another source.

## 2.6 Focal point of difference

The single point of most difference in the reports – apart from basic country distinctions – is related to the question of external intervention in CLCs. While the conclusion reached was qualified, the Philippines was the most satisfied and, indeed, encouraging of external intervention in CLCs. The remaining countries ranged from expressing caution to quite strong negative concerns.

## 2.7 Ideology

One report which reflected strong ideological concerns in the operation of CLCs was Kazakhstan. This is hardly surprising given its status as a politically and economically emerging state. This is noted because of the difficulties the country has of committing to the new and shedding the old. This process is seen to be very necessary if CLCs are to be institutions of the new order rather than the victims of the old.

## Section 3: The CLCs – A Situational Survey

### 3.1 The emergence of CLCs

Community-based programmes have a long history in many countries pre-dating the introduction of compulsory universal education, not to mention the commencement of the UNESCO supported CLC programme. Successful experiences along with implementation difficulties in these long-running programmes have been reported on by various agencies including Governments, NGOs, research institutions and the like.

All the countries in this study report on the evolution of the present CLCs from community-based programmes such as those in mosques, to donor originated and supported community development and the formal provision of non-formal education (NFE). In some cases the legacy of the prior institutions remains. This is most evident in situations where the original purpose of literacy education is still regarded as the prime function of CLCs.

In Bangladesh, all community-based institutions are identified as CLCs; in Indonesia, CLCs are of three different types, namely government-based, company-based or community-based; in Kazakhstan, NGOs (there are 3,500 active NGOs out of 5,000 registered) are berated for having little or no knowledge of CLCs; in Nepal, CLCs are regarded as part of NFE; in Pakistan, the CLCs have been developed alongside government-established community-based programmes such as School Management Committees (SMCs) and Citizen Community Boards (CCBs); in the Philippines, CLCs were established as part of the programme of the Bureau of Alternate Learning Systems – a government agency; in Thailand, CLCs are run by the state and by communities.

All countries acknowledge the positive role of UNESCO in the development of the “modern” CLC since 1998, without saying it was a totally new concept. It should be noted that UNESCO does fall into the category of an external intervention in CLC development. Across the board, UNESCO has been

welcomed as such. Four aspects of this intervention have been the subject of positive comment across the region, namely:

- The definition and general notion of the CLC, as affirmed by UNESCO, are widely accepted, the former often quoted, the latter often serving as a template for CLC development;
- The consistent UNESCO approach to community-based activities and local determination of programmes and personnel make the CLCs significantly different from what has existed before;
- The capacity-building provided under UNESCO's auspices has been very much welcomed;

The non-interventionist approach of UNESCO is also seen as positive.

All countries suggest they would appreciate more UNESCO support, both in expanding the number of CLCs and in capacity-building. The one negative report on UNESCO intervention has been one common to external organizations at large. It is that local participants see the local committees and leaders as officers of APPEAL/UNESCO or the NGO concerned or its funding source.

### 3.2 The management of CLCs

There is a commonality to the management of CLCs across the region.

Some CLCs are almost totally managed by their patron: government, donor, international or national agency, international or national NGO, company or local authority or benefactor. In this instance, there is little or no management structure and community participation in the management of the CLC.

Indonesia is a case in point of both company and government ownership with little or no community participation in management. Companies own and determine all aspects of CLCs established purely for staff training. The government too, establishes and controls CLCs which serve as exemplars for other CLCs. There may be some small role for community management but it is not significant.

From Thailand it is reported that the role of communities in the management of government-run CLCs is limited to financial and in-kind activities but not to their design and content of activities. The consequence is that the activities are devoid of local wisdom, knowledge and skills.

On the other hand, where there is a managed structure shared with the local community, community members may be involved as office bearers, members of management committees (these have different names in different countries), leaders of CLCs, programme coordinators and the like, and have treasurer-type functions.

This is due in part to a bi-structural management arrangement with official and non-official aspects. The latter provides for closer community relations and the capacity to tap local resources of which officialdom will be unaware. Management by committee rather than by leader is also preferred.

The report from Kazakhstan clearly desires a management structure of the sort described above. But this opportunity is being blocked by NGO supervisors because of self-interest. But at least in this country, a model of management has been formulated which, if ever it becomes operational, will actualize management by and from the community.

The bottom line, however, is whether whatever exists is functional. Countries report that management committees rarely meet or meet spasmodically. They report on the need for leaders who lead, managers who manage, donors who fund and participants who participate. Where this need is not met warning bells of non-sustainability ring out.

### 3.3 CLC Activities

NFE and literacy programmes are the activity base for CLCs from the earliest times, although there were community-based activities – particularly religious and cultural – as well. These activities continue into the present, according to country expectations. While literacy has remained a dominant activity for a considerable number of CLCs, most have branched out into a range of other activities, mostly in response to community challenges or personal demands.

Even in terms of literacy, there has been notable expansion from basic to functional literacy and on to a variety of other forms of literacy, as the following Table 1 from the Philippines shows.

**Table 1: Activities of CLCs**

Activity	Number of CLCs	Percent
Accreditation and equivalency (A&E)	8	5.4
A&E , livelihood/training	7	4.7
A&E, literacy	1	0.7
A&E, literacy, training	3	2.0
A&E, livelihood training, computer literacy	1	0.7
A&E, PEPT, training/livelihood	1	0.7
A&E, PEPT, training/livelihood, literacy	2	1.4
A&E, PEPT review	1	0.7
A&E, research	5	3.4
Literacy	37	25.0
Literacy, livelihood	6	4.1
Literacy, livelihood, preschool	1	0.7
Literacy, reading centre/library	2	1.4
Literacy, conferences	3	2.0
Literacy, prayer/worship	2	1.4
Computer literacy	1	0.7
Computer literacy, A&E	1	0.7
Computer literacy, A&E, livelihood	2	1.4
Livelihood training	1	0.7
Meetings, assemblies, activities	13	8.8
Meetings, literacy, livelihood	1	0.7
Reading centre	1	0.7
PEPT review, livelihood, seminars	2	1.4
Seminars, meetings	1	0.7

Activity	Number of CLCs	Percent
Seminars, training	1	0.7
Training, reading centre, conferences	1	0.7
Training	4	2.7
Training, research, A&E	39	26.4
Total	148	100.0

It is also important to note from this table the significance given to accreditation and equivalency (A&E) activities. This is not unique to the Philippines. Indonesia is another significant case in point. It has now made the NFE sector and, hence, some CLCs in Indonesia as the recognized accredited alternate form of primary and secondary education to cater for non-school attending students of school age, whatever the cause or reason for their non-attendance.

More and more this role may pass to other countries' CLCs.

The following Table 2 embraces the range of activities of CLCs across the region highlighting the case of Thailand:

**Table 2: List of Activities of CLCs in Thailand**

1. Education and Literacy
  - Functional literacy
  - Basic education
  - Non-formal education focused on adult learning
  - Promotion of lifelong learning
2. Training
  - Income generation programme and skills training
  - Quality of life programme training
  - Health and sanitation, health promotion programme
  - Camping for democracy training
  - Camping for environment conservation training
  - ICT Training
3. Community and Cultural Development
  - Local and traditional activities development
  - Enhance the local wisdom and work with the older persons
  - Community development projects
  - Poverty alleviation
4. Coordination and Networking
  - Coordinating and building up networks between GOs, NGOs and POs
  - Enabling the local institution to link human resources and social capital
  - Learning networks between academic institutions and community
  - Coordination social groups inside and outside the community

More detailed lists of CLCs' activities appear in the country features in Part 2 of this report.

A feature of this listing is the mention of networking. Several countries have identified linking and networking as important activities of CLCs in the context of sustainability, as the following examples indicate.

### **Bangladesh**

The communities cooperate in developing the links between the CLCs and various service providers, especially the departments of education,

agriculture extension, and health and sanitation at the local government level. Sponsoring NGOs also have a strong role in developing these links, which are very helpful for the CLCs in building support systems to meet the gap in the supply of materials, equipment, technical know-how and manpower, for orientation and training. There is evidence that with the rational use of the network and gradual involvement of direct and indirect beneficiaries, the CLCs attain a position when they no longer remain dependent on external funding support.

### **Kazakhstan**

Another important aspect is to provide help to CLCs to forge links with various people-centred organizations. This will enable CLCs to function efficiently.

### **Pakistan**

An important role of CLCs is to establish networks with other organizations at the community level as well as outside the community, but this has not been followed according to the provided guidelines. The establishment of a network is very important to exchange information related to CLC's needs, community demand and skills training. To achieve economic self-reliance in CLCs, the required skills of the members may be focused and developed through vocational training and by establishing links with micro-credit organizations.

### **Nepal**

Another important aspect is to provide help to CLCs to forge links with various people-centred organizations. This will enable CLCs to function efficiently. CLCs can also be planned as resource centres where activities such as collection of learning resources, their processing and eventually dissemination to the people can be carried out. Stakeholders' need to be encouraged by providing them with technical and professional support.

## Philippines

A CLC is envisioned to be a centre that links with other agencies of government, private and public organizations for programmes that are of benefit to the community.

## Section 4: Community Participation and Ownership

### Participation/Ownership

Participation and ownership are the intertwined components of the modern CLC in the minds of all country participants in this study. The degree of participation and ownership is the clear marker of a successful CLC in all countries. The strong belief expressed in all reports is that: *the greater the degree of community participation in CLC activities, the greater the possibility and reality of ownership, and, therefore, the more likely the sustainability of the CLC.*

### 4.1 Community Participation

This study indicates that participation has different meanings for different situations. At one extreme, it may be that no local participation is possible, which is the case with participation-specific CLCs. A case in point is the company-provided CLC in Indonesia, which is only open to employees. This is a special case and rare.

- Right to participate

The second understanding of participation, described in the reports, is that local citizens are able, even entitled, to become members of a CLC. This describes the widespread situation in the Asia-Pacific region and is shared by the countries involved in this study, with the exception of Indonesia.

- Participation in management

This may progress to a desirable third order of participation, drawn from this study, which is where members of the CLC participate in its management either as leaders or as members of a management committee. This is very much the work-in-progress situation in all countries involved in this study. The situation is much more advanced in this regard in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia than in the remainder.

- Participation in planning

The fourth order of participation, the most significant in all the reports canvassed, is when involvement in formal management extends to participation in determining the actual functions and activities of a CLC from planning to implementing CLC objectives. This degree of participation has many internal aspects. For example, the choice of a site for the CLC could be decided by the community. Where CLCs do exist, participation ranges from determining the activities, designing the programme, deciding on the materials required, implementing all aspects of the CLC's functions, preparing community advocacy plans and materials, electing management personnel, administering and auditing the finances, monitoring and evaluating the CLCs, and reporting on them.

- Participation across all countries

If these functions – and any others to be considered – were graphed across the countries involved in this study (and possibly in all CLCs in the Asia-Pacific region), there would be a very scattered result, skewed towards less rather than more participation.

- Participation in infrastructure support

The fifth order of participation is that of supporting the CLC, financially or “in kind” (labour, materials, ideas, etc.). Several countries reported on this “in kind” involvement. In fact it was often regarded as the only activity wanted or required by some CLC administrations under the heading of community participation.

- The vexed question was that of financial support. Some countries have built up financial demand. The Philippines for example, require joint government and community contributions when setting up a CLC. One year of operation is required before its acceptance as a CLC, which implies that either donor or community funding has already been found. In Pakistan, the National Commission for Human Development has suggested that community members donate PKR5 to PKR10 (up to USD1) per week to the CLC committee.

In cases where there was a government subsidy, such as Nepal, the amount was not enough to sustain the operations of a CLC. In Bangladesh, the NGO accepted a very small donation from members (less than three US cents) which financed an extremely small part of CLC operations.

- The most common solution offered for meeting the financial burden is the emphasis placed on the importance of income generating activities (IGA). For Indonesia, this was seen as the only way forward for the financial sustainability of CLCs. Other countries were not so committed but certainly saw a solution in capacity-building and micro-credit approaches. One suggestion from Bangladesh was that a proportion (10 percent) of money raised from such projects should be contributed to the CLC.
- An alternative solution was donor NGO support. This was the solution for many CLCs. The impact of following this path is discussed in section 5: External Intervention.

- The durability of financial support

One critical factor identified in the financial support of CLCs is its durability. The Indonesian study took up this issue at some length and is reflected in opinions voiced in other study reports. The conclusion drawn is that: government financial (and other) support is likely to be the most lasting. This is dependent, of course, on two elements at least:

- Whether the government is likely to change and whether a new government is of the same mind as its predecessor, in supporting the goals of the CLC and in providing the same degree of financial support;
- Economic stability – national and international. Thailand reports on the need to find new financial sources after government funding was affected by the 1998 turn-down in the economy. With the present global economic crisis, similar circumstances may arise.

- Company financial support

Company financial support for CLCs for image or other reasons may be regarded as fairly secure depending on three factors:

- Changes in company CSR profiles which may determine allocations for charitable purposes;
- Management changes in the company and the consequences for CLC support;
- Company profitability. If this declines, will CLC support continue? More severe company financial woes would have much worse results.

- Limitations in external institutional support

NGOs, donors and agencies' financial support is also subject to the winds of change. Factors which may change attitudes and support include changes in policy direction, in management, in the deliverables expected, and in their funding sources.

- Uncertainty of community support

Communities and their members are likely to suffer from financial reverses if the demand for products is reduced or fails altogether, if products are seasonally affected or if local politics intervene negatively.

- The poverty factor

A critical factor in obtaining community support for CLCs, often mentioned in the study reports, is the poverty of communities, families and family members. This raises a major issue to be addressed by countries such as Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Nepal and Pakistan: poverty alleviation on a national scale.

CLCs in these countries and in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand will need continuing external support in the poorest communities.

- CLC participation in summary

To summarize the multisided aspect of participation, the following tabulation from Nepal, with comments on other countries, identifies possible types of participation:

1. Manipulative participation	Participation is a sham. <i>Kazakhstan and Bangladesh would share this opinion.</i>
2. Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. Information shared belongs only to external professionals. <i>All countries would share this opinion at least in the early days of their respective CLCs' foundation, with the exception of the Philippines.</i>
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by answering questions. No share in decision-making is conceded and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views. <i>Again a common early experience for most countries which is still the case for the majority of CLCs in Bangladesh.</i>
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate in return for food, cash or other material incentives. They have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end. <i>This opinion is not commonly held in other countries.</i>
5. Functional participation	Participation is seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined project objectives. <i>This is certainly the case in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.</i>
6. Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation or strengthening of local groups or institutions that determine how resources are used. Learning methods are used to seek multiple viewpoints. <i>Again, a view shared in practice by Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, and the desirable process for sustainability in all countries surveyed.</i>
7. Self-mobilization	People take initiatives independently of external institutions. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice but retain control over how resources are used. <i>This would be a view held by most countries of the role of NGOs in founding CLCs. It is also the expressed desirable situation for CLCs in most but beyond the reach of populations in the poorest countries, such as Bangladesh and Kazakhstan in addition to Nepal.</i>



## 4.2 Community Ownership

The central question in this study is the assumption that community participation results in a sense of ownership among participants, reduces dependency, and ensures sustainability of programmes that respond to local needs. This is definitely not a straightforward issue. First of all, what does community ownership mean?

As with community participation, ownership can mean a range of things in different contexts. For community members it could mean moving from being mere participants in CLCs to becoming key players in decision-making. It may mean being members of a grassroots group which is self-reliant in every way, from finances to a situation where the community members and the CLC are totally dependent on external bodies for financing and management. It is important to recognize that each of these situations significantly influences the nature of involvement and, thereby, the sense of ownership among community members.

Examined against these questions, the studies provide a mixed picture of “community ownership” of CLCs. In assessing community ownership, the organizing institution or source seems to make a real difference. The range of possibilities in this regard and their impact on the sense of ownership is well illustrated in the seven country studies.

For instance, the Indonesian study indicates that CLCs may be clearly classified as being established by the government as part of its non-formal education programme; some are created by companies, and some have been designed and established by local community groups. The study found that the CLCs established by the local community groups have the greatest advantage in eliciting high levels of participation and ownership.

The situation is quite different in Bangladesh. Here, most CLCs are formed by and operated with assistance from NGOs which bear a large part of the capital and operational expenditures. Only a part of the resources needed for CLCs come from the voluntary contributions of the community. Sometimes foreign/international organizations provide financial and technical support to local NGOs for CLCs. In this case, the sense of ownership is somewhat

peripheral to the operation of the CLCs as most decision-making is done by the organizing NGO. It was found that a major problem in developing community ownership of CLCs in Bangladesh and increasing the participation of the various groups of stakeholders is the lack of sufficient understanding and appreciation of the role of CLCs at various levels in and outside the community. Further, there is the problem of poor documentation of CLC activities in the field. Weaknesses in CLC management and poor representation of local community members also restrain development of ownership by local communities. The situation in Pakistan is not very different where the number of CLCs has increased considerably over the years with most being run by NGOs. The study is inconclusive on the issue of the sense of ownership among community members. It does highlight the need to consider the social and cultural context in examining the issue of community participation and ownership.

Yet, over time, Thailand has streamlined the process of involving local community members through community-based organizations, which helps in creating a sense of ownership among the members. The Kazakhstan study, however, points out that people at the grassroots remain passive recipients who do not take part in designing programmes based on their needs. The ineffectiveness of the programmes in improving the quality of life is another reason for low participation and ownership. The latter point is equally applicable to most other countries. Wherever the CLCs have been able to make an impact on the social and economic conditions of the people in the immediate environs, the sense of ownership is much more evident.

## Section 5: External Intervention

The assessment of external intervention in CLCs in the seven country studies ranges from very positive to very negative. The Philippines may be adjudged to be in the very positive camp and Bangladesh in the very negative, with the remaining five countries between these extremes but not always consistently. On balance, even the most negative parties still acknowledge the necessity of external intervention however much they may want to diminish the intervention.

The important question for moving forward in the development of CLCs is: Why the difference in the assessment of the role of external intervention? There are at least two significant factors to be taken into consideration. The first is: Who are the interventionists? The second is: What is the form of the intervention?

### 5.1 The interventionists

Intervention in CLC operations ranges from international NGOs, development banks, UN agencies, international organizations such as the Red Crescent and the Red Cross, and international charitable persons or organizations (sometimes but not consistently identified as INGOs) to national NGOs which may be government-based, corporations, charitable institutions or community-based organizations. In two countries, Bangladesh and the Philippines, CLCs themselves have been encouraged to register as NGOs in order to accept government funding. "But at what price?" it is asked. Certainly this is not the path to sustainability in the view of the Philippines.

The number of NGOs ranges from a staggering 5,000 in Kazakhstan, albeit only 3,500 are said to be active, to numbers in the hundreds or less in most countries. The issue of numbers is raised as it may reflect on the degree of control that governments can exercise over NGOs. Where this control is minimal, CLCs are at the mercy of the intervening agencies or NGOs in terms of negotiating the purpose, planning and direction of a CLC.

