COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NONFORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES

A Case Study to Explore the Role of Community Participation in the Development of Nonformal Education Programmes in selected Community Learning Centres in Cimahi City Council West Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Nonformal education being any educational activity organized outside the established formal system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives, its programmes should respond to the needs and perceptions of community members, not those of experts or government targets. Based on this, the study intended to explore the role of community participation in the development of nonformal education programmes through community learning centres. It was carried out in two selected CLC’s of Cimahi city council, West Java, Indonesia. Data collection was done through: observation, interview, documentation study, and audiovisual analyses with the intent of establishing the kinds of nonformal education programmes, forms of community participation, categories of community members that participate most, and to ascertain the role of community participation in the sustainability of nonformal education programmes in community learning centres. In general, the study found that (1) the staff members at the two CLCs are aware of the kinds of nonformal education programmes, (2) the CLC programmes are basically government programmes, (3) the forms of participation are of three categories, that is; passive participation, information giving participation and consultative participation, (4) CLCs do not directly involve communities in programmes’ development but work in collaboration with ‘Rukun Warga’ and ‘Rukun Tentangga’, (5) the CLC staff conduct field analysis only during the socialization process of CLC programmes to the grassroot community, and (6) the participants from CLCs are mostly from poor families with low economic background, but there were also those from well-off to do families. The recommendations made based on the findings of this research are: (1) we should learn to mobilize communities for active participation, socialize community learning centers as potential places for handling community needs, and ensure that all community members are the real stakeholders, (2) Nonformal education Professionals should be ready to face the needed desire for change in the development, planning and implementation of nonformal education programmes, (3) Governments should allow educational and development programmes to come from the grassroot with the active participation of the would be beneficiaries, (4) people should be encouraged to; improve their knowledge, Skills and attitudes with the aim of systemic change, and (5) Government should set standards to be followed by community learning centres such that quality is maintained. This implies that the government should do much on the supervision, monitoring, and evaluation, and it should also provide stimulant funds for the grassroot communities to develop sustaining CLCs.

Introduction

Due to the importance of education in human resource development, in the late 1990 and in specific after the Asian economic crisis of 1997 which led to the subsequent rise of unemployment, a large number of community learning centres (PKBM’s) sprouted up all over Indonesia especially in remote areas (Mustofa, 2007:20). By 1998 many CLCs had been established in almost every village of Indonesia. These centres however, began to play an increasingly important role after 2003 with the implementation of decentralization (Mustofa, 2007a).
Since then, the central government and the local district nonformal education offices have been and are still responsible for the development and providing of a major part of the funding requirements and ensuring execution, monitoring and evaluation of nonformal education programmes (UNESCO, 2008: 6). Because of this, many CLCs largely depend on government programmes and above all government funds, as much as two-thirds of the total requirement. This denies the fact that society constantly encounters phenomenal changes. Certainly, just as Freire notes, people at the grassroot have been denied control of their environment but they have been made to be able to continually adjust to an environment imposed upon them by the government.

Problem Identification

Based on the above background, the following are some of the identified problems faced by CLCs in the Cimahi city council as revealed in the preliminary study:

1. Though the essence of a community learning centre (PKBM) is to emphasize community initiative, involvement and support of people at the grassroot level for organizing and developing programmes of their own choice based on their needs, there is no creativity and limited engagement of the local masses. This is due to the fact that, most PKBMs are no longer community initiated but individual initiatives. Such centres have turned into income generating projects for a few members. In other words, some PKBMs have turned into ‘pockets’ for money or resource collection to certain groups of people rather than centres for community services.

2. Due to the dependence on government programmes, the mindset of most community learning centre managers and other influencial staff members largely rely on government budget. Most Managers are at a cross road not understanding what to do more so during delays and also when there is shortage of funds provided by the government. In some cases, this has led to ON/OFF community learning centres (PKBM).s.

3. Besides, the strings attached to the funding and also due to lack of innovativeness and with limited community participation, most CLCs have ended up as centres for implementation of government programmes. In most cases, these programmes have not been able to respond to the exact community problems and needs. And with little or no participation of community members in most activities there has emerged a situation of lack of motivation amongst even those members living at the neighbourhood of these CLCs (PKBM)s; thus, leading to a situation of ‘half-hearted’ local participation.

4. Because of the ‘half-hearted’ local participation, there is a lack of maintenance and sustainability of most PKBMs. Such a situation has also contributed to ON/OFF community learning centres (PKBM). On/Off community learning centres only operate when there is government funding and after the project or after the funds are finished, there is no maintenance and at the end, there is no lasting impact of the programmes contributing to ‘half-hazard’ out come and also leading to community mistrust towards some of the nonformal education programmes.

5. Lastly, even though most of the nonformal education programmes are government programmes and so government sponsored, their facilitation is still far from good as compared to the formal education sector.
Based on these preliminary findings, I limited the scope of the research to the participation of communities in the development of nonformal education programmes. I believe that the above problems can be solved if the responsible persons promote and support community participation in most nonformal education programmes implemented in Community Learning Centres.

