

Seminar B Speakers and Abstracts

Seminar B- 'Key Priorities and Problems in LLL Strategies'

at Room A220, 1330-1500 on 29 May 2012

Chair: Dr. Han Min

B1: Lifelong Learning Strategies and Policies: An International Analysis

Dr. Min Han, Ministry of Education, China

Dr. Haixia Xu, Ministry of Education, China

Dr. Jian Huang, East China Normal University, China

In accordance with the goal of ASEM LLL Network Four, this presentation attempts to review and analyse national lifelong learning strategies and policies that have been recently issued and launched by countries in Europe and Asia, as well as a few other countries. Specifically, this presentation intends to provide an in-depth survey of specific national lifelong learning strategies and policies in selected countries, utilising a framework consisting of national socio-economic context, specific policies, leading and participating organisations, funding, participation, outcome, etc. This presentation further conducts a comparison of the strategic approaches to lifelong learning in individual countries, and it highlights the common trends and unique focus among these countries. The presentation concludes with steps to be taken in order to substantialise these strategies and policies. First, following the formulation of macro-level strategies, relevant institutions and schemes need to be put in place to pave the way for a sound implementation of national strategies and policies on lifelong learning. Second, while specific lifelong learning projects can easily be evaluated, it remains a challenge for both policy-makers and researchers alike to measure the benefits of overarching national strategies and policies to advance lifelong learning, especially its potential impact on narrowing social gaps and enhancing social equity. It is recommended that research on evidence-based outcome be prioritised as an important approach to measuring the wide benefits of lifelong learning as a result of relevant national strategies and policies. The presentation will be of help to policy-makers and researchers interested in the development, implementation, and evaluation of lifelong learning strategies and policies at the national level.

B2: Strategies and Practice of Lifelong Learning in Latvia and Thailand

Assoc. Prof. Ineta Luka, University of Latvia, Latvia

Professor Sumalee Sungsi, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand

The importance of lifelong learning has been recognised for many years and consequently countries have adopted their policies to develop lifelong learning system. In Thailand the importance of lifelong learning was reflected in the National policies and development plans in every period, since 1940. For example, the National Education Act which was launched in 1999 for reforming education of the country towards lifelong learning process. This Act proposed lifelong education philosophy as a principle and framework of organising the whole education system of the country. A wish to learn and upgrade one's skills and competences is part of Latvia traditions as well. Popular Latvian proverb 'Live and learn' means: the longer we live, the more we learn. Although in

Europe lifelong learning became one of the key success milestones already in 2000 by adopting 'A Memorandum of Lifelong Learning', in Latvia the term lifelong learning became well known by adopting National Policy for Lifelong Learning in 2006. Since introduction of Lifelong Learning Policies in the countries, both Thailand and Latvia have experienced success and have faced problems and challenges. Some of them are also revealed in the present paper.

The goal of the present comparative research is to study the comprehension of the term lifelong learning in the two countries, analyse the policies introduced, and single out priorities and the main challenges in implementing of lifelong learning policy in the country.

The paper proposes some examples of best practice in implementation of lifelong learning in Thailand and Latvia. The best practices of implementation of lifelong learning policies and strategies in each local area of the country, particularly in rural areas, are provided as a best practice of Thailand. One of the challenges that Latvia is facing at the moment in lifelong learning is how to decrease the level of drop-outs (aged 18-24) from education. The best practice of Latvia provides an example of a possible solution for this challenge.

The comparative research shows that the concept of lifelong learning in Thailand and Latvia is similar: lifelong learning is interpreted as learning life long and it comprises formal and non-formal education and informal learning. However, the real practice not always coincides with the documents adopted. Both Lifelong Learning Policies of Latvia and of Thailand define definite target groups but they were defined at the time of adopting the Strategy. Since then practice has introduced changes and some of the priorities have changed. The provided best practice examples might be recommended as good practice for other countries as well. The report shows that although the two countries have different history, traditions and they are located in geographically different areas, similarities in their Lifelong Learning Policy have been discovered and the two countries can learn from each other how to best introduce certain issues into life.

B3: Challenges in the Development of Strategies for Early School Leavers of Latvia: Conclusions and Recommendations from Asian-European Perspectives

Professor Zenaida Q. Reyes, Philippine Normal University, Philippines

Professor Irina Maslo, The University of Latvia, Latvia

Lifelong learning in the Philippines happens in schools, home, community and workplace. This paper particularly examines the policies, programs, results of implementation including problems and issues in the trifocalised education sector such basic education, technical-vocational schools and higher education. The Philippines has a number of policies in order to address lifelong learning and these policies were outlined in some provisions of the Philippine Constitution and executive orders from the Office of the President of the Philippines, Department of Education (DepEd), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Through these policies, the three executive departments developed and implemented programs to address beneficiaries in the communities and workplace. For instance, the Department of Education has created the Bureau of Alternative Learning System to ensure that the out-of-school-youth, mothers and young adults who do not have paid jobs and indigenous people were trained in many forms of literacies. Similarly, TESDA was mandated to train technical and vocational skills to the poorer sector of the society while CHED has created a program so that universities will accredit competencies learned by individuals from the world of work. All of these programs were based on the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations and the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan for 2016.

These projects and programs have their share of success stories. Problems and issues however, were inevitable. The three implementing agencies of the government on lifelong learning have encountered almost similar problems like tracking and monitoring their graduates, sustaining the projects because of lack resources both financial and human, poor performance in examinations and the bias on individuals who finish their degrees though accreditation and technical/vocational courses. Despite well crafted programs for lifelong learning, much has to be done as regards addressing the Millennium Development Goals and the Philippine Development Plan.