### 5.2 The intervention

More critical than the fact of intervention is the modus operandi of the interventionists. What is most detested is the rampant "The donor knows what is best for you" mentality. It takes a strong country, far less a strong CLC, to stand up to a donor and say "We know best and this is what we want". The fear of the donor walking out the door, cheque book in hand is a persuasive reminder of what might have been.

The common factor across most country studies is the failure of interventionists to listen, to take advice, to acknowledge the formal and indigenous knowledge that abounds even in the poorest communities, and to employ criteria for achievement – if they do any monitoring and evaluation – based on the local context.

Patronage whether employed ostensibly, subtly, oppressively or mildly continues to be the main form of complaint about the form of intervention which most CLCs experience. The country studies expand on this theme of intervention at greater length. The reader is referred to them for details of country attitudes towards intervention and suggested processes for making interventions user-friendly.

### 5.3 The community participation/ownership and external intervention

The dominant perception is that if the community members participate in the establishment and functioning of CLCs, including contributing to their funding, it will enhance their sense of ownership. As a matter of fact, most CLCs are dependent to a varying extent on funding and technical support from external agencies. While CLCs in some countries are supported by government Thailand, the local contribution to functioning of CLCs cannot be ignored.

Bangladesh is well known to have CLCs funded by various sources and partners. Funding in this case comes from five groups: local individuals, local organizations other than NGOs, local level NGOs, national-level NGOs and international agencies. In several of the countries surveyed, even where the

government may be the main provider of finances, the local community plays an important role to contribute various resources.

On the whole, the finding of the Bangladesh study is broadly applicable to most countries:

Participation of local communities is fairly strong in providing land and/or space (house) for the CLCs and physical labour on a voluntary basis, moderate in providing funds for meeting their operational expenses and marginal in supplying learning/training materials and equipment. The communities, however, actively co-operate in developing linkage relationships of the CLCs with various service providers, especially with the departments of education, agriculture extension, health and sanitation, at the local government level.

Can the CLCs be sustained without external funding? All studies are categorical in asserting that funding from external sources is essential for the sustenance of the CLC movement. There is indeed an effort in most places to make the CLCs self-reliant over time; community members may make some contribution to the functioning of the CLCs they benefit from. But this will not be adequate to sustain them. This is understandable as the communities that are served by CLCs belong to hitherto underserved and marginalized groups which are unable to raise adequate resources for education. In fact, even the study in Bangladesh, where the CLCs currently do not receive any direct government funding, suggests that the government may eventually be persuaded to make allocations for CLCs as institutions of adult and non-formal education, from its education budget.

The country studies indicate that networking with other government and non-government organizations with similar objectives can help raise non-monetary resources in the form of awareness building and teaching/learning materials. Such networking will contribute to meaningful knowledge sharing and capacity-building among different stakeholders.

A final pertinent question is: does external intervention negatively influence the sense of ownership for the community members? This is not a 'black

and white' question with a "yes or no" answer. This again requires a more sensitive understanding of the external intervention process. All seven studies acknowledge the important role played by external agencies, whether it is government, NGO or international agency.

Perceptions and attitudes of national and local level government agencies are crucial for the functioning of the CLCs. While the national government's acceptance is a prerequisite, even if no financial support is received from the government, it is the local leadership which plays a critical role as it works towards building bridges between formal development programmes and the work of CLCs. For instance, the Philippines study points out, "Organizing the CLC at the level of barangay, the smallest political unit, has proven to be highly effective in enlisting community support and developing ownership of the programs by the barangay". Even if no formal political unit operates at the local level, one has to recognize the critical role of local level political leadership, which is perceived by the community to represent its interests and aspirations.

It is not only possible but also essential in the present context that a greater effort is made to balance the role of external intervention and local community participation. Merely being romantic about community ownership to the total exclusion of external intervention is not pragmatic and will jeopardize the sustainability of CLCs.

Two factors seem critical in developing a sensitive relationship which will eventually enhance the ownership feeling and reduce undue dependence on external sources. The first is the recognition that there is no formula for external support to CLCs in any country. This has to be contextualized as the study from Thailand highlights. Such contextualized support demonstrates the sensitivity of the external agency to the needs and aspirations of the local community. It also recognizes the individual uniqueness of each CLC as an organizational entity and builds greater trust between the external agency and the local community.

A second critical factor is to reduce the dependence of the local community on external agencies for technical and academic support. This demands a

new perspective on capacity-building in which the external agency clearly specifies its gradual withdrawal from the scene, accompanied by cumulative enhancement in the technical and academic capacities of local community members. This would also imply that conscious efforts are made to promote and nurture leadership among youth in the local community to take over technical and managerial roles.

A comment from the Pakistan country study is very pertinent on this point.

Probably it also depends on the attitude of the external agency as well whether they want to transfer ownership of these CLCs to the local community or not, because the number of literacy centres under their control determine their credibility and prestige, and they are able to attract the attention of the donor agencies. We could not find any evidence that these external agencies tried to make these CLCs stand on their own.

It might be suggested that the donor agencies change their policy from counting how many CLCs an NGO controls to how many they have capacity-built to autonomy. If this becomes the prime deliverable, it might change NGOs perspective on what matters.

To conclude, CLCs meet a need in the community for alternative learning opportunities especially for adolescents and adults who may be either illiterate or school drop-outs or early completers. CLCs have come to fill this gap as people-centred organizations. State support is critical in the final analysis for the sustainability of the CLC concept and operations. While some countries have succeeded in creating a fine balance between this external support and community involvement, others have not. If it is not the State which partners the CLC, the dependence is likely to fall on the organizing NGOs. This in the long run is susceptible to policy reorientation by the NGO or by the national governments. These NGOs may often be dependent on international development support which is also not fully sustainable in the long run.

## Section 6: Recommendations on Section Sustainability

Issues with regard to sustainability are raised in Section 1.3 above. These have been reshaped and will be discussed in turn, always with an eye to how a particular issue does or may contribute to the sustainability of CLCs.

### 6.1 Community participation and sustainability

There is no doubt that community participation is seen to be essential to the sustainability of CLCs not only in these studies but across the region.

But what sort of participation? To what degree? How can participation be enhanced? Are there limits to participation? Is participation fulfilling?

What sort of participation?

The types of participation have been extensively canvassed in the text above. In summary, the ideal is for participants to be involved in all aspects of CLCs. The range of activities is considerable but may be broken down into the following:

- CLC clients;
- CLC managers;
- CLC planners;
- CLC implementers;
- CLC providers;
- Any other CLC designation.

Sustainability will be enhanced as long as community members can participate fully.

- What degree of participation?

The degree of participation is up to the choice of the participant. The degree of participation changes, however, when the participant becomes a

committee member, chair, leader and the like. In this case the obligation is on the participant to attend to his or her duties. The study reports mention too often that office bearers do not fulfil their duties to the detriment of sustainability.

Sustainability can only happen if members participate fully and responsibly.

- How can participation be enhanced?

It is all very well to talk of the need for full and responsible participation but when the CLC concept is so new, knowing how to participate may be unfamiliar. While CLCs have been around for a long time, the UNESCO intervention has changed the paradigm. A new paradigm requires capacity-building in all aspects of a working CLC to ensure sustainability.

There are also functions which need to be taken more seriously, according to most country reports, if participation is to be enhanced in the interest of sustainability. Chief amongst these are advocacy and partnerships and the like. “No CLC is an island” one might say. The recognition of this and the readiness to promote CLCs in and across communities to gain the best possible service for community participants are endorsed in the study reports as necessary for achieving sustainability.

- Are there limits to participation, which should be recognized?

Some would say no, some yes. For the former, there is an ideological position which emphasizes the rights of all citizens to share the affluence of society equally with others, as is reflected in the Kazakhstan study. In this regard every operation in a CLC should be open to all members. Sustainability will not have been achieved until it is.

The latter position is best reflected in the Thailand report with the repeated reference to self sufficiency. This doctrine which has become a feature of Thai ideology is attributable to His Majesty, the King of Thailand. His doctrine has become part of CLC thinking and its vocabulary. One aspect which touches on our theme is the need of CLCs to identify their purpose and determine how to reach it in a self-sufficient manner.

The road to CLC sustainability may vary according to the dominant national ideology. What is significant for all countries is the need for CLCs to be able to monitor and evaluate their objectives, performance and achievements. This is lacking in most countries surveyed and is commented on accordingly. But it is a necessary function if sustainability is to be achieved.

- Is participation fulfilling?

There is a direct connection between the degree to which the CLC’s programmes and operations are deemed to be fulfilling by the community, and sustainability. The study all too frequently identifies keywords such as “relevance”, “availability”, “interest”, “community-based”, “people-centred” as being critical to participation and the sustainability of a CLC.

- The human face of CLCs.

In the pursuit of sustainability it is all too easy to forget that human activities have a human face. One of the best descriptions of this is the example provided in the Bangladesh study:

IGA (Income Generating Activity) does not rank very high in the list of useful activities of a majority of CLCs but when members of local communities are asked to mention the activities they think the CLCs should concentrate on, they identified IGA as the most important one and they have also indicated the specific trades they preferred.

Another example illustrating the human face is when local patrons support CLCs but meet objections to their wish to have a say in CLC affairs. No doubt there are other human cases which can interfere with the sustainability of CLCs.

## 6.2 Community ownership and sustainability

There is an assumed connection between participation, ownership and sustainability, with more participation leading to more ownership leading to more sustainability. This is a logical progression and one which all countries in the study accept.

There are degrees of difference in terms of the participation most crucial to ownership, and the ownership most important to sustainability. There is considerable agreement in the studies on the need for participative ownership, especially in terms of capacity-building programmes. There is less, but significant emphasis on the ownership of the CLC administration; and even less on the location and furnishing of the structure.

The critical factor and barrier between participation and ownership and also between ownership and sustainability is finance. Few countries see the possibility of CLCs becoming self-sustaining. Poverty is legitimately given as the reason why financial ownership is out of question – forever. But even in some of the poorest countries, efforts have been made to encourage poor participants to contribute “in kind” or by contributing a portion of their income.

Ownership is not without failures in terms of sustainability. The Indonesia report sets out very clearly how ownership can destroy a CLC, whether it is ownership by a company, a government or a community. Changing fortunes can lead to a resetting of priorities by a donor. Ownership can sustain and ownership can terminate.

Of all the barriers between ownership and sustainability, the financial obstacle is the greatest. Others, such as donor obstinacy to handing over ownership, or community factors of gender and status remain serious impediments to ownership. One solution, proposed in the Indonesian study, is that all CLC activities must be income generating. This is a matter for debate. But without such a dogmatic approach, which is unlikely to be universally accepted, the financial barrier remains impenetrable, at least without external intervention.

### 6.3 External Intervention and sustainability

External intervention is discussed in section 5 and as a feature of each of the country reports in part 2 of this synthesis. It is the common view that external intervention was necessary, is still necessary in part and will remain necessary well into the future.

However, there are also common views that external intervention has to give way to advancing the internal autonomy of CLCs, which is the better route to sustainability. The litany of complaints about external intervention will not be repeated here but should be noted. The question is how this change can be put into practice.

Given the variety of idiosyncrasies interventionists have, it is not possible to come up with a one-treatment solution. Dialogue is one approach. But where does it start? CLCs need to have a clear position on what the community expects of them and how this will be achieved. But capacity to articulate a position is a prerequisite which is often absent without support. And so intervention begins. But it is equally important for interventionists to know where the community comes from!

It is also important to understand where the intervention comes from, its objective, its scope, its programme and its exit strategy. Again, communities may not be able to access such information without support.

The overriding condition on external intervention which can be drawn from the reports and other literature and practice, is that “intervention should decrease as internal autonomy increases”. There may come a point of no return, probably when financing ceases, when the local community can go no further in terms of participation and ownership. For the sustainability of the CLC, financial external intervention needs to be continued.

One further matter in respect of continued intervention through funding which communities should be made aware of, is whether and/or to what extent the donor will continue support through recurrent funding. Sustainability may depend on the answer.

#### **6.4 Community participation and ownership, and external intervention: the best balance**

Creating balance and synergy between external agencies and local communities is inevitable for the sustainability of CLCs. This balance has to be discovered gradually with the active involvement of all stakeholders. It is not a question of “either-or”; rather the synergy between external agency and local community evolves over time. It cannot be achieved as a project goal to be measured and demonstrated in a short period. Instead, it demands long-term engagement with the concept and mutual trust between the external agency and its intentions on one hand, and the aspirations and capabilities of the local community members on the other.

#### **6.5 A successful external-community relationship: the Philippines**

The example provided below from the Philippines is the best illustration of external intervention. It holds enormous promise for sustainability. Whether it can serve as a template for other countries will depend on a range of variables, which may make it difficult to adopt. But this example may spawn ideas for greater independence for CLCs leading to more sustainability.

The intervention is by government thereby bringing financial stability to the CLC. The intervention is self-interested in promoting programmes the government wants continued. At the same time, communities are free, indeed encouraged, to propose and implement programmes suited to community needs. The intervention is transparent. Its execution is also accountable as the CLC management is in the hands of elected personnel.

All in all, it seems that there is accord on all sides.

In organizing the CLCs at the barangay level, the BALS appears to have hit on a brilliant idea. Barangays are the smallest unit of government. Their major mandate is to deliver basic services to community members; they are the representatives of government at the grassroots level. They are headed by elected officials with a fixed term, who are accountable to their constituents and are expected to work for the common good. To the extent that livelihood training is a persistent need regardless of who is in power, barangay CLCs will in all likelihood offer these and other programmes in line with the needs of the voting community. Another advantage of the barangay is its size. It has a smaller constituency than a municipality; its officials are responsible for fewer people and accountability is better achieved.

Funding for the setting up of CLCs is a joint exercise of the BALS and the local government unit. The barangay provides counterpart funds covering the cost of construction for the CLC, supplies and other expenses. It also allots funds for livelihood programmes. The mobile teachers who conduct literacy classes and A&E review classes are under the payroll of the BALS.

The projects of the CLC outside the literacy and A&E programme run by BALS come from the Barangay Development Council (BDC). The Council is actively involved in planning the projects for the CLC. Sometimes, community groups request certain training programmes which the barangay then delivers for free.

The BALS provides the basic framework under which CLCs are to be organized while allowing each CLC the leeway to branch out into activities that are deemed by the community leaders to be appropriate to their unique needs. In adopting this strategy, the BALS is able to push for its traditional niche area of literacy education in a non-traditional setting, the barangay rather than the school, and to expand the concept of learning to embrace non-traditional forms such as livelihood training.

BALS is also perceived as being immune to barangay politics and can thus respond to the needs of the disadvantaged and conduct its tests fairly.

## 6.6 Summary country opinions on achieving sustainability

The research studies are not short on recommendations for sustainability. These lists are available in the conclusions to the country features in Part Two below. Here is a brief summary from each country study which captures an assessment of the path to sustainable CLCs.

### *Bangladesh*

The most important factor for successful CLCs is their acceptance as organizations that are useful to the local people who own them and are keen to take part in their activities. A successful CLC motivates the local people by demonstrating that its literacy and continuing education programme is designed for them; and that its skills development, leadership and management training uses links with other agencies to contribute to the social and economic development.

### *Indonesia*

The main driving forces of CLC sustainability are (i) the usefulness of its programmes to the community members and (ii) its ability to be a self-fulfilling institution.

The most significant matter is to make the CLC activities relevant to the education needs of society.

The CLC should transform itself from an education institution into one that generates income. This transformation, however, must not make the institution depart from its original tasks, which is providing education to its community members.

### *Kazakhstan*

Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in

the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programmes are operated, and benefits are parceled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society.

### *Nepal*

Ownership is closely associated with sustainability. In fact the sustainability of a programme tends to radiate if the programme can keep its stakeholders intimately attached to it. This is possible only when the stakeholders unhesitatingly feel that they own the programme. Sustainability not only survives but also grows strongly if the stakeholders are accepted with dignity and recognition.

### *Pakistan*

Local communities now show an interest in the organization of CLCs and although their role in planning the activities is still marginal and local communities do not monitor the activities of their CLCs, they do elect members of the management committee, contribute to funding them and extend other forms of support. The more this participation increases, the more likely sustainability will follow.

Increased efficiency in the operations and administration of CLCs is also imperative for their sustainability.

### *Philippines*

Community ownership and external intervention affect the sustainability of CLCs in the country. Are these factors working in synergy to enhance sustainability? Or are they in direct opposition to one another such that as one is enhanced the other tends to diminish? Is there an optimal mix whereby community ownership and external intervention can together enhance the sustainability of the CLCs?



The acceptance of the CLC concept is a plus factor for its long-term sustainability. However, external intervention in the form of provision of livelihood training opportunities will have to continue as the CLCs do not have the capacity to run these programmes entirely on their own.

### *Thailand*

People's participation is the main factor to ensure sustainable development. The area of participation at present is highly related to vocational activities that increase the family income. But CLCs which are not supported by the government can participate and join together in many activities at the highest level.

### *Conclusion*

Community participation/ownership and external intervention will remain intertwined in the development of and for the sustainability of CLCs in the Asia-Pacific region. This is not "either-or" but a "both-and" necessity for the sustainability of CLCs into the future. Where complete autonomy and self-sustenance do emerge, so much the better.

In the meantime, the focus must be on increasing community participation and ownership and reducing reliance on external intervention. This will place demands on political, administrative, donor and participants' goals for CLCs, as well as their understanding and goodwill. But the sustainability of CLCs may just depend on these factors.

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# PART TWO

## ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRY CASE FEATURES

## Section 1: Bangladesh Case Features

### 1. CLC Focus

The government of Bangladesh attaches importance to primary education and NFE. Some recent efforts include organizational and administrative measures to strengthen programme implementation. This is in line with the National EFA Plan of Action (NPA) formulated in 1995 and incorporating the ideas of the Jomtien World Conference (1990). Following the Dakar World Education Forum 2000, the government undertook preparation of a new plan of action (NPA-2) for the period 2002 to 2015.

Literacy has improved significantly in the past twenty-five years. In 1981 the adult literacy in the country was 23.8 percent and in 2002 it stood at 41 percent. According to some estimates, about 10 percent were semi-literate. In a study conducted by Education Watch (2000)<sup>1</sup>, the estimated literacy rate among the country's female population aged 15 years and above was 35.8 percent and the corresponding figure for the males was 47.3 percent. The figure was 37.5 percent for rural and 62.3 percent for the urban adult population. The age specific literacy rate of the population showed that it was the highest for the age group 15-19 years (64.2 percent) and lowest for children 5-9 years (1.7 percent).

The literacy status of the population manifests large disparities in terms of gender, socio-economic attributes and geography. The urban-rural gap is very high and the disparity is most pronounced for disadvantaged girls and women. Clearly, much more effort is needed if literacy is seen as a means of overcoming socio-economic divisions and promoting social mobility. Government efforts are insufficient to meet the education demands of all levels, as well as of all types including training in life skills.