Problem Statement

According to the mentioned problems as obtained during the preliminary study, the most pressing need for CLCs in Cimahi and Indonesia as a whole are numerous, but the most out-standing relate to ‘community participation’ in CLC activities. This is routed into the history of CLCs in Indonesia. Since they were started by the government, the top down approach dominated and continues to dominate the development and implementation of nonformal education programmes. Nonformal education being any educational activity organized outside the established formal system, whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives, its programmes should respond to the needs and perceptions of community members, not those of experts or government targets. Advocacy developing today around the issue of nonformal education in particular through the promotion of EFA goals has little chance of being heard (or realized) if it does not promote the implementation of reliable programmes development which allows the foundation to be laid for efficient nonformal education sub-sector by locals based on the localized content. For success to be achieved in most CLCs there is a great demand for the promotion of community role in the development of nonformal education programmes which intend to affect the beliefs, values, needs, attitudes and self-experience of community members.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to explore the role of community participation in the development of nonformal education programmes in a Community Learning Centre.

The specific objectives among others include;

1. To establish the kinds of nonformal education programmes implemented in a community learning centre in which community members participate most;
2. To discover the forms of community participation in the development of nonformal education programmes in community learning centres;
3. To establish the categories of community members that participate most in the planning and development of nonformal education programmes; and
4. To ascertain the role of community participation in the sustainability of nonformal education programmes in community learning centres.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main dimensions to be studied, the key factors, or variables, and presumed relationships among them. Thus, frameworks come in several shapes and sizes. They can be rudimentary or elaborate, theory driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal (Miles & Huberman, 1984: 28; John W. Creswell, 97). For any research, problem identification and formulation is the centre of focus which is the main point in the
search for the solution. In line with this research, I intend to explore the role of community participation in nonformal education programmes development. The conceptual framework has been designed based on the problems which were identified during the field study and also the theories discovered during the study of the various literatures, which in turn has been developed to help in answering the problem of the research. This conceptual framework is therefore expected to act as guide in the development of nonformal education programmes. The framework is presented as follow:

The above conceptual framework is based on the belief that the philosophy of programming with communities should involve active participation of the people. This process is essential for effective programmes to evolve. It is only through this approach that a continuing education educator (or a nonformal education educator) is able to provide people with educational opportunities that relate to their needs and interests and contribute to resolving problems pertinent to economic and social-well-being of the entire society.

From the figure, programmes should be developed base on the community’s original condition which entails community needs, the community level of awareness, the community potentials which include local resources, cultural aspects, natural resources and the existing knowledge on participation as one society or ethnicity. Based on this perception, programmes development is referred to as the art of designing, planning, and implementing a course of action to achieve an appropriate outcome (which is attitude change, knowledge and skills development resulting to systemic change). Thus, programme development has been used in line with Boyle’s definition. He defines programme development as a deliberate series of actions and decisions through which representatives of people affected by the potential programme are involved with a programmer.

According to Boyle (1981a), the planning activity begins with certain value assumptions and proceeds through analyzing the system, setting goals, and selecting means to achieve those goals. In programmes development, there are planned consequences that follow a conscious and rationale
course of action. The framework below suggests the importance of seeing programme development in total reception and helps to represent an integrated approach through which the economic, psychological, social, cultural and political, and environment elements can be considered in programmes. These elements are also a representation of community potentials and on other hand provide us with light on how CLC programmes should be developed. This implies that for any change agent intending to bring new forms of operation, s/he needs to analyse a given community’s prevailing condition before embarking on the journey to change.

Programme development is an attempt to plan an educational programme which will contribute to improving the health of the people and their community. Health is defined in this research as the state of being, the condition, and the situation. According to Boyle (1981b:5), health may be the economic health (for example, levels of per capita income) or the social health (housing conditions for the aged etc) or the environmental health or cultural health (the number and scope of leisure activities available). The changes needed to improve these situations must be identified and described. The knowledge, attitudes, and skills that people need in order to change these situations must be described.

The diagram above has been brought in since it describes a true society where all individuals and their needs are represented. This is the originating concept that makes me perceive a CLC (PKBM) as a true local educational institution outside the formal education system which is established and managed by local people based on the various learning needs of the local community. In other words, the idea comes from the community, it is developed by the community and it is meant to meet the needs of a community. This therefore calls for full participation of the community as a whole beginning from the environmental scanning to get aware of the community’s condition by the community itself (community self-mobilization); to establish their needs and to create awareness on the need for change; to establish the community potential by identifying the available resources,
integrating the cultural aspects and norms and understanding the entire social condition (Interactive Participation). It is only by such away, that the programmes determined are based on the empirical evidence of the community itself. For any ideal participation.

Questions like who is a member; what should we do; what are our contributions; how is the management; and what programmes to be implemented; are some of the questions which have been answered in this research. In this research, issues like collective action, increased influence of the community; strong voice of the community is heard in the development of nonformal education programmes. In other words, programmes which have a lasting impact on community members where by one can observe attitude change, knowledge development, skills improvement and systemic change.

