



ADULT EDUCATION IN LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE NEED TO PROFESSIONALIZE THE RANKS OF STAKEHOLDERS – THE ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Premises

- Adult education in the context of lifelong learning: crucial to Asia in attaining the goal of Education for All and achieving respectability and competitiveness.
- An integral part of human resource development of a nation – crucial in sustainable development.
- Both an area of advocacy and source of opportunity.

Asia In Great Need of Adult Education

- Home to more than half of world's population and $\frac{3}{4}$ of adult non-literates.
- Has highly diverse cultures, languages, economic disparities and socio-political structures.
- Without adult education, more and more adults to be socially and economically excluded.

Situation in Developing East Asia

- Need for more effective response to globalization, economic structural shifts, and generally higher pace of economic growth.
- These issues call for new knowledge, skills and value system.
- Hence, new issue-responsive policy framework for adult education in the 21st century is in order.

Need for Clarity on Basic Parameters

- The term “adult education” has diverse meaning and connotation across countries;
- It has to be understood and pertinent policy formulated in the context of lifelong learning and priority requirements of developing countries.
- Dilemma: arriving at a common conceptual and ontological understanding of the construct given context-specific requirements

Need for Clarity on Basic Parameters

- Any learning activity for people 14-15 years of age outside formal education.
- In lifelong learning, AE can be understood as support, substitute, supplement or complement to formal learning process.
- Implication: its quality, standards, competencies have to be at par, if not, better than those of the formal education system.

Need for Clarity on Basic Parameters

- AE institutions and agencies should have a more coherent policy approach .
- They should provide the right fit between society ‘s learning requirements vs content, pedagogy, methodologies, learning premise, and qualifications/credentials.
- Degree of sophistication and level of professionalization for AE educators and trainers to synchronize with present quality of education vs goals established.

Europe & Asia: Contrasts/Lessons

- EU: AE integral part of lifelong learning; a policy tool for competitiveness in knowledge economy.
- Asia: higher segment of developing countries, AE as continuing education/skills upgrade; lower segment, AE as basic and functional literacy.

Europe & Asia: Contrasts/Lessons

- Europe: due to advanced AE system, serves not as model, but only as reference
- Asia: has to slowly move up AE from mere basic and functional literacy to providing relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Europe: a source of best practices in AE due to more advanced research.
- Asia: can benchmark its AE quality & criteria vs those EU best practices.

Drawback Against Asian AE Upgrade

- High level of non-literate adults in Asia: 124 million, of which 71% women.
- Perception issue: “secondary or inferior”
- Limited availability of funds for AE and its upgrade.
- *Silver lining*: improved literacy rate from 82% (1985-1994) to 92% (1995-2004).

Professionalizing Asian AE

- Rooted in the need to professionalize AE teachers and trainers.
- Reality: lack of support from public and private sectors in professionalization programmes.
- Primary reason: AE considered as “secondary” or “inferior” vs. formal education.

Professionalizing Asian AE

- *Results:*

- AE attracts teachers/trainers with limited or questionable competence.
- Those competent and qualified move to other professions.
- Bar of qualifications brought lower to bring in more teachers and learners.

Thus, AE quality suffers.

Professionalizing Asian AE

- Asian AE : has to be brought to overall lifelong learning framework, for reform to take hold in professionalizing AE.
- Asian AE: a flawed appreciation of its essential role in nation building and a continued view as being a mere adjunct to formal education system lead to off-tangent policy approach.
- Thailand lifelong learning policy: supportive of AE.

Strategic Reforms at AE Professionalization

- Profile of actors in Asian AE need to be upgraded.
- Degree courses and training modules for Asian AE teachers, trainers , administrators and support personnel to be made available.
- Quality of courses and training modules benchmarked to standards of advanced societies.
- Course and module content should reflect local conditions and requirements (e.g. transfer process for skills in demand in nascent industries)

Strategic Reforms at AE Professionalization

- Teachers and trainers should have the ability to develop managerial and entrepreneurial skills, esp in TVET programs.
- Part of training program is how to develop appropriate life skills (e.g. self-assertiveness, negotiating skills, etc.)
- Strongly relevant in developing countries, where young potential capitalists are on the rise.

Role of Higher Education Institutes

- Across Asia, greater HEI participation in AE is needed so as:
 - to lend prestige to AE programme
 - to facilitate tapping into reservoir of expertise and facilities
 - to elicit greater recognition of AE graduates by other sectors, esp the job market.

Innovation in Pedagogy and Delivery

- An important element of AE reform and professionalization.
- Good practice: Philippine alternative learning system (ALS)
 - makes use of private contractors deemed more competent.
 - able to bring learning modules to heretofore distant areas.
 - context and location specific capability.

Funding Challenge in Asian AE

- One factor deemed most influential in determining the failure/success of AE programme and professionalization efforts.
- Budgetary support from government among developing Asian countries perennially restricted.
- Private sector participation should be encouraged but fiscal incentives to be extended.

Quality, Not Quantity

- Poor AE quality results in poor outputs.
- Poor outputs further reinforces image of AE as “inferior” to formal education system.
- Principle of accreditation and equivalency should be put in operation.
- Good practice: ALS Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) System and CHED Expanded Tertiary Education & Equiv Accreditation Program (ETEEAP)

Adult Education in Learning Society

- Human resource development: key to Asian prosperity and sustainable development.
- Developing a learning society assumes continued adult learning process.
- Competitiveness in global knowledge economy can be achieved only if society/community subscribes to a learning society.



Thank you!

Danke!

Salamat!

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