Literacy intervention programmes of NGOs increased notably in the country from the mid-1980s. They address problems of literacy and education mainly of children who lack access to formal schooling or were dropouts from the

<sup>1</sup> Education Watch is an association with members of NGO, Governments, Development Partners, and Universities in Bangladesh.

system and adult illiterates requiring both literacy and training in livelihood trades. Several bilateral and multilateral donors support these programmes.

Poverty is cited at all levels in the education system as one of the major barriers hindering progress towards universal access to education. Research by Education Watch (1999) found that 23 percent children are not enrolled in school and out of it 79 percent were poor. While among the enrolled, the poor constituted 66 percent. The study also found that children from economically disadvantaged families enrol in fewer numbers, attend infrequently, dropout more and underachieve. The need for children to work, the poor understanding of illiterate parents about the value of education and their limited capacity to support the schooling of their children, contribute to an inability or unwillingness to ensure enrolment at school. Accordingly, emphasis has been placed in the PEDP (Primary Education Development Programme) on measures to address these barriers.

### 2. The CLCs: A situational analysis

#### 2.1 CLC Functions

CLC functions in Bangladesh were identified by J. A. Rahman, et al. as

- Education, information and services for improvement in the quality of life;
- Making people aware of local resources and their use;
- Sensitizing people about their rights;
- Skills training and workshops;
- Savings and credit services;
- Operating as a venue for discussion of problems and settlement of conflicts;
- Occasional healthcare services;
- Providing opportunities and facilities for recreation and for organizing religious and social functions; and
- Liaison with local government agencies, extension services departments and NGOs.

## 2.2 CLC Programmes

CLCs in Bangladesh do not operate in any specific community groups or in any particular type of locality. They are spread throughout the country.

CLC activities in Bangladesh can be grouped under four broad titles: education and training courses, community library and information services, community development activities, and coordination and networking. CLC activities in the country are:

(a) NFE (Literacy/continuing education)

- Diverse learning opportunity;
- Sharing learning and opinions;
- Continuing education;
- Remedial measures for children in difficulty;
- Community library.

(b) Skills development (HRD and income generating activities)

- Subject matter training;
- Training in development of skills in different professions;
- Savings and credit services;
- Workshops.

(c) Community development services/social mobilization

- Meeting the development partners and service providers;
- Community development planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring;
- Discussion on social and economic issues.

(d) Cultural development/community consolidation

- Awareness raising;
- Socializing and recreation;
- Games and sports;
- Observance of national and international days;
- Organization of cultural functions and programmes.

CLC programmes in Bangladesh are built on the past experience of implementing adult, non-formal and continuing education. They aim at benefiting its members (out-of-school children and disadvantaged women, youth, and in some cases, the elderly) through their empowerment and

social transformation. CLC members are primarily literacy class learners and, in order to be recognized as a CLC member, a learner has to register his or her name.

CLC activities are planned considering the socio-economic environment of the target population. Then follows an assessment of the intervention required to solve their problems in literacy and life skills for the purpose of improving living standards. Ideally, the planning of these programmes should be participatory in nature but in Bangladesh, they usually come from the top: from the headquarters of sponsoring agencies.

## 2.3 Community Participation

One of the essential preconditions for a CLC to attain success is the active participation of its members in its activities. Participation in CLCs is in fact participation of the target group population (mainly, out-of-school children, adolescents, youth and adults, especially the disadvantaged girls and women).

Participation also means the representation of people from these beneficiary groups and of members of the local communities in the planning, management and evaluation of CLC activities.

In the past, membership was free of charge but in recent times all NGOs accept a token membership fee amounting to one or two Taka (BDT) per member per month (about one to two US\$ cents), which is insignificant and does not cover even a small part of operational expenses. The fee may not be seen as a subscription but as the members' contribution, thus creating a feeling of ownership.

## 2.4 CLC Costings

The estimated annual expenditure in salary/honoraria and allowances for staff and resource persons in a CLC in Bangladesh is about BDT150,000 (a little more than USD2,000). Teaching, learning and reading materials (including subscriptions to newspapers and journals) around BDT31,000 (USD450) in a year. The cash expenditure may be much less, provided the CLC can collect books and other reading materials from the education offices of the government, NGOs and international agencies that distribute these material for ANFE in the country free of charge. Added to all these expenditures are the costs of utility services such as gas, electricity and water, repair and maintenance, postage and communication, transport, entertainment and contingencies, which altogether may account for an annual amount of BDT39,000 (USD550). Thus, if the life of the fixed assets is considered 15 years on average, the estimated annual expenditure of a CLC stands at BDT280,000 implying that the expenditure per learner per month is about BDT390 or about USD5.80.

The fixed cost components of a typical 60-member CLC include the cost of land, the cost of building the CLC house, and the cost of furniture and equipment. In the context of Bangladesh, these expenses claim about BDT900,000 (approximately USD13,000), which includes the cost of purchasing a sizeable number of computers, tools and instruments for training in vocational skills. The amount may vary depending on the location, the type of house and the furniture and equipment. Another major expenditure is the salary/honoraria and allowances of the staff on the regular payroll (community worker/facilitator, accountant, demonstrator, peon) as well as persons occasionally invited for the purpose of training or evaluation. There are options for reducing these costs, provided a CLC can successfully use network relationships.

In practice, CLCs in Bangladesh operate with modest budgets. Most CLCs have only one or two full-time staff working for free or for a small honorarium. Staff could be voluntary, if and only if, the local communities find a person or persons suitable and willing to work sincerely and without honoraria, as

part of their social work. Otherwise, it is rational to hire people with proper emoluments so that they do not lose their incentive in undertaking the heavy workload.

The central government has practically no role at present in funding or providing support in any form to the CLCs. However, since promotion of adult and non-formal education (ANFE) is now a part of the government policy in attaining the MDG and EFA goals, the government recognizes the role of CLCs and allows local governments to work with them. At least in one case a local government involves a CLC in all its public functions of delivery of developmental services to the local communities.

## 3. Community Participation and Ownership

### 3.1 The Processes

CLC members who regularly take part in CLC activities are benefited in many ways. For example, thanks to regular participation in the CLC literacy and NFE programme, about one-third attain a literacy level of grade A (grade V) in three years, which in a regular primary school would take five to seven years. Being literate the members become capable of reading, writing and counting, managing household accounts and even the accounts of the small businesses they undertake. Further, with literacy and increased awareness about society and the environment, they take better care of their family and children, enjoy a better status in the family and the community, and can play a more meaningful role in the decision-making of both family and community.

Participation in training at CLCs for income generating skills (such as growing vegetables, poultry, nursery, sewing and livestock rearing) and quality of life (social awareness, men-women relationships, environment conservation and leadership development) contributes to an increase in participants' monthly income, as well as in enhancing their position in the family and the community.

Members of CLCs, as well as of the local communities find it useful to take part in issue-based discussions and campaigns such as:

- The development of awareness about consequences of early marriage and dowry;
- Training on healthcare, sanitation and inoculation;
- Agricultural extension services, and
- Cultural programmes.

CLC members believe that CLC activities enhance community consciousness and social integrity and the capacity to solve many problems through discussion and mutual cooperation.

### 3.2 Limitations

Major limitations of CLCs which have been identified in Bangladesh are:

Most CLCs operate with modest budgets, inadequate space for increasing the number of learners, a shortage of teaching/training materials and equipment, and inexperienced management and teaching and training personnel, who have heavy workloads but a small honorarium. CLC teachers and trainers lack skills in delivering services.

The role of local communities in planning CLC activities is still marginal; local communities in practice do not monitor the activities of the CLCs, although they elect their members. The latter are not regular in attending monthly meetings and the meetings are often irregular. Members of the local community do not review or analyze CLC documents. CLCs at the grassroots level generate little, if any, communication material. They do not share in the findings of research on CLCs made by others.

The accounts of the CLC are not formally audited.

CLCs do not have a good record in terms of the participation of local communities largely because they fail to become institutions for which the members have a feeling of ownership, i.e. the feeling of the community

is that the CLC is its own organization and works in the interest of its own welfare. CLC members and non-members consider that paying for CLC services is not worth it.

CLCs have made very little contribution to developing the management capacity of the local people. CLC members consider that leadership development training has some usefulness and the issue-based discussions are also helpful but ultimately, they live their individual lives. Most of their initiatives are at the personal or family level. They rarely get involved in management of the organizations or governments.

Members of CLCs are expected to visit regularly for reading (newspapers, periodicals or magazines and books of different types) or participating in other activities such as discussions, cultural programmes and sports. But the evidence suggests that CLCs do not maintain reading materials in adequate quantities or add to their stock. They also have very limited facilities for games and sports. This is the main reason why most adults of local communities are discouraged from visiting CLCs. The young also quickly lose interests in them because the latter are poorly equipped with games and sports facilities, offer limited training programmes, and have few reading materials.

Other reasons why community members are not regular in attending CLC activities include work pressure at home or in work places and, in the case of women, opposition by their husband/mother-in-law, the absence of someone to look after children, and the inconvenient location and working hours of CLCs. A survey in 2001 revealed that many women did not take part simply because they were not aware of what a CLC was and what it had to offer to the community.

The 2001 survey also revealed that in some areas local people were not motivated enough to get actively involved in CLC activities. Only 41 percent of the target group, male and female, living in the close vicinity of the CLCs were members and even they were not regular in attending meetings. Many members had complaints regarding facilities at the CLC such as having only one newspaper, or having a limited stock of books, the poor condition of the CLC building, the poor quality of training and the like.

In summary, despite the fact that CLCs implement useful tasks and are generally hailed for their contribution to the socio-economic development of local communities, many of them do not perform well and cannot generate the benefits their members expect. Sometimes the gap between expectation and achievement is so large that local communities are discouraged. For example, although the CLCs provide training in different livelihood skills for income generation, the training is not applied because in most cases the members cannot organize a small business due to shortage of capital. Many also face problems in marketing their products or services. Income generating activities do not rank very high in the list of useful activities of the majority of CLCs. But when local communities are asked which activities they think the CLCs should concentrate on, they mention income generation as the most important. They also indicate the specific trades they prefer.

### 3.3 Future Directions for Sustainability

With the gradual increase in the number of CLCs in different parts of the country and the demonstration of their worth in terms of benefits received by participating members and communities, CLCs have gained acceptability in recent years which contributes towards their sustainability.

Local communities now show an interest in the organization of their CLCs and, although their role in planning and monitoring activities is still marginal, they do elect members of the CLC management committee, contribute to funding and extend other forms of support. The more this participation increases, the more likely sustainability will follow.

CLCs attract guardians of adolescents and large sections of the adult population in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh for many reasons. Case studies show that the degree of their acceptability to local communities depends on their efficiency in the delivery of:

- Literacy and continuing education service;
- Programmes of awareness development, health education and adolescents' family life education;

- Training in different vocational and income generating skills; and
- Microcredit.

Sometimes, assistance in primary healthcare services becomes an important consideration. Communities take an interest in seeing that the CLCs have their own establishments and funds, that they develop a good network with other service providers, that the CLC staff themselves follow the learning practice, and that the CLCs with mostly adolescent members place leadership in the hands of mothers, offer functional education and diversify activities.

In summary, increased efficiency in the operations and administration of CLCs is imperative for their sustainability.

## 4. External Intervention

It has been noted in Bangladesh that "external intervention" ranges from international agencies and organizations, to national government and agencies, local government agencies, to local authorities and town/village administrations and patrons.

### 4.1 The Processes

Case studies confirm that most CLCs in Bangladesh are established by NGOs that have their head offices in the capital city Dhaka. In most cases, the practice is to establish the CLCs with the involvement of grassroots organizations that are developed in the course of implementing NGO programmes. Most often, the NGOs provide a substantial part of the funding for CLCs whose projects are developed by the sponsoring NGOs and funded by donor agencies. Sometimes such projects start with funding from the NGO's own sources or even from the funds of local associations or organizations. But at a later stage donors are involved if the sponsoring NGOs succeed in persuading them to offer support.

CLCs often work in collaboration with local government offices of education, agriculture, health, etc. for support in delivery of services to their members. These offices also use CLCs as convenient platforms for their activities at the local level. This two way linkage expands the coverage of CLC programmes and helps in their capacity-building. The increase in tangible benefits from CLCs and their contribution to capacity-building for community development are the two major factors that promote development of community ownership of CLCs.

#### 4.2 Limitations

Despite support from local communities and external agencies, CLCs in Bangladesh are still weak in terms of human, material and financial resources. They are poorly housed, do not have adequate amenities, lack materials, equipment and tools, suffer from a shortage of funds and well motivated and efficient personnel, conduct a narrow range of monotonous activities and have management problems. Most CLCs at the grassroots level are a one-person show. There is also the problem of half-hearted local participation largely because of a feeling of lack of ownership that has severe consequences for the sustainability of CLCs.

With only a few exceptions, the planning of CLCs suffers from typical weaknesses in designing the scale and structure of activities and preparing budgets. The traditional practice is to include a large number of diverse activities making a CLC an all-purpose institution for community development without paying appropriate attention to its resource position. Budget allocations are disproportionately biased towards some expenditure while ignoring the weight and importance of others, including some priority items that are more relevant to a given community. This happens particularly when organizations taking the initiative in establishing CLCs receive funding from external agencies, especially foreign agencies.

#### 4.3 Future Directions for Sustainability

In marginal countries and more specifically in marginal communities within a country, CLCs face the threat of closure when external funding is withdrawn. Ensuring a balance between community participation/ownership and external interventions in CLCs is not simple since “the more community participation is seen, the less support comes from the government: the more government support is given, there is less community participation or ownership in the CLC”. Addressing the funding and associated balance issue is essential for the future sustainability of CLCs.

#### 5. Recommendations on Sustainability

Case studies in Bangladesh show that participation of local communities is fairly strong in providing land and/or space (a house) for the CLCs and voluntary physical labour. It is moderate in providing funds for meeting operational expenses and marginal in supplying learning/training materials and equipment. The communities, however, actively cooperate in developing links with various service providers, especially with the departments of education, agriculture extension, health and sanitation. Sponsoring NGOs also have a strong role in developing these links which are helpful for the CLCs in building a support system for the supply of materials, equipment and technical know-how, and manpower for orientation and training. With the rational use of links and networks and gradual involvement of direct and indirect beneficiaries, the CLCs attain a position when they no longer remain dependent on external funding. Also, CLCs can improve their financial strength by generating a surplus in their microcredit programme and by collecting contributions from the beneficiaries of the programme to the extent of say, 10 percent of the surplus that they generate. They may also initiate small businesses in the CLCs themselves and receive donations from the well-to-do people of the locality

Therefore, for Bangladesh, key words for enhancing the sustainability of CLCs are “participative ownership”, “links”, “funding” and “efficiency”.



### 5.1 Participative ownership

With the gradual increase in the number of CLCs in different parts of the country and the demonstration of their worth in terms of the benefits to members and the communities they live in, CLCs have gained some acceptance in recent years. Local communities now show interest and although their ownership in planning CLC activities is still marginal, they elect members of the management committee, contribute funding and extend other forms of support. Local people indirectly participate in monitoring and evaluation of the CLCs in their discussions in public meeting places (such as bazaars) or spots (such as tea stalls or union council offices).

One of the essential preconditions for a CLC to attain sustainability in operation is the participation of its members in its activities. Participation in CLCs is in fact participation of the target group population, mainly the out-of-school children, adolescents, youth and adults, and especially disadvantaged girls and women. Sustainability also requires the representation of people from these beneficiary groups and members of the local communities in the planning, management and evaluation of CLC activities.

### 5.2 Networking

CLCs can develop their network relationships with different types of organizations for improving delivery of their services, capacity-building and sustainability.

CLCs can develop a support mechanism for themselves through coordination, networking and partnerships which help in the creation of a feeling of ownership in the mindset of network partners; and also in the sustainability of CLCs through information and resource sharing, awareness raising, and capacity-building. With its limited capacity in terms of material, financial and human resources, a CLC cannot carry out all development activities alone. It needs to establish links with government agencies and local and foreign NGOs. Developing networks between CLCs and academic and research institutions, business houses, government extension

departments and microcredit institutions and among CLCs themselves, creates opportunities for availing 'extra' services and information at low cost. This also provides access to resources and marketing opportunities and most importantly, an increase in the knowledge and the capacity-building of CLC workers which is a key factor in their sustainability. Government departments can use CLCs as platforms for providing various services to local communities such as birth registration, immunization, maternal and child healthcare, primary healthcare, water and sanitation services, the distribution of seeds and saplings, agricultural counselling and training, training in livelihood trades.

### 5.3 Funding

Case studies in Bangladesh show that the sample CLCs were established with major funding and technical support from sponsoring NGOs and international agencies. But the contribution of local individuals and communities has increased over time. At present some CLCs generate more than 90 percent of their operating expenses from the local community. It took them 7 to 10 years to reduce their dependence on external funds.

Participation of local communities in a CLC that sustains itself without outside funding comes through:

- A realization that the CLC is their own organization and, within its own scope and resources, provides the services that the local community needs;
- The activities of the CLC are useful;
- The management and decision-making process is participatory; and
- The CLC operates with efficiency and transparency.

## Section 2: Indonesia Case Features

**“From, for, and by the society members themselves”**

*A motto for Indonesian CLCs*

### 1. CLC Focus

In Indonesia, non-formal education programmes for this focus are Learning Package A and Learning Package B, and their counterparts within the formal streams, i.e. the secular and religious primary and junior secondary schools. These non-formal education alternatives are set to have a five percent share in providing 7 to 15 year old children with basic education. The non-formal education programme which is the single programme in Indonesia is the functional literacy programme. The government provides generous support for institutions which provide these programmes to achieve universal basic education and to eradicate illiteracy.

Those non-formal programmes are available through CLCs or independent programmes. The main difference between a CLC and an independent programme is trivial: a CLC offers various programmes while an independent programme may offer one programme only. The logic behind this is simple: how it could be called a “centre” if it only offers one programme? CLCs may choose to offer any non-formal education programmes. No government rule applies to the types of non-formal education programmes offered by any CLC in the country. So it is an independent programme.

Historically, non-formal education offered two main programmes, literacy and family welfare education. Literacy education was offered through Learning Package A which served illiterate adults. Upon finishing the 100 modules of this package, the previously illiterate adults were considered as finishing primary education. The family welfare education programme offers knowledge and skills needed by women as house-keepers and mothers, such as simple food processing skills and child rearing skills. Unfortunately, at a later period, this particular education programme was administered by

another party at the national level, having been taken out of the education ministry.

When the Government of Indonesia promulgated mandatory basic education in 1994, Learning Package A was transferred from adult education into children’s education, i.e. the non-formal alternative for primary school. Literacy education was then transferred into its new name, functional literacy, and it has had new learning materials since then. Upon the granting of primary school equivalency, Learning Package A was then followed by Learning Package B, equivalent to junior secondary school, and Learning Package C several years later.

The skills cultivation portion of the family welfare education evolved into three programmes, namely vocational skill training courses, internships, and income generating programmes. Vocational skill training courses at the CLCs provide various skills, from food production to computer skills, in the mode of more structured vocational courses. Internship programmes provide various skills in the mode of less structured vocational skill. Where both the previous modes merely offered the skills to produce goods and services, the income generating programme provides both the skills necessary to produce goods and services, and simple marketing principles as well.