**Methodology of the Study**

The research design is a case study conducted in the district of Cimahi one of the districts of Indonesia within the Province of West Java. I conducted observations the observation as of the techniques of my research acted as a tool to confirm the information provided during interviews; study of documents, with the documents, I basically wanted to find the programmes implemented, and whether these programmes comprised any form of participation; and the two techniques followed interviews which conducted in the two selected CLCs (PKBM S).

The focus of my study was basically to explore the role of community participation in the development of nonformal education programmes in Community Learning Centres, of: Bina Mandiri, Cipageran and Miskatul Anwar in Cibabati both in Cimahi city council. The aim of the study is to stimulate and revive the community role in nonformal education programmes delivery and also to establish the fundamental aspects of communities in determining their future through nonformal education. The research also aims at promoting and empowering communities through CLCs in contributing to the National Nonformal Education programmes which are of lasting impact to the society.

**Findings of the Research**

The findings of the research in summary are as follow:

1. The findings revealed that the staff members at the two CLCs are aware of the kinds of nonformal education programmes. The programmes being implemented by the two CLCs are basically four, namely: Equivalency Programme which cover the three packages of A, B and C; Life Skills Programmes; Early Childhood Programme and Literacy Programme.

2. In the study, it was revealed that these programmes are basically government programmes. This is in line with belief harbored by the two heads; they believe that the government always develops programmes that fit the needs of the communities.

3. The findings also reveal that CLCs involve communities in programmes’ development through ‘Rukun Warga’ and ‘Rukun Tentangga’ which when translated to Uganda’s system; it is similar to Local Council II and Local Council I. It is these community leaders feeding the community learning centres with information on the needs of their respective communities.
4. It was revealed that the CLC staffs conduct field analyses in the process of socializing CLC programmes to the grassroot community. This is when the ‘Rukun Warga’ and ‘Rukun Tentangga’ are consulted on the needs of their communities.

5. The findings also show that local leaders help in providing information about the needs of communities. The ‘Rws’ and ‘Rts’ are used to gather information and to determine for their communities. Therefore, the cooperation between local leaders and CLC staff is basically in information sharing, helping to mobilize communities for specific programmes and to provide information on the community condition.

6. I established that these leaders are aware of the programmes of CLCs (PKBM$s$). They are aware of programmes implemented by the CLC, such as; early childhood education (PAUD), literacy programmes, life skills programmes and equivalency programme. The study also revealed that due to the perception of the leaders about the programmes, they are able to mobilize the members of their community who are hard to reach.

7. The findings revealed that there is no specific strategy by the local leaders in mobilizing communities and also there is no specific measure that has been taken to have their opinions heard in most of the community programmes meant for the grassroot, the leaders are following mostly CLC programmes.

8. The study revealed that most of the programmes are followed by youths and the adults and or old people mostly follow literacy programmes. All programmes in general are perceived important to both the youths and the adults. Both the youths and adults believe there is a change in their lives.

9. In the field study, I discovered that the participants are mostly from poor families with low economic background, but there were also those from well-off to do families, but their parents were against formal education since they perceived education as a system that spoils students’ character.

10. It was revealed that the categories of community members that participate most include ‘Rukun Tentangga’ and ‘Rukun Warga’, and also families with low income. The participation of families with low incomes is by sending their children to learn at the CLC since most of the families cannot afford formal education and wish their children a good future which is always associated to education.

11. The study finally reveals that the biggest number of the participants of CLCs is basically the youths. Moreso those joining those joining equivalence programmes.

12. The findings as summarised reveal that to ascertain the role of community participation in the sustainability of CLCs, the staffs work in close relationship with communities to make sure communities participate in most of the activities.

13. Though discussions held revealed the different forms of participation, the forms mentioned are basically summed-up into three categories, that is; passive participation, information giving participation and consultative participation.

Recommendations

Development is an idea, practice, or situation that is perceived positive by an individual or the entire society.
1. As change agents, we should learn to mobilize communities for active participation, socialize community learning centers as potential places for handling community needs, and ensure that all community members are the real stakeholders.

2. Nonformal education Professionals should be ready to face the needed desire for change in the development, planning and implementation of nonformal education programmes.

3. Governments should allow educational and development programme to come from the grassroot with the active participation of the would be beneficiaries of the programmes and activities to be implemented.

4. Government should act more on standard setting than planning, developing, and implementing of the nonformal education programmes. It should therefore set standards which will enable it to supervise, monitor and evaluate. In other words, communities should be empowered to take part in all the nonformal education programmes resulting to self-mobilization. With self-mobilization,

5. Innovativeness should be considered as one of the tools to a country’s development through educational approach, that is; through informal (family education, mass or civic education in communities etc), non formal education (out of school time programs), and of course formal education which is carried out in schools (ranging from kindergarten to university education)

6. Through innovation, people should be encouraged to: improve their economic situations, health conditions, socio-cultural and among others. This is because all innovations aim at positive a result which is the objective of any National development.

7. Through Nonformal education, there should be change in thinking and behaviour for any given community. If a group, an organization, a community or a given country embarks on any new venture, it should think of Nonformal education as an appropriate that needs support to change people’s minds towards any given new development focus.

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