### 2. The CLCs: A Situational Survey

#### 2.1 CLC Functions

CLCs in Indonesia (*Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat* or literally translated as a community learning activities centre) were initially introduced by the Ministry of National Education to manage learning resources provided for non-formal education that were previously offered through various independent non-formal programmes. The introduction of a new, one-roof, institution in 1998 was aimed at achieving two main purposes. The first was to better manage and use more efficiently extant learning resources. It was very difficult to manage all learning resources distributed to various independent programmes. There was no systematic reporting method for

non-formal education providers. Furthermore, independently managed programmes made the joint use of resources close to impossible.

The second purpose was to be able to provide better technical supervision for all non-formal education programmes. It is inefficient to provide technical support from the government when education programmes are managed independently. With the limited number of non-formal education supervisors, providing technical support to all providers was impossible.

Indonesia's CLCs also share common management characteristics with the CLCs of other countries. There are CLCs that are managed by society, public CLCs, and CLCs sponsored by industry. Society managed CLCs are the most common and will be mainly discussed throughout this report. Public CLCs are only available in Jakarta, the national capital. Industry sponsored CLCs were founded for (i) upgrading workers' education, both for productivity and regulation purposes and (ii) image building purposes through the so called corporate social responsibility (CSR). CLCs founded for fulfilling the first purpose are located mainly within the industry, financed mostly by the industry, and providing services to the company's workers. Company founded CLCs for image building purposes are commonly open to communities living near the industry.

Currently, the government through the Centre for Policy Research and Educational Innovation has started to develop a multispectrum CLC. The first spectrum is CLCs located in religious institutions such as a mosque or a church. It is hoped that community members who come to pray will stop by and benefit from the educational services provided. The second spectrum is ICT based CLCs whose services will be delivered through the Internet and other media such as DVD and television. Another type of CLC being piloted is based on public facilities such as food vendors. The idea is that while sipping coffee, customers will have their knowledge updated.

## 2.2 CLC Programmes

CLC programmes grew from literacy and family welfare education programmes. Literacy education expanded to become two programmes, functional literacy and Learning Packages A, B, and C. Even though family welfare education was finally administered outside the education ministry, it grew into four new programmes, i.e. vocational skills training courses, internship education, income generation and early childhood education. Currently non-formal education services that may be offered by CLCs have expanded to six programmes, namely: literacy education, equivalency education, vocational training courses, internship, income generating education, and early childhood education.

CLCs in Indonesia enjoy considerable flexibility. They may offer any non-formal education programmes available and they may also invent new programmes and offer educational services through those programmes. From the first point of view, the government provides programme menus and CLCs may choose what they like to address community needs. Even though there are two government focuses on education, there is no mandatory programme to be conducted in the CLCs. CLCs can conduct any programme as long as it serves the needs of their community. The government believes that the life cycle of the institution will be disturbed if it does not serve the community needs properly.

## 2.3 Community Participation

Participation in Indonesian CLCs depends on their classification.

Government-provided CLCs are to provide exemplary models that will be initiated by society and companies. They are supervised directly by the Non-Formal Education Division of the provincial office of education in Jakarta. There is no participation of the neighbouring community at this level. There are some cases where tutors and instructors of the CLC programmes come from the society.

Surrounding community members who need education services are invited to attend a meeting in the CLC. The frequency of the meetings is not more than twice a year and in most cases it is only once a year, at the beginning of the working year. The purpose of these meeting is as a public relations exercise. The community members rarely have a chance to select the types of programmes. Both men and women are involved in this limited degree of participation. The economically marginalized group will not attend this kind of CLC meeting.

Company-based CLCs have been established in some provinces. The motive for establishing is either to increase educational attainment of the company's workers or to fulfil social responsibilities. For the former, it is quite logical that community members who live nearby are not involved in the CLC committees, programmes and activities.

Companies with social responsibility related motives provide CLCs which involve the community. Members are commonly on the committee, take decisions and benefit from the education services. This type of CLC tends to address popular problems and, therefore, the people who take part will likely reap benefits in having such a non-formal education service provider.

Community-based CLCs are those that most involve the community. Involvement ranges from committee membership, decision-making, the target audience, and last but not least, resources providers. Membership for community-based CLCs only comes from the community members themselves.

Since the community-based CLC is founded by the community it serves, decision-making also rests with the community. The most important motive for any community to establish its own CLC is to serve the community members' educational needs.

When a community decides to set up its own CLC, it should be ready to be the main financial contributor. In most cases external resources will be available only when the CLC can show proof that founding the CLC is feasible. In most cases, the only way to build the reputation of the CLC is by

providing a limited education service with quality and relevance. It is stated in the Indonesian Government Support Guidelines that a CLC may apply for financial support only if it is already more than one year old. Financial support from donors such as business or industry is likely to be available only if the patron believes that the resources will not go amiss.

The characteristics of the groups being served by CLCs are commonly dictated by the education programmes offered. Since an individual CLC chooses the non-formal education programmes it offers, the target groups can vary. Generally, however, target groups served by CLCs can be characterized by their socio-economic status and position in life. The group that tends not to use CLC services comprises community members with a high socio-economic status who live in urban areas. But, CLCs are also less likely to serve communities which live in very remote areas. So, in general, CLCs serve communities of lower economic status in both urban and rural areas.

A more detailed description of the target groups served by a CLC is based on the non-formal programmes it offers. When a CLC provides equivalency education, its target group is characterized by socio-economic status, working status, age group, and place of life. Learning Package A and B, that are equivalent to primary and junior secondary education respectively, commonly tend to serve (i) the economically less capable and working children and youth in rural areas and (ii) marginalized children and youth in urban areas, such as the under-served children living in the poorest slums and working children living in the slums. Learning Package C serves three target groups: (i) economically better-off groups, mainly working youth and adults in rural and urban areas who seek better careers, (ii) less affluent youth and those who live in urban areas; and (iii) office workers who graduate from vocational senior secondary schools and who must take Learning Package C as a prerequisite to pursue education at the tertiary level. Also worth mentioning is that although still in its infancy, there is a CLC on Bali island that targets its equivalency education services to the more affluent group.

Vocational skills training and income generating education target audiences, are commonly characterized by socio-economic status and employment status. Based on these characteristics, they may be classified into three groups. The first is economically less-affluent unemployed young adults who want to start self-employment or seek a job. The second group is housewives who want to have an independent income. Both these groups may live in rural, peri-urban, and urban areas and commonly come from lower social backgrounds. The third group comprises working people who want to have additional income or find better jobs.

Functional literacy education programmes in Indonesia commonly serve older adults, mainly women, who live in both peri-urban and rural areas, and tend to come from a low socio-economic group.

Early childhood education (and care in some cases) serves both the affluent and the less affluent living in both urban and rural areas. Although both groups are being served, the quality of services available to them.

Kindergartens tend to be more available for the middle and upper level socio-economic groups and mostly available to urban, peri-urban, and some sub-district families. Play groups are available for the affluent and less affluent groups as well and those living in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. The quality of kindergarten and play group services, however, varies with a great gap between those available for the rich and the poor. This is due to the fact that most educational resources come from parents.

### 3. Community Participation and Ownership

#### 3.1 The Processes

The main motivator for the newly born CLC system in Indonesia was community empowerment. The concept was that the type of education programme to be offered by the CLC should be decided by the community, while the management of programme delivery, including financing, should be the responsibility of the members themselves. From the management

viewpoint, government does not dictate the types of education programmes to be offered. It only acts as a facilitator for CLC programmes and activities. The motto for Indonesian CLCs is “from, for, and by the society members themselves”.

When a community decides to set up its own CLC, it should be ready to be the main financial contributor. So far, in most cases, external resources will be available only when the CLC can show proof that it is viable.

Since it was introduced in 1998, slowly the CLC movement has gained community acceptance. The latest data show that the number of CLCs has increased from 3,064 in 2004 to 4,513 in 2007.

#### 3.2 Future Directions for Sustainability

- The durability of sustainability

Although social institutions’ sustainability is often discussed in terms of continuation of funds for the activities conducted, it is a mistake to assume that the programmes and activities will run forever once the funds are secured. The institutions’ sustainability should be discussed in terms of the degree of their ability to fulfil their stakeholders’ expectations, including the needs of their main clients.

- Variables for sustainability

There are at least two variables that affect learning institutions’ sustainability. They are:

- (i) The relevancy of the learning services offered to the needs of society; and
- (ii) The availability of resources needed to produce those relevant services.

- Government CLCs

Government CLCs are born in an environment where resources tend to be available all the time. As the government is in full support of the role of CLCs it will fully support the institution with the resources it needs. For government

CLCs with frequent problems, the most severe action is to replace the CLC leader, not to close the institution. Under such circumstance, there is a high possibility of sustainability. The government will readily pay for the mistakes of its own CLCs.

- **Company-based CLCs**

Company-based CLCs are born in an environment where resource availability depends on at least two variables, namely the business situation of the company and its need for such an institution.

Since company-based CLCs tend to be dependent upon the company for financial support, the business environment affects CLC sustainability. Resources tend to be available only when business is booming. When business is suffering, the company's resources are concentrated on surviving the crunch rather than the CLC.

There are at least two different motives for a company to establish a CLC or to support one. The first is to increase its own workers' educational achievements hoping that a better educated workforce will boost productivity. The second motive is related to image building through corporate social responsibility. One of the image building modes follows a famous Chinese proverb "provide needy people with a fishing rod, and don't give them fish". By providing a fishing rod (in this case education through a CLC) the effect will last longer than if the company provides food directly to the needy.

A CLC that is established or mainly supported by a company to improve its workers skills will likely lose its company-based support when the educational achievement goal is reached. When this is the case the CLC will lose its purpose and will cease to exist.

On the other hand, a CLC that has been established or is mainly supported for the sake of creating a good image for the company will not be affected by the workers' educational achievements. What matters most to the company is its image. As long as the CLC serves the educational needs of the community competently, its sustainability is only dependent upon

the company's business situation. The above information was obtained through interviews of stakeholders. Further studies and researches would be necessary.

In a better resourced level of society, CLC resources are likely to depend on the willingness of individuals to contribute funds to the institution. Their willingness, in turn, is more likely to be dependent upon the match between educational services provided by the CLC and those that society expects. When services match expectations, individuals are more likely to donate. When expectations are not met, the reverse is true.

It is to be noted that even in a well-off society where educational needs are fulfilled by the CLC; there is no guarantee that the community will provide endless funding. In order to have a sustainable life, the CLC should be able to offer useful learning and contents to attract potential learners who are able to finance the education services they receive. Should the quality of the services deteriorate, the CLC is at risk of closing.

## **4. External Intervention**

### **4.1 Modes of Intervention**

External intervention in CLCs in Indonesia ranges from national government and agencies, business and industry, to local government agencies, local authorities and town/village administrations and benefactors. International agencies and organizations, mainly NGOs, are also involved as are international aid agencies. The direct intervention of government and business in the promotion of CLC is described in detail above.

Provision of education and training for the economically deprived community members certainly needs a helping hand from the outside. The lack of human, physical, and financial resources for education and training among the less fortunate provides adequate room for external help, including external agencies. The external agencies' role, however, will not last forever. From the CLC position, institutional activities must be sustained. Sustainability needs freedom from dependence on others' help.

#### 4.2 Future Directions for Sustainability

The role of external agencies which may include government, business and industries, and NGOs, varies and should decrease with the age or maturity level of the CLCs during their life cycle. The intervention of external agencies is most needed at the establishment step, should be reduced at the expansion step, and should be lightest and cease altogether at the sustainability step.

During the initial step, external agencies' roles include assisting in NFE institutional establishment, providing technical and management support for governing the newly set up institution, and providing finance for the education activities of the CLC.

At the expansion step, external roles are mainly focused on the quality assurance (QA) of education and training, technical management and financial support. Only CLCs with the highest feasibility level proposals should be supported and receive grants. This financial support, however, should be closely linked with technical management assistance. Best practices come from the so-called "step-father" (*beak agnate*) scheme, where both technical and financial support are provided in one package.

#### 5. Recommendations on Sustainability

The focus of sustainability is to make CLCs independent. Independence relies on the programmes meeting the needs of society and the availability of funds for the institution's maintenance. Lessons learned from best practice show that the keys to independence are income generating education and/or vocational training. Income generating education provides the trainees with the ability to investigate types of products needed by the market, producing those products and marketing them. On the other hand, vocational training programmes focus on providing the skills needed to produce a certain product. Businesses and industry perform the most important role in CLCs' sustainability with the "step-father" approach. Business and industry conduct the product needs analysis, the

CLCs produce the products based on it, and the "father" markets them. This needs analysis and marketing capacity are transferred bit by bit until the CLC committee members master them and have adequate knowledge, skills, and the attitude necessary to do everything by themselves.

There is assistance available for improvement of CLCs in Indonesia. The "step-father" approach that focuses on QA and business management should be accompanied by lessons learnt from the success of the Bangladesh Grameen Bank in providing banking services for the poor. Many large companies are ready to provide help. The government has already issued a regulation to promote resource development activities of companies. The banking infrastructure is readily available throughout Indonesia, both through the national bank and provincial government banks. Well established NGOs with good networks may act as mediators between CLCs and donor agencies including business and industry. Coordination among NGOs, CLCs, donors, private companies will be useful to find effective ways to sustain CLCs.

## **Section 3: Kazakhstan Case Features**

### **1. CLC Focus**

#### *1.1 Education is the key*

Education is a key component in assessing human development. With this in mind, Kazakhstan stresses the significance of education in the Strategic Plan for Kazakhstan Development. Equally important is this focus on education in the “Strategy-2030” document. A number of laws and legislative documents demonstrate the aspiration of Kazakhstan in building a democratic, politically and economically stable society, where education plays a key role.

Examples of this priority are demonstrated in the following laws: Law on Education, Law on Higher Education, Law on Child’s Rights in Kazakhstan, Law on Family Villages and on Houses for Adolescents, Legislation “On Social and Medical Correction Help for Children with Limited Ability”, and the State programme “Rural Schools” to mention just a few such documents. The legislative framework provides an opportunity for development of all levels of education in the public and private sectors, and in formal and non-formal education. The current state of the education system is characterized by low quality at all levels. It lags behind the demands of the market economy and it does not fully integrate the priorities accepted by civilized societies.

#### *1.2 Equal opportunity and access*

The strategic goal for education is providing equal opportunity and access to quality education, both formal and informal. Education must anticipate the needs of the nation but this is not happening in Kazakhstan. One reason for this is the lack of professionals versed in education policy able to produce a workable agenda. There are many cases of professional incompetence among university graduates resulting in questionable ethics in the work place that sustain corruption, gender imbalance, and inequality and discrimination in society. In the long run this results in low standards of living for many people, rural areas being the most vulnerable.

#### *1.3 Rural-urban differences*

It goes without saying that rural schools are deprived of what municipal schools can offer to learners. Therefore, the government has looked into the matter of consolidating the infrastructure of rural areas. According to the agenda, more schools will be constructed in rural areas and more transportation will be provided to remote sites for children to get to district schools or schools in bigger villages.

#### *1.4 Education law for NFE*

The laws and regulations on education do not specify NFE issues, which means that it is not formally structured. However, this is not a sign that NFE is playing its role in education sector development. Its role can be further enhanced to contribute to the quality of education in Kazakhstan.

#### *1.5 Establishing CLCs*

There are seven CLCs currently operating in Kazakhstan. The following information is based on the project materials of the supervising NGO.

The project of setting up CLCs was done in three stages. During the first stage the supervising NGO studied the education needs of the local population and how to deliver services to them. Using questionnaires and round table discussions respondents identified their priorities. In order of importance they are elementary computer skills, knowledge of the law, language education, knowledge of entrepreneurship, and sport. This needs analysis was also done for foreign donors to guide them on the establishment of CLCs.

The study clearly shows the respondents’ desire for practical, applicable education. People understand that education creates the foundation for career development.

During the second stage of the project, a learning tour to Uzbekistan was organized. Fifteen representatives of Kazakhstan's pilot projects observed



CLCs' activities in Uzbekistan. Potential managers of CLCs obtained information on resources and programmes that Uzbekistan's CLCs offer.

During the third stage, pilot CLCs were set up. First, six centres were established in Almaty and Zhambil *oblasts* (regions) in 2003. The major outcomes were:

- The premises were selected and repaired. They were set up in local libraries, municipal locations, village premises and a school;
- All CLCs were provided with equipment and management guidelines;
- The directions for the CLCs' activities were planned;
- In line with the plan of work, the supervising NGO conducted seminars for facilitators and leaders of the CLCs with the participation of officials from the Ministry of Education and Science and local administrations.

## 2. The CLCs: A Situational Survey

### 2.1. CLC Functions

The Community Learning Centre is a venue for non-formal education. It provides information and conducts events which are educational, cultural, health oriented and ecological for municipal and rural populations. Its activities are aimed at the needs of community members. CLCs provide services in general and professional education for various age groups to obtain knowledge and practical skills for improving the quality of life in a changing society. The outcomes include: raising educational levels and professional qualifications, increased income, psychological and social adaptation, improvement of health, preserving the environment, and the development of arts and culture.

The CLC project has been active in Kazakhstan since 2002. From the very beginning it was under the umbrella of one supervisor-NGO, Education for All in Kazakhstan. The major focus of this NGO in its work with CLCs is "fostering programme activities of CLCs for further development of their potential, institutional development and impact on community development", as stated in the project documentation.

The project documents also state that the skills and competencies that help people adapt to the new conditions in the transition to a market economy are important. This should result in the people taking the initiative to solve their life issues rather than waiting for the state to do it. This is to be achieved through education programmes.

The CLCs in Kazakhstan were set up with UNESCO funding and supervised by the NGO Education for All from the start.

The supervisor-NGO aims at accessing local communities for various education training programmes. In the report of 2002-2005 the NGO stated: "...the long term goal is raising the individuals' role and the development of the entire community on the basis of educational programmes throughout their lives".

It is to be noted that the analysis of the project documentation and the reports on the events conducted by the supervisor-NGOs does not give a clear picture and justification of why the sites were selected for setting up CLCs, and their progress during several years of existence. This in turn impacts on the whole idea and essence of community ownership and participation. Almost no useful information exists on the NGO-supervisor's website on this issue. Therefore, the NGO community in Kazakhstan is barely aware of the CLCs' existence.

### 2.2 CLC Programmes

The NGO determined the following programmes for the CLCs:

- Amanbokter village: computer literacy, sewing, cheese making;
- Karbala village: computer literacy, sewing, cheese making, entrepreneurship;
- Kordai village: computer literacy, sewing;
- Nogaibai village: computer literacy, sewing, traditional sewing crafts;
- Sortobe village: computer literacy, sewing, study of Kazakh language, local traditions, health education;

- Karaganda city: computer literacy, sewing, life skills, retraining in working professions, ecological programmes;
- Taraz city: computer literacy, sewing, tourism, preschool education.

According to the data, 12 programmes intended for facilitators and heads of CLCs were conducted by the NGO from 2002 to 2007. “We will not give comments on the topics – they are all important, no doubt, although they are repetitive and focus on “CLCs within CLCs context” so to speak. Unfortunately, no attention to the connections between development and societal issues was given. Questions arise on the sustainability of participation and ownership as follows:

- Are the facilitators and leaders the actual “owners” of those topics or were they initiated and suggested by the NGO?
- Why does it appear that the participants are mostly passive recipients of information?
- How can the current situation develop the role of participants as leaders who encourage local communities to be more active?

Sustainability cannot be resolved unless leaders and facilitators play a key role and are active initiators and not passive recipients of the topics suggested by the NGO.

One thoughtful and independent leader of the CLC spoke of the topics of the seminars that were suggested to them by the NGO in less than complimentary terms:

I was asked to come to Almaty to participate in the seminar on cheese making. Why should I? I went there as they bring us together once or twice a year. So we must go. I found it completely useless to obtain these skills. I would rather go to the market and buy cheese. The costs are the same. I have other priorities and [cheese making] is not an issue for our region.

These and other comments confirm that issues of ownership and sustainability were not considered from the very start of the CLCs’ operation.

The idea of ownership and sustainability cannot be resolved unless leaders and facilitators are active initiators and not passive recipients of suggested topics.

While the agendas of the seminars conducted for CLCs by the NGO are available, the most important things such as programmes, educational materials, recommendations and success and failures are not. Most of the CLCs began and still go on with what a colleague from Bangladesh defined as “boring low level activities”: teaching computer literacy and sewing. Some CLCs have to charge for these services to survive.

### 2.3 Participation in CLC Activities

According to the NGO’s documentation, a key target group is people who are deprived of obtaining an education: preschool children, drop outs, the unemployed, mothers who have many children, the elderly and the handicapped. The NGO states that services are also provided to farmers and schoolchildren who wish to operate computers.

## 3. Community Participation and Ownership

### 3.1 The processes

The advantages of participation ownership of CLCs in Kazakhstan are limited, as is evident from the limitations described below. However, there are advantages in the work of CLCs. For example, in one instance cooperation between the CLC management committee and the NGO supervisor led to locally-pertinent courses being introduced, along with those suggested by the latter. Also, cooperation with external authorities resulted in political and financial support.

Case studies also revealed that the strength of CLCs was evident in the contributions which training courses made to participants in terms of knowledge development leading to employment.

### 3.2 Limitations

Researchers on CLCs in Kazakhstan who have quoted the opinion of Dr. Rahman from Bangladesh, DAM, who describes CLCs in his country as: "... stereotyped and boring activities, ineffective management..." believe this is "completely true for most of the activities of Kazakhstan CLCs".

Dr. Rahman continues with his thinking on interdependence and the correlation of ownership and sustainability: "There is also a problem of half-hearted local participation, largely generated in the absence of a feeling of ownership, that has severe consequences for the sustainability of CLCs". The researchers on CLCs assert: "we are in complete solidarity with Dr. Rahman on this point after having analyzed the situation with CLCs in Kazakhstan".

They go on to agree with the proposal that:

Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future.

The researchers conclude that "the above stated definitions should have been the guidelines from the very start of CLCs operations".

### 3.3 Future Directions for Sustainability

Leaders should serve the needs of the community. They emerge at critical points in time and share a vision. This vision needs to be clearly explained and accepted by the community. Then it becomes a shared vision. The NGO-supervisor did not play a key role as a leader for CLCs. The heads of the majority of the CLCs, especially the rural ones, did not become leaders

for their communities which initially were put in the position of passive recipients. The topics of the seminars suggested at the first stage were useful but they became repetitive and useless at subsequent stages of project development. The NGO supervisors even blocked the whole idea of ownership and external intervention.

The following matters are regarded as critical elements if ownership in CLCs is to be successful:

Electing a community leader whose responsibility is spreading the information about a CLC's mission and its role in the community. It is important to build up the ownership and participation of people among all members of the community so that people see that this centre is built for them. CLC can also function to advice and support people to solve their problems.

The strategy, mission and broad-based goals of CLCs need to be clearly stated. If there is no clear focus one cannot track progress in:

- Community learning outcomes;
- Basic skills development;
- Community members' personal development;
- Measurement: providing evidence that goals are being accomplished. (Benchmarks need to be devised in terms of quantity and quality).

Project leaders, community members and efficient NGOs have to come together to see what has been achieved for empowering citizens to improve their lives. (How computer and sewing instruction contribute to personal development, for example.)

No criteria for measuring effectiveness exist in this project. They should have been identified from the start. There needs to be a clear focus on the mission of CLCs in terms of target groups, programmes and activities, otherwise community ownership is difficult to propagate. Monitoring of the project must be demonstrated using statistics showing outcomes such as: the number of people who found employment or opened small businesses,

the number of participants who actually used their cheese making skills to improve their economic status and by how much, and so forth. The absence of strategy and measurement has already resulted in the following:

- Lack of a strategy in providing equipment to the CLCs at the initial stage of the project. Teachers confessed that the sewing machines can only be used for sewing light dresses, whereas sewing a jacket is not possible;
- Many seminars offered by the NGO supervisor had no measured criteria and, hence, low effectiveness;
- The cheese processing initiative did not result in opening and sustaining small and medium enterprises, which is a big challenge for Kazakhstan.

The grassroots population remains passive: recipients did not take part in designing programmes based on their needs. Absence of clarity and measurement criteria results in no participation. Ineffectiveness in improving community life is another outcome of no participation. There is no reduction in unemployment or the incidence of human trafficking, while gender discrimination and ignorance of gender education continue to hinder progress. Political apathy in terms of complete ignorance about national issues remains as it was before.

There must be a clear differentiation of various activities:

- For leisure – dancing, cooking, etc.;
- Obtaining employment;
- Raising political awareness and participation; and
- Filling in educational gaps for the disabled, elderly adults, young unemployed, etc.

CLCs at the moment resemble the Houses of Culture that existed all over the former USSR. The focus on leisure activities speaks for that. They were operated on a large scale with state support. CLCs need to find their place in Kazakhstan society and contribute to community life beyond this leisure focus.

Social problems, such as extensive society-wide corruption, gender imbalance, poverty in rural areas, unemployment in small towns and rural areas, low awareness and low levels of participation have to be addressed. Success can only be achieved if all these intertwined issues are dealt with.

Facilitators and heads of the CLCs need to be empowered to assume an active rather than passive role in articulating leaders' needs. There is currently no communication between efficient NGOs now active in Kazakhstan and the CLCs. Some NGOs' experience in creating self-sustaining groups, for example, could be an invaluable source of community practice for all concerned.

## 4. External Intervention

### 4.1 The Processes

Around 5,000 NGOs are officially registered in Kazakhstan out of which 3,500 are said to be operational. They work to solve cultural, educational, social, poverty, gender, social justice, many-children families and other issues in Kazakh society. The scope of education NGO activities is diverse. It ranges from development of citizen education, introducing global issues in education, fighting against addiction such as alcohol and drug abuse, AIDS, ecological education and creating new teaching materials for all levels of education.

It is important to stress that some NGOs play a significant role and a number of their activities at the country level have earned the genuine respect of professionals and the population at large. Their work proved ability to achieve sustainable and workable long-term outcomes in the projects they implemented. Leadership style, humane and professional qualities and behaviour are important criteria in this respect.

It has to be said that the most prominent and successful Kazakhstan NGOs at the national level have no clue about the existence of CLCs. Is this due to poor information about CLCs on the website of the supervisor-NGO?

Several years of this project's operation should have brought some impact and recognition at the country level.

At the moment, non-governmental/non commercial organizations implement the function of non-formal education, NFE. They work with all age groups, children, adolescents and adults to solve social, health, economic and educational problems. Training programmes are supported financially by foreign donors and the Kazakhstan Government. The programmes they offer are diverse and they are supported by the professional expertise, educational background and work experience of NGO staff. The diversity of educational programmes really matters as this opens up new horizons for understanding how NFE is geared to the context of social, economic and political development. The result of their work is primarily presented in printed materials, brochures with educational materials and reports. The outcomes of these projects are not systematized. All projects and programmes are different and useful for improvement of the quality of life. But there are common mistakes such as no correlation of NGO activities; as well as a lack of information on the outcomes that in turn is revealed in the repetition of old programmes instead of backing up and further developing those which are promising. This remark does not diminish their achievements but the message is to coordinate and systematize outcomes presently scattered among NGOs.

A number of foreign donors offer good programmes for many professions and specialties. This includes short-term and long-term projects aimed at development of state-of-the-art skills. One example is where the skills of the NGO staff in tourism and sports played their role in designing the content of related training programmes. First they were offered to schoolchildren and young people then to the population at large. Again, this case, as well as others proves the strategic idea: designing programme content that reflects the local reality and the needs of the local community, sustains the whole idea of ownership and participation and financial sustainability. As an NGO they can offer paid training programmes in tourism and sport which have become popular with the public. People are ready to pay for such quality services.

#### 4.2 Limitations

Communication with CLCs has been hindered by incorrect data on the contacts that were presented by the supervisor-NGO. Telephone numbers of many CLCs were changed long ago. Addresses of their location have also changed. E-mail addresses for the majority of CLCs do not exist at all. One example of the limiting action of external parties was the decision of the Ministry of Education and Science to prohibit the issuing of diplomas in vocational education to retrained adults. The reasoning is as follows: the mission of vocational schools is the preparation for professions which does not encompass retraining. In accordance with this rule the vocational centre now issues certificates only, which nonetheless are highly respected and recognized in the locality.

#### 5. Recommendations on Sustainability

The analysis and recommendations for enhancing CLC sustainability in Kazakhstan are based on the particular situations in various CLCs. They are treated as common issues for the operation of CLCs. The common issues that predetermine effectiveness and efficiency for sustainability of any project are:

- The professional background, qualifications and ethical qualities of people, those implementing projects and those involved at all stages of the project cycle;
- Social accountability of local communities/professional communities at all levels of project initiation, design and implementation;
- Fair and objective analysis of regional needs backed up with previous achievements in other projects;
- Ability to see problems from the vantage points of both national and international development;
- Tracking down successes for achieving new challenges in order not to repeat others' failures;

- Gearing economic and social development to educational strategies specific to regional needs;
- Providing consultative advice by professionals to government on innovations that really worked. Open talk on failures at governmental and NGO levels;
- Understanding the issues of leadership, community participation and empowerment, when designing programmes and projects, and selecting implementers;
- Developing a vision of long-term sustainable outcomes that are left after a project's outside funding ceases;
- Working out educational strategies that empower the participation of local communities;
- Openness of local authorities to community needs. Building close links between authorities and NGOs in identifying local needs and finding sources for funding, nationally and internationally.

## Section 4: Nepal Case Features

**The CLC is defined as a local educational institution or a learning centre functioning outside the formal education system, usually established and managed by local people in villages and in urban locations, with the aim to capacitate deprived people to bring about qualitative changes in their lives.**

### 1. CLC Focus

Considering the needs of illiterate poor people, the scope of the literacy programme and out-of-school programme for children was expanded to cover not only knowledge and skills in reading, writing and calculation, but also the use of literacy and new knowledge to solve daily problems regarding health, family welfare and acquiring new skills and more income. This requires promoting empowerment and capacity-building of the local people. But the processes of empowerment and capacity-building through the traditional school system were not suitable. Therefore, people's institutions, which can offer literacy, post literacy and general education combined with vocational education relevant to the day-to-day life of the poor in rural areas is necessary. Thus the Community Learning Centre (CLC) was found to be the most appropriate institution because local people themselves establish and manage them. They decide on the content, methods and modus operandi of CLCs that suit their needs and aspirations.

In Nepal, CLCs are gradually increasing in number following the initiative of the Government, NGOs and the UNESCO Country Office. The total number of CLCs in operation is 215 (NFEC supports 156, UNESCO supports 25, and NFE-NRC supports 34), most of which are located in the rural setting (as of 2009).

The Tenth Plan of Nepal (2002-2007) accepted CLCs as effective and locally sustainable institutions for continuing education. The plan envisaged using the physical facilities of local primary schools so that quite a large number

of CLCs could be opened. The target was to establish 205 CLCs within the plan period, in each and every electoral constituency. It also stated in the plan that local bodies would be entrusted with the job of running CLCs.

Similarly, the Education for All: National Plan of Action (2004-2009) has underlined the importance of CLCs as the alternative strategy of learning for empowerment. The document also reiterates the Tenth Plan's emphasis on expanding the number of CLCs with more impetus on promoting coordination between CLCs and various other development organizations working at the local level.

The Three-Year Interim Plan (2007-09) also reiterated this commitment and the CLC's role for expanding NFE in the country. The plan has the target for establishing 129 CLCs in the remaining electoral constituencies within the plan period. Furthermore, it also stated that the programme will stress enhancing skills and increasing income levels of disadvantaged and marginalized communities. Incorporating the concept of CLCs in these plans and in the Education for All: National Plan of Action is, of course, an indication that the government has recognized CLCs as effective means of localized learning.

To provide the momentum needed, NFEC developed a CLC operational manual with the support of NFEC, UNESCO Kathmandu and NRC-NFE. The guidelines were prepared to implement the policy of NFE through Community Learning Centres. The guidelines assume that the CLC is an organization which provides functional education to children, youth and adults to help individuals and communities develop. The school curriculum is directed by the central government, whereas the curriculum in CLCs is decided by the local people themselves. The CLC is expected to be set up and managed by the local people according to their needs and aspirations. The guidelines specify the objectives of the CLCs as providing basic education for all, disseminating development information to the people in the community, developing the necessary manpower to carry out developmental work in the community, and working as a link-agency between development agencies and the local people.

During discussions, NFEC staff members maintained that the establishment of a CLC in each electoral constituency could not help achieve their goals. A VEP-based CLC was conceptualized and this concept has already been implemented. At present, NFEC is extending its support to develop Village Education Plans (VEP) in 300 VDCs of 20 districts. Once the VEPs are prepared, NFEC encourages establishing CLCs in those villages. Moreover, CLCs will also be established in each ward of municipalities.

From the beginning the government has not worked to frame a comprehensive national CLC policy. CLCs have been deprived of having a national legal framework. This stands as a major impediment in the institutionalization of CLCs. However, NFEC considered this problem and moved to incorporate the provision of CLCs in ongoing amendments to the Education Act. With these amendments, CLCs will become autonomous community organizations that can make contact with other organizations, make agreements and conduct activities independently, rather than at present being considered part of NFEC.

## 2. The CLCs: A Situational Survey

### 2.1 CLC Functions

The functions of CLCs in Nepal may be summarized as follows:

- Formal education support centres;
- Non-formal education and lifelong learning;
- Political discourse centres;
- Women's forum groups;
- Social and culture revitalization;
- Microcredit;
- Community's reflection centre/association;
- Skills training/vocational education.

## 2.2 CLC Programmes

Concerning programmes, NFE policy considers that:

- Programmes will be individually or collectively implemented by CLCs, NGOs, local groups, schools, CBOs and government organizations;
- Programmes related to community needs and education will be implemented;
- Different programmes related to adult or youth life skills will be conducted;
- CLCs will be mobilized for community development, improved production, the promotion and conservation of the cultural heritage, and continuing education.

CLCs have several executing bodies that decide on policy and programmes, and implement their activities. Even though the participation of beneficiaries in these bodies is essential for fostering ownership, the local influential people are the main representatives on these bodies. The composition of CLCs may not be truly representative if the involvement of beneficiaries is low. The current structure of CLCs may promote hierarchical directives and prescriptions in programme development and may ignore the needs and aspirations of people at the periphery. As CLCs' programmes are mostly designed and implemented by the executives of the CLCs, and these executives are influential in their locality, it is hard to say that the needs of the target people will be articulated. Furthermore, CLCs rarely conduct detailed surveys of the target community. So, one can be sceptical whether CLCs satisfy the wants of those most in need.

The following is a selection from a list of programmes and activities operated in one CLC in Nepal:

- Saving/Credit groups (income generation activities);
- Adult literacy and post literacy classes;
- Early childhood development;
- Training in electricity, motorcycle repairing, radio/TV repairing, computers, carpentry, mushroom farming, off season vegetable farming, beauty

parlour management, banana farming, masonry, bamboo, tools preparation, and cycle repairing;

- Literacy through computers;
- CLC management training;
- Coaching classes in mathematics, English and science.

## 2.3 Participation in Activities

NFE policy requires that emphasis will be given to special target groups while establishing new CLCs. This will be the focal point to expand all types of non-formal education. With the mobilization of different individuals and groups, literacy campaigns will be implemented in the community. Women members of groups will be encouraged to manage childcare centres. Taking into consideration community needs, different kinds of development works will be implemented to support the groups, and, with the partnership of the media, will be made available to CLCs.

The reasons for the establishment and evolution of CLCs in Nepal are various. Hence participation varies according to the purpose. Some CLCs evolved to address the needs of the local people, and some for preserving and promoting local culture and cultural heritage. Some CLCs were established for women and engaging them in productive work, while others were for income-generation and community development. In the establishment of CLCs, the community took the initiative. However, external agencies like District Education Officers and UNESCO also had a prominent role.

Most CLCs are located in accessible areas. As the people living there have relative advantages in terms of their access to information and knowledge, they can take the initiative in the establishment of a CLC. They can make contacts with the DEOs and other agencies. For people living in remote and inaccessible places the opposite is true.



### 3. Community Participation/Ownership

#### 3.1 The processes

The feeling of ownership of target people to the CLC lies in their affinity for the CLC. The affinity sprouts when the target people have a close relationship with it. Moreover, social and cultural bonds between participants also stimulate the relationship, and thus ownership.

Trust is one of the several attributes that rouses the feeling of ownership. When people's needs are fulfilled and their problems are addressed promptly, the incitement of trust gears up with the feeling of ownership..

Ethno-interaction which is to be understood as in-depth sharing and exchange of ideas and perceptions provides latitude to the programme stakeholders to reflect and to act together. The process, which is basically geared towards taking account of stakeholders' needs and problems and also their own knowledge and skills in the design and implementation of development programmes, has the potential to deepen the feeling of ownership.

Stakeholders' real belonging to a programme is also dependent on the tangible returns. Another crucial factor in cultivating the feeling of ownership among programme participants is the extent to which they are involved in decision-making, starting from the inception to the implementation phase of a development programme.

Another essential element is transparency and accountability. If all the workings of a programme are not clearly visible to the stakeholders, they may limit their intrinsic involvement in it which obviously would restrict their feeling of ownership. Moreover, the more the delivery potential of a programme the more it is likely to foster the feeling of ownership.

*"As far as the world lasts, the CLC remains. CLC itself is a community; and the community does not disappear as long as the world remains."*

This notion also suggests that the CLC should be able to develop the feeling of ownership among the stakeholders.

CLCs play a positive role not only for local empowerment, but also for local conflict management. This develops positive attitudes among the population and the feeling that the CLC is community property.

#### 3. Limitations

The limitations to ownership of CLCs in Nepal relate primarily to the domination of CLCs by external sources in terms of their establishment, organization, planning of activities and implementation. An almost impenetrable barrier is claimed to exist between supply and demand, with the donors determining the supply regardless of the demand. Hence, ownership belongs to the supply side and there is little or no ownership interest from the demand side. Some believe this situation is being corrected.

Details supporting this contention are found under the next heading with indications on how this might be put to right for the sustainability of CLCs.

#### 3.3 Future Directions for Sustainability

Although the popularity of CLCs seems to be growing, a clear and common understanding of the concept of CLCs among the population has yet to surface. Since CLCs run programmes, such as NFE, Early Childhood Development, and income-generation supported by DEOs, the community feels that the CLC is also a government agency like a DEO. Such a notion certainly does not help the CLC to evolve as an autonomous community organization.

Further, the CLC is also understood as the extension wing of NGOs, UNESCO and the like, because the CLC conducts programmes sponsored by these organizations. For UNESCO-sponsored CLCs, stakeholders hold the notion that CLCs are UNESCO offices. They might have developed this impression because UNESCO-funded CLCs are operating under the direct management of UNESCO. Where CLCs are managed by a government body or by NGOs, the stakeholders feel that they are government offices or NGO offices.

Residents cannot conceive CLCs as community organizations thus creating a mixed perception about their ownership. Since CLCs conduct their programmes with external support, stakeholders cannot understand that the CLC is theirs. When the community sees a CLC as a government agency or the extension wing of an NGO, how can it develop the feeling of ownership? CLCs as energizers of empowerment have faced many barriers including management issues, the process of institutionalization and sustainability and identifying programmes that really help the community.

As indicated earlier, people do not have a clear understanding of the concept of the CLC. Because of this they simply act on instructions recommended by the lead figures of the CLC management body. They are left with very little or no space to critically reflect on what procedural and programme components would stimulate a real empowerment of their lives.

Therefore, it is essential to give the stakeholders a full and clear understanding of the CLC movement. For this purpose they need to be actively involved in the process of discourse so that they get a thorough conceptual and structural understanding of the CLC. On the management side, one notices the dominance of the traditional approach characterized by hierarchical ordering and orthodox bureaucratic values and norms. Usually, people are assigned roles to mobilize resources and contribute voluntary labour for setting up the CLC infrastructure. Stakeholders' involvement in visualizing what kind of structural set up will make CLCs more instrumental for their empowerment is hardly deemed as the main priority. This practice has deprived them of their right to make choices as to what types of management approaches are appropriate for them. They are obliged to adhere to a choice which is not their own. This has defeated the meaning of empowerment. Therefore, there has to be strong advocacy in support of allowing people to make their own choices regarding CLC management. Their autonomy in the management of CLCs will foster their confidence in creating other enabling institutional structures for community empowerment.

The types of programmes carried out by CLCs include literacy, income potential skills, health issues, women in development and community

support all of which represent typical traditional programmes and are invariably considered as the determinants of empowerment. These programme prescriptions are expected to result in a synergy for positive change. In reality one can notice some physical changes but the structural problems in the social setting have remained intact. The programme sponsors do not seem to be providing an equal footing for all stakeholders irrespective of who they are so that their feelings and thoughts are not voiced. Programmes developed and implemented without articulation of the participants do not support empowerment and eventually resist social transformation.

Therefore, it is most pertinent for the future operation of CLCs to give priority to the stakeholders' historical reality. For this purpose the stakeholders' need to be involved in visioning exercises facilitated by professionals. It is also important to look critically into the current practice of needs assessment. Actually, it is superficial because the sponsors intentionally set a process through which the stakeholders are led to express what suits the sponsor's own agenda.

The operation of CLC activities seems to be overly controlled by the 'banking method' and as a result the role of the stakeholders is limited to listen and comply. This modus operandi will definitely hinder the potential of stakeholders. Similarly, the learning materials should help the stakeholders to reflect critically and think of ways that put them in the process of empowerment. The learning materials in use at present are very much traditional and have domesticating intentions.

Another important weakness is the dearth of competent human resources that can provide substantial professional support in transforming CLCs as the catalyst for empowerment. The training offered is ineffective and non-functional because it follows the traditional concept which accredits 'expert' authority as the suppliers of knowledge to fill up the 'empty' heads of the trainees. It is hard to believe that such training provides the real elements of empowerment. It is therefore necessary to make a paradigm shift from traditionalism to pragmatism in the development of human resources.

Another critical point in the modality of CLC operations is the continuation of traditionalism in the formation of CLC management committees and advisory committees, which invariably consist of local elites and dominant community figures. The deliberate stance to ignore the principle of inclusiveness on such committees means that CLCs are not truly people-oriented organizations. This is the irony which CLCs have faced in Nepal. In order to depose this irony of management and operation, re-engineering of CLCs with the help of social activists needs to be stepped up a few gears.

## 4. External Intervention

### 4.1 The Processes

Community dynamics are essential for the evolution of CLCs. However, external support is equally important for their sustainability. External support comes from a range of sources, internal and external to Nepal. Most conspicuous among the former is the District Education Office, while NGOs contribute most from the latter group.

### 4.2 Limitations

At present, CLCs have received external support for conducting their programmes. If the external support is discontinued, it will be very hard for CLCs to continue. In this sense, the external support the CLCs receive cannot promote it as an independent organization even if the support is essential for the advancement of the CLC. Moreover, the external support to CLCs has not been institutionalized. The agencies provide support to execute their own interests which certainly prohibits CLCs from evolving as community-based organizations. External support has not been channelled into the capacity development of CLCs. Until CLCs are able to fulfil their resource needs by themselves, support from outside, basically from NGOs and INGOs, and from other potential sources, is essential.

CLCs have to face the problem of complying with the provider's terms and conditions which are attached to the provision of support. Thus the need to adhere to the conditions impedes the free flow of ideas from the grassroots level. The management of CLCs divorced from context specific ideas evades the spirit of empowerment. In this respect the donors should adopt a liberal stance while providing resource support. If their intent is to really help the stakeholders to emerge from their wretched reality, they need to be allowed to exercise their freedom to think, to create and to perform. Top-down strategies of development have not produced the desired results for development at the local level. Grassroots-level participation is preferred. Programmes developed and implemented by outsiders will not articulate the priorities of the target audience who happen to be the beneficiaries of the programme.

There are several examples of external initiatives in development that failed when they could not involve the community in decision-making, planning, management and implementation. People's participation is necessary for community development. Normally, participation refers to a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.

Most external organizations, donors and INGOs seek out NGOs and community-based organizations to implement their programmes. For this purpose, they use CLCs. As most CLCs do not have plans and programmes, they opt for conducting the programmes supported by these organizations. Thus the CLCs are once again compromised by external objectives and priorities. This leads them to become a local-level NGO or CBO. While granting funds to the CLC, the donor organizations request them to register with the government. As the legal status of CLCs is not clear, CLCs register as an NGO. This move defeats the very concept of CLCs – a common platform for all in the community. Hence the influence of external organizations further deepens the problem and creates hurdles for CLCs to become a place for local participants and their upliftment.

### 4.3 Future Directions for Sustainability

CLCs in the present context seem to have been organized along the principle of structuralism which tends to fertilize the status-quo in the social structure. This obviously constricts social transformation by allowing the traditional forces to continue their stranglehold on national affairs.

Therefore, a new thrust for energizing CLCs as a vigorous change apparatus must be set in place. For this purpose it is imperative in the interest of the future sustainability of CLCs to move ahead with the initiatives proposed here:

First of all, a strong national CLC policy needs to be developed with a national level CLC coordination committee. This committee should comprise representatives from the government, NGOs, INGOs, donor agencies and most importantly from civil society. The committee should be wholeheartedly devoted to the causes of dignity, equality, impartiality and above all for the emancipation of destitute people from oppression and injustice. This body has to make it a guiding principle to detect social dynamics and address social evils.

The next step is related to forming district and village-level coordination committees. These committees should have representatives mainly from civil society but also from local government, development agencies and educational institutions, as well as from NGOs and CBOs. The focus of these committees should be on building harmony with the people in order to identify effective programme interventions linked to their critical needs. Moreover, they have to be committed to the 'putting people first' principle and to mobilizing resources.

Another important aspect is to provide help to CLCs to forge links with other people-centred organizations. This will enable them to function efficiently. CLCs can also be planned as resource centres where activities, such as the collection of learning resources, their processing and eventually dissemination to the people can be carried out. For this to happen, stakeholders' initiatives need to be encouraged by providing them with technical and professional support.

Programme implementation structures designed by outsiders or sponsors seem fairly unrealistic since they lack compatible qualities in the CLC context. The stakeholders may have their own ideas of what a viable structural management should be. The problem is that often no interest is shown in community ideas because sponsors believe they know best. In this way, insensitivity towards people's ability to make their own choices has negatively affected the operation of CLCs.

Another equally important issue is related to the sustainable operation of CLCs. This concern has a great deal to do with the monitoring of CLC affairs. Prescriptive monitoring which is normally carried out by the sponsors has not shown any notable impact. Here again the attitude of ignoring the people is a major problem. It would, of course, be a relevant step to create a local mechanism conceived by the stakeholders to monitor the workings of their CLCs. The concept that CLCs are there for the operation of traditionally inherited programmes such as literacy, post-literacy and other so-called development activities, persists. The crucial elements that help people emerge from the clutches of indignity and inequality are not strongly reflected in CLC activities. Often, there is a tendency to look at CLCs separately from the contradictions and coercion which have become part of Nepal's recent history. Therefore, CLCs which empower should be the goal especially when compared to the current reality of Nepal.

### 5. Recommendations on Sustainability

The confusion on the role of CLCs needs to be cleared up. Therefore, the status, structure, role and functions of CLCs should be defined within a proper legal code.

The representation of people on the periphery in the decision-making bodies of CLCs is meagre. Their proper participation in these bodies should be ensured. To do this, a legal framework should be developed and the present guidelines revised; their quota should be determined and social awareness programmes should be launched.

To ensure the current programme development practice of CLCs articulate the needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries, CLCs should conduct community surveys and focus group discussions before developing their programmes. Moreover, participation of people at the periphery must be ensured.

At present, CLCs involve beneficiaries by forming several functional groups. This kind of functional participation does not promote interactive participation and self-mobilization of the beneficiaries. Therefore, CLCs should develop and implement programmes that ensure interactive participation of beneficiaries and their self-mobilization by involving them in the joint analysis of problems, setting the targets and priorities.

The external support CLCs receive readies them for programme implementation. However, such support does not enhance the capacity of CLCs or make them autonomous. External support should be provided for the capacity development of CLCs, especially in the areas of management such as resource generation, needs assessment, institutional building, planning, programme management and implementation, monitoring, documentation and dissemination.

External support should aim at developing stakeholders' capacity to sustain CLCs by themselves. It should not entrench them in a dependent position.

To ensure the sustainability of CLCs at the outset, stakeholders need to be encouraged to articulate their knowledge, experiences, and skills.

Participation/Ownership should be fostered in CLCs by encouraging decisions which will lead to the creation of a congenial environment for sustainability.

## Section 5: Pakistan Case Features

The Community Learning Centre (CLC) is a local institution outside the formal education system, usually set up and managed by the involvement of local people to provide various learning opportunities as per the needs and demands of the local community, leading to continuous and lifelong learning for sustained improvement of people's quality of life.

**[Editorial Note:** The research into CLCs in Pakistan was severely restricted by the law and order situation, firstly with the killing of a popular political leader and, secondly, extremists' activities, particularly in two provinces. Apart from the use of documentary material, the features below evolve from nine CLCs operating in urban slums, which provide education and training to illiterate adults and out-of-school children. The concern of all goes out to CLCs operating in such difficult political contexts.]

### 1. CLC Focus

#### 1.1 Literacy in Pakistan

The picture of illiteracy in Pakistan is grim. At present, the adult literacy rate is estimated to be 54 percent (male 66 percent, female 42 percent). Although successive governments have announced various programmes to promote literacy, they have been unable to do this because of political, social and cultural constraints. Official statistics released by the Federal Education Ministry of Pakistan give a desperate picture of education for all. The enrolment at primary level is already very low, but 50 percent of those who do enrol drop out in the very early years of schooling. In a country with a low literacy rate, where more than 57 million people are living below the poverty line, it is essential to make more provisions for adult literacy. In the past and present, the governments made efforts to eradicate illiteracy but there are a number of challenges. The progress in the literacy rates

is minimum. One of challenge is the relapse into illiteracy after the basic literacy programmes. For the retention of newly acquired literacy skills and for further learning, there is need for an extensive institutionalized continuing education programme. Such a learning opportunity should be easily available to those who want a better life for themselves and their communities.

### *1.2 Sustainability of NFE*

However, one of the serious weaknesses of literacy and non-formal basic education (NFBE) in Pakistan is that it is carried out on an ad-hoc basis and in the form of a one-shot term activity. Literacy classes are usually conducted for six or nine months and then they disappear after the programme has ended. The same is true for classes for out-of-school children. Due to the lack of a permanent structure at the grassroots level, literacy and non-formal basic education programmes do not provide functional education based on the needs and problems of target groups. Literacy and NFBE programmes should help people to identify their real problems and solve them through learning about health, cleanliness, nutrition, family planning and the environment. Similarly, the functional literacy programme should help learners to acquire new skills and technology, to improve their professional life and their capacity to earn their livelihood.

### *1.3 Establishing CLCs*

Although it needs a holistic policy and the concerted efforts of both the government and the community to help solve these problems, it is expected that the establishment of CLCs empowers people to at least develop a realization of these problems and develop new skills to address them. The CLC is a multipurpose institute of the community by the community and for the community to promote learning and skills to improve the quality of life.

### *1.4 Community Involvement*

The concept of community involvement is not new in Pakistan. The country has a long tradition of community involvement in teaching and learning of the young and adults in home schools, local schools, mosques and madrassahs (the religious schools in Muslim society). Over the last 50 years, the government has incorporated this concept in programmes such as Village Aid, People's Work programmes, Rural Development, School Management Committees (SMCs) and, most recently, the Citizen Community Boards (CCBs). Each of these community-based programmes intends to make full use of the contribution of the people for their own development. But, the involvement of the community by and large has been restricted to the provision of funds particularly to the religious institutions while their management has remained in the hands of the individuals who manage them. However, the government had intentions to involve the local community in the affairs of educational institutions.

### *1.5 The two-way approach in CLCs*

The concept of the Community Learning Centre goes one step further because it envisages bringing knowledge, skills, and access to updated information and values to the doorsteps of the learner and to reach a maximum number of beneficiaries. It is not a one-way approach in which the resource persons or the instructor in the CLC imparts knowledge, skills, or values to the learners. Rather, there is an abundance of knowledge in the community itself. What is required is to provide an opportunity for this knowledge to be passed from one generation to the next. The optimum use of collective wisdom is at the heart of the Community Learning Centre. The concept of the CLC also involves the sense of ownership by the community of these centres.

## 1.6 The development of CLCs

Some CLCs were established under particularly after 1998, but the concept of CLC received added emphasis under the LIFE project of UNESCO, particularly during 2006. Under the new emphasis, the main thrust of the input by UNESCO was to make these CLCs as functional as possible by involving the local community; and making them self-sustainable by enabling through community ownership.

## 2. The CLCs: A Situational Survey

### 2.1 CLC Functions

The main purpose of CLCs in Pakistan is to provide opportunities for basic literacy, post literacy, continuing education, (knowledge, skills and values) through non-formal and informal modes, responding to needs identified by the community itself.

Whether the programme is to be implemented by the Government or non-government organizations, the basic aim and scope may be more or less similar. A model CLC may have similar characteristics, salient features, strategies and functions. The functions of CLCs are identified as:

- Providing non-formal, continuing education and skills training programmes;
- Responding to needs identified by the community;
- Providing access to information in fields of interest to the community;
- Strengthening the capacities of communities to carry out educational activities by themselves;
- Providing programmes leading to the improvement of the quality of life of the participants and their communities; and
- Contributing to poverty alleviation.

### 2.2 CLC Programmes

In the development of CLC programmes, intervention to be provided by government and non-governmental organizations under the umbrella of UNESCO was aimed to produce an impact at two levels. First, the development of the capacity of the stakeholders involved in the functioning of the CLCs; and secondly, empowerment of the community to take the initiative and own the CLCs in terms of their functioning, management and financial matters. For the purpose of capacity-building the following activities were to be carried out by the executing agencies with the help of UNESCO:

Training of literacy managers, teacher trainers and facilitators/teachers of CLCs to have improved attendance and higher achievement of learners. This would also ensure proper recognition of the local needs of society and needs-based provision of material contributing to reducing poverty and providing socio-economic support for the less privileged in society.

The special focus on women in the community would support female empowerment through opportunities to participate in CLCs; and to take a leading role in self-development and the overall social development of the community.

A smooth transition from external sources of funding to local participation and ownership by adopting needs-based policies and income generating activities.

Much progress has been made in the area of capacity-building of the individuals involved in the establishment and management of CLCs particularly, the middle level managers, literacy personal, teachers and community leaders. The activities pertaining to the capacity-building of the individuals involved in the functioning of CLCs have been very extensive. There is every likelihood that these activities will produce a significant impact on the development of the capacity of individuals. Material for community mobilization and guidelines for establishing CLCs have been developed and disseminated. This has been done in the recent past and it will take some time to take the whole community fully on board.

After reviewing the documents provided by various agencies involved in the establishment of CLCs in Pakistan, the following activities were proposed by them. However, as these CLCs are still in the stage of infancy, not all activities are being carried out.

- Adult Basic Literacy;
- Post Literacy;
- Health Education which includes, immunization, personal hygiene etc.;
- Conflict resolution at the local level;
- Library;
- Community dialogue to express ideas in fields of interest leading to improved quality of life for every segment of the community;
- Networking of volunteers, learners and teachers in the form of clusters;
- Celebration of local, national and international events and days;
- Awareness raising on healthcare, gender and social issues;
- Life skills based continuing education.

### 2.3 Participation in CLC Activities

The CLC functions as the venue for education and training and as a resource and information centre for various development activities, and community networking. The activities are flexible and participatory. The CLC should allow leadership to emerge from the community, while support should also be made through strengthened coordination, networking and partnerships.

## 3. Community Participation and Ownership

### 3.1 The Processes

The success of most CLCs is yet to be seen particularly in terms of empowerment of the local community and sustainability of these centres. Most CLCs are basic literacy centres, not having achieved the status of self sustainability and community empowerment.

Stakeholders express positive feelings about the establishment of CLCs and their role in providing skills for earning a better livelihood:

"I used to sell bangles from early morning to late evening but could not earn more money. Now, after learning skills to make decoration items, I am able to earn more money."

### 3.2 Limitations

Progress in the empowerment of the community and development of the capacity of the local community to run CLCs on a self-sustainable basis has not been impressive. This is due to the low level of awareness and the lack of motivation of the local community to take on the activities of the CLCs. The reasons for this are:

- First, these CLCs have been recently established, some of them just a month or so before the visit by the research team;
- Secondly, almost all these CLCs have been established in poor areas where basic facilities like healthcare and education are rarely available. These local communities have few resources and have large families to support from a meagre income;
- Thirdly, the process of establishing the CLCs probably needs to be revisited. Communities need to be involved from the very beginning, including needs assessment, site selection, planning, decisions about programmes and resource mobilization.

A substantial effort is needed in the area of community ownership in which the responsibility for the functioning and management of CLCs is shifted from NGOs to the local community.

In terms of community mobilization, before the establishment of CLCs, local communities, particularly individuals active within the community, were gathered together by the donor/sponsoring agency. The proposal for the establishment of a CLC was discussed and the community was asked for volunteers, material resources and funds. However, community



mobilization is a continuous process and requires concerted efforts on the part of mobilizers. Apart from the initial gathering of the community, no sign of continuing effort was found.

Similarly, management committees were constituted in most of the CLCs and these committees elected their chair and secretary from amongst themselves. However this was done under the sponsorship of the external agency. In certain cases, some community members were indifferent because they were involved in the initial meetings but were not given any responsibility.

Most of the CLCs were single sex, serving males or females. This was due to the cultural sensitivities of the local population. However, in management committees, both males and females were involved when possible. Most were social workers, Imams, female councillors, farmers and school teachers. However, out of nine CLCs participating in this study, four were recently established and the constitution of their management committees was still in process. At present, the CLCs are managed by the donor agencies.

Management committees are not very functional. Their meetings depend on the initiative of the manager/teacher. In all centres, one manager/teacher was appointed by the external agency to look after and run the affairs of the CLC.

Management meetings tend to be a formality because these committees are not financially strong and depend on the external agencies for new programmes. Most of the decisions taken by the community in terms of new programmes are conveyed to the donor agencies for implementation. The local community has not yet been able to fully take on board the activities of CLCs. If funds are not available, new programmes are not started.

### 3.3 Future Directions for Sustainability

The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), a governmental organization established in 2002, is the largest organization involved in the establishment of CLCs throughout the country. Other government agencies and NGOs have established CLCs in provincial Pakistan. However, the NCHD is itself new. All these organizations, particularly the NCHD have decided to ensure sustainability of CLCs by registering them as Citizen Community Boards (CCB) under the recently implemented devolution plan. By registering as Citizen Community Boards, CLCs will be legally allowed to receive funding from the government for various activities and projects provided that these CCBs raise 20 percent of the funding themselves. Although at present, these CLCs are being managed by the establishing agencies, the district governments, being the main stakeholders, may take them under their jurisdiction. For this purpose, the NCHD has also proposed to:

- Mobilize community members to deposit their savings in the form of cash PKR5.00 to PKR10.00 each per week with the committee;
- Collect a token amount of money on issuance of library books by the CLC;
- Ask CLC Management Committees to raise funds through different activities.

If these measures are effective, future sustainability will be more likely.

Future sustainability in terms of participation/ownership may also be supported, if the following issues are addressed:

- Committees may be involved in the working of the CLCs. However, the local community has not taken ownership of these centres because they are still largely being managed by the external agencies;
- As the literacy rate in the country and particularly in the areas where CLCs have been established is very low, the local community lacks the initiative and capability to assess the needs of the community to initiate new programmes;

- Local communities are not enthusiastic contributors in terms of their time, money and effort to make CLCs a success. Again, the reason for this reluctance to contribute can be ascribed to their poverty and lack of education. It may also depend on whether the external agency wants to transfer ownership to the local community. The number of literacy centres under their control may determine their credibility and prestige, and therefore their ability to attract the attention of the donor agencies.

## 4. External Intervention

### 4.1 Advantages

For Pakistan, the advantages of external interventions have also inherently been the limitations.

Most CLCs were established by an outside organization. Locally, the community was involved only for consultative purposes once the decision had already been made to establish the CLC. The ideas of the outside agency did not originate from within the community itself.

All the planning, programming, even the appointment of staff was done externally. Payment of salaries to the managing/teaching staff of the CLC is still being borne by external agencies from the grant provided by UNESCO.

Management Committees, wherever formed, were usually set up by the establishing agency. They did not emerge as a result of consultative processes within the community.

Even if management committees exist, these are not very functional and active.

Very little advocacy and mobilization is visible. Community mobilization in terms of materials and financial aspects is still weak and lacking in many CLCs.

The programmes at the CLCs have been broadly concerned with literacy and, in some cases, basic education and imparting income generation skills.

Impressive work has been done in the area of capacity-building, which includes development of materials and training of staff. Various public sector institutions and NGOs have been involved in these activities.

Although it is very difficult to discover the real reason for lack of ownership by the community and its empowerment, it can generally be ascribed to:

- Low literacy rates in the community;
- Lack of awareness in the community;
- A feudal culture where every new initiative needs to be approved by the influential personalities of the locality;
- Lack of precedence of successful endeavours in the past; and
- Lack of confidence in the NGOs.

### 4.2 Future Directions for Sustainability

Financially, CLCs in Pakistan have not attained the status of self-sustainability. External intervention in one form or the other will continue for a considerable time.

Community capacity to sustain CLCs without external support, where communities are usually below the poverty line, requires a holistic approach to alleviating poverty.

At the same time, community ownership can be sustained – apart from financial viability – if the external suppliers operate from a demand side rather than the supply side.

## 5. Recommendations on Sustainability

In order to make CLCs sustainable and to transfer their ownership to the community itself, the following steps need to be taken:

The basic idea for establishing a CLC should come from the community itself. The NGOs must start a mobilization campaign but must not lead in establishing the CLC.

The local community should be informed from the beginning that it will be provided with a limited amount of seed money; and that the community should come up with a strong and assured plan of fundraising to set up the CLC and run it on a self-sustaining basis.

There is a need to raise awareness among communities that they must rely more and more on their own resources.

In order to make CLCs self-sustainable and self-managed by the communities themselves, it is important that management committees comprise of skilled and self-motivated persons who can invest their time and money to make CLCs an effective enterprise.

The inputs from outside agencies should not be imposed on the community.

CLC-based training should be organized (at the local level) and should be relevant to the needs of CLC personnel.

An important role of CLCs is to establish networks with other organizations within and outside the community. This has not been followed. The establishment of a network is very important to exchange information related to CLC needs, community demands, skills training and so on.

Another missing factor has been the lack of advocacy in mobilizing the community. Though it is not easy, it is advisable to involve not only influential men and women right from the start, but also members of the local government councils. In fact, the chairman or Nazim of the district government should be approached first so that his good offices are used for securing the cooperation of the community. Further, before setting up CLCs, informal consultation meetings should be held with local people regarding their needs and demands.

The CLC programme should be a response to these demands and requirements. This will cause the community to take an interest in CLC activities and may lead to active participation and ownership of the centres.

## Section 6: Philippines Case Features

The CLC movement in the Philippines is a young one, begun around 2003 by the Department of Education. It needs to be nurtured to take firm root in the education landscape. The BALS will need to boost its capabilities for monitoring and evaluating the perils of and the gains from this new movement, so that it can better steer the CLC idea in the optimum direction.

### 1. CLC Focus

Among countries in ASEAN, the Philippines has one of the highest literacy rates, second only to Thailand. In the 2003 Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), basic literacy was recorded at 94 percent; females have a slightly higher rate, at 94.3 percent than males at 92.6 percent.

Despite the provisions for the chance to achieve basic education for all, including free and compulsory primary and free secondary education, many children fall through the cracks. The reported cohort survival rate in the primary level (grade 1 to 6) in school year 2005-2006 was 58 percent. Thus only six out of every 10 grade 1 entrants completed grade 6. At secondary school, cohort survival rate in the school year 2003-2004 was 51 percent, when reckoned from grade 1, but relatively higher at 75 percent if reckoned from first year high school. These figures imply that most of the dropping out occurs in the primary grades, which in turn suggests that dropouts at such an early stage in their schooling may then lapse to illiteracy.

The incomplete schooling of a significant segment of the population is reflected in the functional literacy rates. While simple literacy as recorded in the 2003 FLEMMS was a high 94 percent, functional literacy measured as the ability to read, write and compute is 84 percent, 82 percent for males and 86 percent for females. Moreover, if the ability to comprehend is included in the functional literacy measure, the rate drops further to 66 percent, 63

percent for males and 69 percent for females. The FLEMMS also showed that functional literacy was lower among the poor (7 out of 10 aged 10-64) than the non-poor (9 out of 10).

Opportunities to pursue learning outside of the formal education system are accessible. According to the 2003 FLEMMS, of the estimated 51 million population aged 15 and over, 9.7 million or 19 percent reported having attended non-formal training of some sort.

About four out of 10 persons who have ever attended any training reported taking part in a livelihood training programme, attesting to the significance of this learning need among the population. The overall high literacy rates in the country are reflected in the low proportion whose training was in functional or basic literacy.

The Philippine government has long recognized the necessity to address the learning needs of Filipino citizens who are unable to avail themselves fully of the opportunities for formal education that the country's public education system provides. The Bureau of Non-formal Education under the Department of Education was designed specifically to respond to the problem of illiteracy among those who are unable to gain literacy skills in the formal system. In particular it addresses the learning needs of marginalized groups including the deprived and underserved citizens.

The Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems (BALS) has as its functions:

- Address the needs of the marginalized groups of the population, including the deprived, depressed and underserved citizens;
- Coordinate with various agencies for skills development to enhance and ensure continuing employability, efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness in the labour market;
- Ensure the expansion of access to educational opportunities for citizens of different interests, capabilities, demographic characteristics, and socio-economic origins and status; and
- Promote certification and accreditation of alternative learning programmes, both formal and informal in nature, for basic education.

The BALS embarked on a programme to establish Community Learning Centres in barangays (the smallest political unit in the country) as part of its project for providing continuing education in an alternative learning environment. In the Primer on Community Learning Centres issued by the Staff Development Division of the BALS, a Community Learning Centre is defined as a local institution or centre of learning managed by local people. It provides opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will help in the development and improvement of livelihood in less developed localities.

The criteria for selection of barangays where CLCs may be established are: the socioeconomic profile of the area, the level of literacy, support from the local government and other public organizations, support from private organizations/NGOs, and accessibility to the members of the community. The two phases for establishing CLCs are Planning and Implementation:

#### **Planning**

- Community mobilization/ information dissemination/drumming up interest;
- Community planning;
- Preparation of plans of action.

#### **Implementation**

- Execution of plans;
- Monitoring;
- Evaluation of programmes/drawing up of lessons learned.

Based on the latest available data from the department of Education BALS, there is a recorded total of 522 CLCs organized under the BALS network. These are found in 15 of the 17 administrative regions in the country.

## 2. The CLCs: A Situational Analysis

### 2.1 CLC Functions

A CLC is envisioned to be a place where the community can gather for literacy classes, community meetings, training on non-formal and informal programmes, public information and dissemination, and community development. It is also a centre that links with other agencies of government, private and public organizations, for programmes that are of benefit to the community.

The objectives of CLCs are:

- To help in the development of the livelihood of citizens through the programmes and projects of the alternative learning system;
- To strengthen and broaden community links for mutual support;
- To develop the capability of those who lead the community or barangay.

The objectives of the CLCs imply that they target communities with a large proportion of members in need of livelihood training assistance. By this definition, not all communities in the country are expected to need their own Community Learning Centre.

### 2.2 CLC Programmes

The establishment and initial operation of the CLC pilot sites received assistance from UNESCO. In a report prepared for UNESCO by the Bureau of Non-formal Education it was stated that, by 2003, the CLCs in the pilot and expansion sites were operational and were multipurpose in nature.

The types of activities engaged in in one region illustrate CLC programmes.

**Table 3: CLC programmes**

Activity	Number of CLCs	Percent
Accreditation and equivalency (A&E)	8	5.4
A&E, livelihood/training	7	4.7
A&E, literacy	1	0.7
A&E, literacy, training	3	2.0
A&E, livelihood training, computer literacy	1	0.7
A&E, PEPT*, training/livelihood	1	0.7
A&E, PEPT, training/livelihood, literacy	2	1.4
A&E, PEPT review	1	0.7
A&E, research	5	3.4
Literacy	37	25.0
Literacy, livelihood	6	4.1
Literacy, livelihood, preschool	1	0.7
Literacy, reading centre/library	2	1.4
Literacy, conferences	3	2.0
Literacy, prayer/worship	2	1.4
Computer literacy	1	0.7
Computer literacy, A&E	1	0.7
Computer literacy, A&E, livelihood	2	1.4
Livelihood training	1	0.7
Meetings, assemblies, activities	13	8.8
Meetings, literacy, livelihood	1	0.7
Reading centre	1	0.7
PEPT review, livelihood, seminars	2	1.4
Seminars, meetings	1	0.7
Seminars, training	1	0.7
Training, reading centre, conferences	1	0.7
Training	4	2.7
Training, research, A&E	39	26.4
Total	148	100.0

Note: \*Philippine Educational Placement Test

The table indicates that in this one region the most common activities are related to literacy. The CLCs serve as the venue for the conduct of classes to teach simple and functional literacy. The classes are conducted by mobile teachers under the supervision of the BALS.

The second most common activity is related to accreditation and equivalency (A&E). The A&E system is a “certification of learning for out-of-school youth and adults aged 15 and above who are unable” to complete basic education through the formal system either at the primary or secondary level. It addresses the need of those who drop out of primary or secondary school to acquire the appropriate competencies for a specific grade level in the formal system and to be formally recognized as having done so.

### 2.3 Participation in CLC Activities

Community ownership of the CLC is manifested in the well attended livelihood training programmes in the three study sites and the sense of ownership of the CLC programmes by the barangays through their officials.

## 3. Community Participation and Ownership

### 3.1 Advantages

- Location

Three out of every four CLCs are located in barangays in facilities that belong to the local government such as barangay halls. The second most common location is a school or a facility run by the BALS for its other programmes of alternative learning. Some regions have a wide range of locations such as churches, community libraries or reading centres, jail facilities and a women’s centre.

- Programmes

The programmes address what are perceived by community leaders, those who manage these programmes, to be the learning needs of certain

disadvantaged sectors of the community for training in livelihood skills that will be of practical use for gainful employment. Evidently, in all the cases, the way they arrive at such a perception is not through intensive community consultation but through the decision of these community leaders, especially those who have been elected to such positions.

- Leadership

Despite the absence of real community participation in the planning of CLC programmes the leaders seemed to have correctly identified and satisfactorily addressed a genuine community need as can be inferred from the popularity of their livelihood programmes. The fact that the programme managers are elected officials may have a lot to do with this. Being community leaders they are expected to be attuned to community needs; being elected officials they are also accountable to their constituents for the kinds of services they should provide to the community.

- External support

The external agencies who support CLC livelihood training activities with trainers and funds are one with the programme administrators in the awareness that inculcating livelihood skills is the way to help community members who are in search of economic empowerment. From the profiles of the participants in the livelihood programmes it can be observed that the CLC case studies are successfully bringing together service providers (barangay officials, external agencies offering support in various forms) and the desired clients (underserved learners such as stay at home mothers, unemployed young adults, the elderly in search of gainful work), even if the approach is not remotely participatory.

### 3.2 Limitations

This acceptance of the CLC concept is a plus factor for its long term sustainability. However, external intervention in the form of provision of livelihood training opportunities will have to continue as the CLCs do not have the capacity to run these programmes entirely on their own.

The 2006 BALS Report mentions that there are non-functioning CLCs which indicates that the idea of a learning hub in the barangay organized mainly by an outside entity like the BALS in consultation with local elective officials does not always take root after initial implementation.

One person mentioned that she was aware of one CLC's closure because the barangay decided to operate a restaurant in the same space. Still, there are more functional than non-functional barangays reported in the report.

The contrast in the case studies is apparent in the role that the barangay plays as the locus of activity of the CLC. Some have made all CLC activities official activities of the barangay. One, however, follows the model of operating the CLC under the guidance of a private organization operating within the barangay, a foundation purposely created to run the CLC. From the stories of the case, it appears that the latter model will have major problems regarding sustainability because the CLC was conceived to be a programme of a private group and not of the barangay. More importantly, the CLC has no physical facility within which to operate other than the barangay. When the new barangay captain takes over there is no telling where the current CLC will go.

### 3.3 Future Directions for Sustainability

The acceptance of the CLC concept is a plus factor for its long term sustainability. However, external intervention in the form of provision of livelihood training opportunities will have to continue as the CLCs do not have the capacity to run these programmes entirely on their own.

Two activities to maintain the sustainability of CLCs are the establishment of a management Information system, and a monitoring and evaluation process.

## 4. External Intervention

### 4.1 Advantages

In the experience of the Philippines, the lead external agency with the major role to play in the movement to establish Community Learning Centres has been the Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems (BALS) of the Philippine Department of Education. It has identified the barangay as the grassroots unit of political organization with which it will work, not the usual municipal or provincial level that has been the model in most education programmes of the national government. In this way it has brought the CLC closer to the level of learners. Being a smaller political unit than the municipality, the barangay is accountable to a smaller constituency; it is also highly likely that the needs of this constituency will be more alike than in a larger constituency.

- The BALS

The BALS has harnessed its considerable resources as a national government entity and tapped international agencies like UNESCO to introduce the idea of establishing CLCs in the thousands of barangays in the country. The BALS provides seed funds for their initial operation. The BALS has likewise provided the basic framework under which CLCs are organized while allowing each CLC the leeway to branch out into other activities that are deemed by the community leaders to be appropriate to their unique needs. In adopting this strategy, the BALS is able to push for its traditional niche area of literacy education in a non-traditional setting for those who have fallen off the conventional path to basic education. The BALS have also expanded the concept of learning to embrace non-traditional forms such as livelihood training.

Being a government agency with the mandate to run alternative learning, the BALS will not have problems with the sustainability of its literacy education programmes. It has the funds, the human resources and the right policy direction. It needs to improve its monitoring and evaluation system so that its official reports contain uniform information/data and, thus,

comparisons across areas in the country will be made possible. It needs to improve its data banking, especially at the national level. The monitoring and evaluation system is explained below.

- Other External Agencies

Activities that the CLC organizes outside of the BALS literacy programmes require support from other external agencies case by case. International organizations like UNESCO and SEAMEO INNOTECH have been instrumental in giving birth to the idea of organizing CLCs at the grassroots level. They exert their influence on the BALS to spearhead pilot testing and helping the initial implementation with funding and other means of support.

Other external agencies have been the municipal government, local branches of national government agencies like the Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry, the Technical Skills Development Authority and socio-civic groups outside the community which are willing to organize livelihood training programmes as part of their civic work. These groups have been largely reactive to the needs for training of the communities. They are not actively seeking to promote their livelihood training programmes or any services that they can offer to the community through the CLCs. Rather, the community seeks out these external agencies for the assistance they can offer the barangay through the Community Learning Centres.

It is difficult for the barangay relying on its own resources to respond to the needs of the community, especially for livelihood training. A strong sense of ownership by the barangay of its non-literacy programmes gives it the motivation to seek links with outside sources of support, such as the agencies mentioned earlier, who will successfully deliver training and resources to the community.

To keep track of the CLCs in the country, BALS set up a Management Information System that serves as an information resource base. It also collects data on CLCs that serve as a reference for policy makers to improve programme implementation, as part of its monitoring and evaluation

activities. Among the activities are development of performance indicators and orientation of programme implementers nationwide on their use.

In 2006, BALS staff together with regional/division officials conducted site visits of selected CLCs. Monitoring sites were selected based on the list of UNESCO-funded CLCs. The outcome was the identification of performance indicators that are essential in formulating CLC standards for BALS.

## 5. Recommendations on Sustainability

Enhancing CLC sustainability in the Philippines will be dependent on the following major findings:

### 5.1 Major Finding 1

Community Learning Centres are acceptable to the grassroots in the Philippines because they respond to the needs of the underserved.

The Community Learning Centre idea has caught on in many areas of the country with the establishment of the BALS which is organized under an expanded framework of adult learning that includes other learning forms and pathways and not just literacy education. This shift is timely because the Philippines already has a high literacy rate compared to many of its ASEAN neighbours.

Given the labour force profile of the country, the predominance of unskilled labour indicates that there is an underserved sector needing training for livelihood skills enhancement. Survey data from the 2003 FLEMMS likewise shows that there is a high demand for learning/training in livelihood skills among the adult population. Moreover, the emergence of newer skills such as computer literacy also calls for training among those who were unable to learn this skill in school or in other settings.



The BALS continues to meet the needs of these learners because it continues to offer these programmes in the CLCs. Moreover, the BALS possesses the technical expertise for the conduct of literacy education programmes. It is also perceived as being a disinterested agency, immune to barangay politics and can thus respond to the needs of the disadvantaged and conduct tests fairly.

### *5.2 Major Finding 2*

External intervention was instrumental in getting the CLCs organized but community ownership through the barangay enhanced the chances for sustainability. The community took to the idea of a CLC and adopted it as its own, even if it was a concept that did not really emerge from the community. The introduced concept fills an identified need for alternative learning opportunities. For this reason, the sustainability of the CLC is enhanced because this need is not likely to be ever fully met and CLC livelihood training programmes will always have a clientele.

The nature of the external intervention to introduce the CLC concept was such that the community was allowed much leeway to decide for itself what livelihood skills programmes to develop and what additional activities to conduct in its CLC. Because the intervention was facilitative rather than prescriptive, there was no perception that the intervention was an imposition.

### *5.3 Major Finding 3*

External support for CLCs will be needed as communities are unable to adequately provide for the alternative learning needs of their members on their own. The barangay will have to develop the capability to seek multiple external partners so as not to induce donor fatigue among supporters whose help is repeatedly tapped.

### *5.4 Major Finding 4*

Organizing the CLC at the level of the barangay, the smallest political unit, has proven to be highly effective in enlisting community support and developing ownership of the programmes by the barangay.

In organizing the CLCs at the barangay level, the BALS appears to have hit on a brilliant idea. Barangays are political units and possess official status. As such they can attract funds from external agencies as they have continuity and enjoy the legitimacy of being a legally constituted political unit. They are headed by elected officials with a fixed term. These officials are accountable to their constituents and are expected to work for the common good. CLCs will in all likelihood offer those programmes that are attuned to the needs of the voting community. Another advantage of the barangay is its size. It is a more compact unit so its officials are responsible for fewer people and accountability is better achieved.

### *5.5 Major Finding 5*

By retaining the basic literacy classes and the A&E programme, BALS continues to serve a minority of Filipinos who fell through the cracks in the formal education system. Further, by establishing the CLCs, BALS cast a wider net for adult learners. Also, in enlisting the barangays as partners in the CLC, BALS enhanced the sustainability of the learning environment for adult learners.

### *5.6 Major Finding 6*

Women play strong support roles at all levels of CLC activities as participants in the training programmes, as community organizers recruiting participants, and as trainers themselves – even though the major role of barangay captain is inevitably occupied by men. From the case studies at least, the CLCs in the Philippines seem to wear a predominantly female face.

In conclusion, the Philippine case clearly illustrates that external intervention and community ownership are in a synergistic relationship which enhances the sustainability of the CLCs. The key to this synergy is the recognition by all concerned – whether external agents or community leaders and constituents – of the need for providing opportunities for lifelong learning in the community. To this end, the sustainability of the CLCs is enhanced if both external agencies and the community agree that this need will remain constant and CLCs will always have a role to play in the community.

## **Section 7: Thailand Case Features**

### **1. CLC Focus**

There are two categories of CLCs in Thailand.

#### **1.1 Government supported CLCs**

First are the CLCs which receive major government support but are also organized and run by local people. The four main Thai government organizations involved in the CLC Project are: the Department of Non-Formal Education, the Department of Community Development, and the Office of the Prime Minister and the Office of the Rajabhat University Council. These agencies have either contributed funding support for specific projects, or provided technical support for activities such as occupational training. Each CLC also seeks and receives support within its own community from private donors, businesses and members of the community.

The concept of Community Learning Centres of the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission, ONFEC, was developed out of a village reading centre initiative, which began in 1998. The pilot CLC project in Thailand was launched in September 2000 with support from UNESCO. The pilot project was supported financially by UNDP and implemented in cooperation with government agencies. Since 2001, UNESCO has collaborated with the Princess Sirindhorn's Foundation for the Development of Children and Youth in renovating existing CLCs under the Foundation's Mae Fa Luang Project, which targets hill-tribe children and youth in remote districts of Northern Thailand. The UNESCO-supported CLC project has further supported the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission (ONFEC) in strengthening the existing CLC mechanism and network in Thailand, particularly at the grassroots level.

The CLC operations assessment reveals that one of the major problems is that the operating committee selected by people in the community is unable to run the CLCs efficiently due to (1) the committees' lack of knowledge

and understanding in organizing non-formal education activities, (2) which was compounded by the committees' inadequate financial support from Tambon Administration Organizations, as well as (3) the centres' management continuity is interrupted by changes in committee members, and (4) many centres do not reflect the needs of people in the community. As a result, people do not support the centre's activities.

In 2004, ONFEC set policies and strategies to encourage community members to take part in planning educational activities that respond to the community's needs, integrating real life with education, exploiting networks and social capital to enhance resource sharing and the use of technology to increase learning efficiency.

### 1.2 Community CLCs

Second are centres organized and run by local people, usually led informally by a community leader and accepted by locals, whose aim is to assist in coping with local problems, community development, and enhancing the quality of life. The centres' work is based on local culture, way of life, and traditions and has as its aim the preservation of local wisdom. Their impact is mostly limited to the community level due to finite resources. Their activities are varied in terms of their problems, needs, interests, networks, and resources. The College of Social Management, an NGO working on knowledge management, classified the learning process of CLCs run by locals and communities in the following categories:

- Life Management: including health, spiritual, life planning, family management and development, and career development;
- Activities Management: such as projects, temple fairs etc.;
- Relationship Management aiming to strengthen social capital and social integration, and promoting relationships that address conflict among partners;
- Population Management;
- Organization Management: seeking ways to promote participation and make everyone feel happy based on good governance principles;

- Community Management: aiming to enrich the community by integrating social capital and natural resources;
- Knowledge Management: collecting, gathering, selecting and distributing data and information;
- Leadership Management: enhancing management skills of the leader and the manager.

### 1.3 Numbers of CLCs

There are 8,057 CLCs supported by ONFEC in all 76 provinces (ONFEC, 2005.) [There is no data and no empirical study on CLCs operated by local people.

The Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI), a Thai government agency formed in 2000 authorizes community organizations that have been run continuously and accepted by communities, both state and private organizations. Most of these authorized organizations also run the CLCs that emphasize learning processes among their members and networks. In 2007, CODI authorized 2,158 organizations. Before the year 2007 about 3,935 organizations were already approved

However, some approved organizations may not be well run or may not establish a CLC. On the other hand, many non-approved organizations may run CLCs very effectively. So it is estimated that there are not less than 5,000 CLCs all over the country that are operated by local people/organizations.

## 2. The CLCs: A Situational Survey

### 2.1 CLC Functions

The main activities of the CLCs largely supported by the government, especially the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission (ONFEC), are quite similar. Four forms of education are delivered through these CLCs:

- Basic Education by offering equivalency programmes;
- Vocational Education;
- Informal Education through distance-learning strategies; and
- Non-Formal Education.

In 2004, ONFEC set up five CLC projects to enhance resource sharing and the use of technology to increase learning efficiency, with the following functions:

- Life skills development camp;
- Non-formal education to solve poverty;
- Public library development;
- Learning process for development using information technology; and
- Developing CLCs as lifelong learning centres.

Recent social and economic changes have resulted in limits to public resources and administrative decentralization. However, this has been offset by an increase in the role of local people in community administration and greater acceptance of diversity in society as well as increasingly influential social movements. All have led to better coordination and cooperation by the state and private sector.

## 2.2 CLC Programmes

CLC activities and operations have become more diversified and relevant to community needs. Major activities of both types of CLC are:

### Education and Literacy

- Functional literacy;
- Basic education;
- Non-formal education focused on adult learning;
- Promotion of lifelong learning.

### Training

- Income generation programmes and skills training;
- Quality of life programme training;
- Health and sanitation;
- Health promotion programme;
- Camping for democracy training;
- Camping for environment conservation training;
- ICT Training.

### Community and Cultural Development

- Local and traditional activities development;
- Enhance the local wisdom and work with the older persons;
- Community development projects;
- Poverty alleviation.

### Coordination and Networking

- Coordination and building up networks between GO, NGOs and POs in the occupational groups;
- Make provision for the local institution to link human resources and social capital;
- Learning networks between academic institutions and the community;
- Coordination of social groups inside and outside the community.

Although CLCs operate with the goal of preserving local wisdom in the way that is appropriate with local customs, life and tradition, their operations are often limited to meeting the needs of a narrow group within each particular community due to lack of resources and coordination. However, improved coordination and network expansion has allowed them to improve operations. Subsequently, they are now receiving more financial support from the central government and local administration organizations.

On the other hand, CLCs that were well supported by state agencies but received minimal support from people in the community found that they

were able to improve their operation to better serve the needs of society after exchanging views with the communities they serve, and adjusting their focus more towards local wisdom and traditions.

### 3. Community Participation and Ownership

#### 3.1 Advantages

All CLCs in this study have applied participatory approaches developed from thinking together, debating the sources of their problems and seeking a community leader or key persons to form a working group to deliver solutions. In forming a working group, a community leader plays a vital role in applying a participatory approach for decision-making to determine the community's own plans, and setting operational guidelines which are agreeable to all CLC members.

When community members are satisfied with a relationship which gives them value, attention and respect and lets them voice their opinions or criticism, solve problems or take responsible roles, community participation follows. It can be said that all the case studies allowed all interested individuals to participate in CLCs, regardless of their sex, age, and ethnic group. Everybody has his/her own "stand" which is a key element in feeling ownership from the very beginning.

#### 3.2 Future Directions for Sustainability

Sustainability of participation and ownership in Thailand will follow if a number of suggestions are adopted. They include:

- Facing shared challenges and impacts

This happens when community members are aware of the common problems and crises in the community and are motivated to sort them out together. Confronting common problems and realizing their negative impact on the community triggers a sense of ownership and a common concern in fighting together.

- Setting up a group with clear objectives

This happens when an individual person or a group of people develop their relationship by working together. The group may have a leader, supporters and back-up resources to support the group to work towards the same goals. Again, practical success in CLCs has followed the adoption of this practice.

- Managing relationships in the organization/community equally and respecting rights

This happens when organizations adjust their structural relationship to become an open one. Executives and members have an equal relationship. Their rights and responsibilities are mutually respected. Relationship is not determined by one's level of authority. The leaders who respect other members equally, accept the diversity and differences of others, allow all members to voice their opinions, and listen to other's views or suggestions, play a key role in the strengthening and empowering of their community.

- Having open communication

This happens when communities have communication and opinion exchange in an open style. Community leaders and members have formal and informal talks. They listen and pay attention to each other's opinions. They respect the decisions made. Leaders have the capability to bridge and compromise differences in opinions. All case studies indicated direct communications' flow with the members of the CLC through regular meetings and discussing community problems together in an open and straightforward manner. This practice creates an atmosphere of trust and understanding.

- Having goals that bring short-term and primary benefits

This happens when the organization/community sets clear goals and responds to problems such as economic needs, poverty and the problems that the community is facing. Therefore, community/organization members' short-term benefits are met.

Having goals to bring long-term and shared benefits to the community

This happens when members participate in work aiming at long-term benefits, such as sustaining life quality and capability development to protect community assets.

## 4. External Intervention

### 4.1 Advantages

Progress made by each CLC is dependent on various factors, both internal factors which determine whether that CLC will be successful or not and external factors which complement the progress of the CLC. CLCs do not always achieve or are not strong enough 100 percent of the time but they are given support and assistance from external intervention. External intervention in this study has several meanings which include:

- Global Trends

Global trends are considered an important external intervention at the mega level. Because mega level intervention brings in a new realization and new knowledge to society and community, it causes the locals to pay attention to and accept its values. Good examples can be drawn from the issues of community rights, self-reliance, good relations with nature, sufficiency-economy, realization of the value of localism or local wisdom, and so on. These concepts have been well accepted by the global community and are valued by Thai society and the Thai Government. Therefore, when CLCs are interested in global trends and act accordingly, they are likely to be accepted by the people and community who in turn attract funding and aid from the government, non-government and business sectors that pool their support for CLCs.

- Funding Sources

There are different kinds of funding sources which create a direct impact on the achievement and progress of CLCs. Most funding sources provide financial support periodically or temporarily according to their respective

policies and objectives. Under these circumstances, it implies that CLCs may lose their momentum in the long run. However, periodic financial support does play an important role in fuelling the workflow and progress of the recipient CLCs supervised by their committees. The in-country funding sources are mostly derived from the government, private organizations, or community savings. CLC leaders and committees must have knowledge and skills in project management, expenses auditing, and financial reporting. Where leaders and committees do not have these skills, local NGOs will provide training for them on how to write a project proposal enabling them to seek funding by themselves. In this way external funding sources are necessary and important to CLCs and they are ready to follow key conditions set by the funding sources.

- External knowledge sources

Academia, intellectuals, and professionals are all considered important external human and knowledge capital who provide new techniques or information beneficial to the sustainability of CLCs. These days external assistance differs from the past, which was mostly the top-down approach. Now, external assistance means sharing knowledge with local intellects and helping the community identify their strength-base and realize their own potential. This new approach empowers local people to learn new ways of thinking, to analyze their own problems, to design their own solutions, and to have confidence in their capacity.

- External human capital

Bringing in external human capital is one way to integrate external knowledge into the existing local wisdom and at the same time to fade out the old top-down approach, paving the way for community leaders to take the driving seat. It opens new opportunities for the leaders of communities to learn something from external allies, to exchange their views, to be members of various national committees. These experiences help strengthen the leadership and decision-making, developing a better vision, applying good practices and new knowledge to their communities, and building up community learning centres for children and youth.

- Varieties of external intervention

External intervention can be varied ranging from providing training courses, scholarships and consultation, to technical assistance and related legislation so that they will be able to function within the law.

- Role of Government

The roles of the government sector or other external parties in empowering CLCs should take into account the specific need and characteristic of each CLC.

- External administrative support

Another important role of external intervention is it allows outsiders to be members of CLC committees or other community committees. Through this mechanism, CLCs gain more information or resources from external parties. Outsiders will also help them in public relations or organizing public forums in order to expand CLC activities across a wider area. This in turn leads to networking or initiating joint projects with other partners.

- Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the role of external intervention or external support is vital in strengthening CLCs. External intervention provides moral support, financial support, and technical know-how which is conducive to the improvement of CLC structures or even just to have access to external resources. All of these contributions of external intervention have added value to CLCs. Another important point that should be taken into account is that the role of external intervention should be equal to that of CLC leaders and members; and the relationship between the two should be in the form of sharing and supporting each other. External intervention should not play a dominating role or use financial or governing powers to order changes without consulting the community which in turn will bring a sense of ownership.

## 4.2 Future Directions for Sustainability

The development of community ownership and external intervention is a process of triggering a parallel movement between the two as they complement each other in terms of building up relationships and sustaining the flow of outside support. Together, they should act to build up the strength, morality, and commitment of the local people, which in turn leads to a sense of ownership.

## 5. Recommendations on Sustainability

A wide range of suggestions is offered to enhance sustainability for CLCs in Thailand, including the following proposals:

### 5.1 The relationship between leaders and members:

- The development and levelling in the participation of CLCs leaders and members is dependent mutually. They should mutually attach greater importance to managing sensitive issues.
- The appropriate management of relationships between leaders and members plays an important role in creating a happy working atmosphere and a sense of ownership.

### 5.2 Freedom in expressing their ideas:

- Freedom in arguing, criticizing and opposing;
- Freedom in asking questions and valuing those who like to question;
- Participation in defining goals;
- Intrinsic satisfaction from the work itself.

### 5.3 Characteristics of learning activities:

- Activities have to be diversified to meet the objectives holistically;
- Learning activities are learning processes of the communities;

- Learning activities contribute to ownership and the capability development of members;
- Learning activities must restore the community's confidence;
- Learning activities must restore relationships;
- Learning activities must have new management approaches in which learning reflects real community contexts, for example, management which is non-agency based, management which does not have the traditional hierarchy, management which is more problem-based and context-based;
- Learning activities must have new learning methods.

#### 5.4 CLC management

- CLC management should be bi-structural i.e. the official structure on the one hand and non-official on the other hand. This bi-structural system facilitates closer access to the community;
- Management should open for greater participation from individuals or groups;
- Management of CLCs with high diversity in terms of projects and activities will trigger greater enthusiasm among the leaders and related partners;
- In creating a sense of ownership, attention should be paid to carrying out a variety of productive activities to better serve the various interests of participants;
- Activities of CLCs should be flexible enough to be organized outside the community to reach others in remote areas;
- Research and studies undertaken by local people and in their own style, should be encouraged.

#### 5.5 CLC Leaders

- Leaders should play a guiding role in managing a new way of learning as it is at the core of connecting members' thoughts and making them interested in participating in the activities regularly and attentively;

- Leaders should attach importance to the learning process management starting from designing learning objectives and designing content, to the methods and processes of the learning. Both should involve collaborative thinking from as many stakeholders as possible. This learning process should open opportunities for extensive collaborative thinking throughout the whole process;
- Leaders should never stop searching for 'representatives' who are well-accepted members, or creating a 'communication system' open to suggestions and criticism.
- Leaders should allow CLC staff and members to undertake duties that are in line with their capacities or interest;
- Leaders in each CLC should encourage participation when it comes to setting goals and objectives to meet the short-term and long-term needs of stakeholders;
- CLC leaders should come from among the community's representatives as they are the 'insiders' who know well the needs and problems of their community. CLC leaders of the future should not only play the role of commander but also of environment manager, resource seeker, learning manager, as well as a co-sponsor in building up the learning process.



# ANNEX

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