



National Campaign for Education Nepal

Review of VNR Report 2017

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Adult Learning and Education in Nepal

Adult learning refers to a way of learning of adults through self-direction in autonomous way orienting towards their goals whilst adult education is a practice in which adults engage in sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. It can be of any form of learning of adults through which they learn something for their living. Thus, these broad and vague concepts or ideas are difficult to deal in brief as these occur with the ongoing lives. However, for the first time the concept of “Adult Education” was introduced in the report of first commission, Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NEPC, 1956). At that time, the adult education was conceived as mere literacy, limiting to teaching adults how to read and write. Gradually the idea of literacy as genesis led towards the several literacy programs such as Adult Post-Literacy Program, the Flexible Schooling Program, the Women's Literacy Program, the School Outreach Program, the Income Generating Program, and out of school program (through the Community Learning Centers). The other educational efforts from different commissions re-confirmed the policies and programs.

The notion and practices of ALE in educational milieu include diverse educational practices under specific programs including university education. However, in school education system, the programs such as teacher professional development, parenting education, and training for school leaders could be seen as the programs of ALE which are under the provisions stipulated in Education Act 1971 (Eighth Amendment) and Education Rules 2002. 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)', a vital means of facilitating poverty reduction and maximization of social and economic benefits to improve rural livelihoods and lives, particularly for poor and disadvantaged youth and women, is another educational program of ALE guided by TVET Policy 2012. There is 'Non-Formal Education Program' particularly the adult/women literacy programs under the policy framework of Non-Formal Education Policy 2007. Despite all these educational programs, the adult literacy programs and practices are largely conceived as ALE in the context of Nepal as envisaged by different educational policies.

With the effort made in adult literacy for long with specific policies, the literacy rate of Nepal is growing slowly every year. As of fiscal year 2018/19, the literacy rate for above six years of age is 87%, for age

15-24 years is 95 % and that for above fifteen years of age is 75 %. This shows that the large proportion of the child and young population are still not literate in Nepal (MoEST, 2018/19). Only 12 per cent of children of the poorest quintile are developmentally on track in literacy and numeracy compared with 65 per cent from the richest quintile. However, other studies conducted in the recent year's shows that the low adult literacy rate, particularly among females and underprivileged groups is a factor involved in the continuing lack of participation in the education system on the part of girls and children from underprivileged communities. The low level of adult literacy prevents people from reaping the full benefit of or contributing to the country's socio-economic development. Woman with some primary education is less fertile, but has healthier children than an unschooled woman, and that the differences tend to be significantly marked if most of the women in the community have benefited from this level of education.

On the other hand, the largest generation of young people (aged 10-24 years) in Nepal that occupies 32.8 percent of the population of Nepal (CBS, 2014). The majority of those are in poor rural areas and urban slums that lack access to education and health systems; poor quality reproductive health choice and scarcity of job (UNFPA, 2017). Hence, the scenario of the nation when these large young populations without life skills and access to education complete their efficient performing age of their life without skills and access to education will be more painful to the county. The context in Nepal has been changed with the promulgation of new constitution 2015 re-structuring three levels governments and delegating most educational responsibilities in the local governments. On the other hand, government has endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 agenda and has taken several steps for the attainment of these global goals including the preparation of the local targets and indicators. Frameworks and action plans, baseline surveys were already prepared in the early 2016. Progressive efforts from the government have also been seen in terms of the access to quality education of all children and adults. However, the current demand of adult learning in education is yet to be worked out. Adult learning in education is majorly incorporated in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 and there is some specific target indicator set out to achieve the adult literacy and lifelong learning skills.

Context, Objective and Methodology of Review

Nepal had expressed its interest to present its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High Level Political Forum in July, 2017 in line with the UN Secretary General's guidelines. A task force was set up to facilitate in the preparation of the report and consultations were held with the different line ministries, private sectors, experts and academia. However, one of the major stakeholder groups of education i.e. Civil Society Organizations were not consulted in the VNR process (NFN, 2017) in its Voluntary National Review Report (VNR) presented in 2017.

In the backlight of Nepal to achieve progress in terms of Sustainable Development goal and considering the huge youth population as a demographic dividend of Nepal who are slowly entering into the adult population, there is a need to think upon whether the government's efforts are towards the strengthening of educational effectiveness of youth and adults in order to meet the sustainable development goals. But, the concept of adult learning and education has not been in the light of the government's report. Thus,

this report analyzes the Voluntary National Review Report of Nepal, 2017 from the perspective of Adult Learning in Education. Out of the 17 SDGs, adult learning in education specifically is mentioned in the SDG4. However, the VNR report of Nepal, 2017 does not reports about the SDG 4. Thus, this review report has attempted to examine the perspective of ALE in terms of other SDGs that has been reported and also the possible areas of SDG4 where it could be incorporated.

Therefore, the major basis of this analysis is the review and analysis of the VNR report of Nepal, 2017. A part from this, some of the other related documents prepared by the National Planning Commission in terms of SDG, Policies related to Education and Adult learning, Local Government Operation Act, 2017, 14th three Year Plan , Red book . were reviewed and analyzed. The draft report was shared to the NCE Nepal member organizations as well as other CSOs and educational stakeholders for the review. The report was then shared to the ASPBAE for the final review.

Voluntary National Review Report (VNR) in 2017 explicitly reviewed the Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 17. However, it has not been reviewed from adult education and lifelong perspectives in the entire report. Thus, Nepal government's VNR does not discuss much about the educational aspects such as adult learning and education. However, training for women and youths, awareness rising for the community people, technical and vocational education for building entrepreneurship for women, adults and youth have been referred and discussed in the review of other SDG goals that were under the review.

Enrollment of women in technical and vocational education and training was also one of the important agenda that remained unfinished at the end of 2015. Though the SDG 4 had its targets and indicators on the making progress in this agenda, but yet not much progress has been identified in this arena. In fact, the VNR has clearly identified attainment of the gender parity in technical and vocational education and training and ensuring women's empowerment in those programs as the major social sectorial challenges in the attainment of SDGs. In addition, the VNR also explicitly discusses about the challenges in creating employment opportunities for both educated and illiterate youths, adults and women in the country. The challenges of creating employment opportunities is because of lack of adequate training, skills and job orientation required for the current labor market. Annually 450,000 youths and women enter into the labor market for seeking the job and entrepreneurship (ILO, 2016); however most of whom do not have the adequate skills and trainings to cope up with the competitive market and because of which they are forced to migrate in the other counties to work. Even if they tend to work in the country, they are low paid. Especially the women who migrate for the work in the other countries are exploited and discriminated.

A part from this, with regard to ALE, the report discusses about the awareness raising program to improve the nutritional status of pregnant women and 2 years aged children. Besides, the report mentions about the role of cooperatives to increase access to quality education and lifelong learning by organizing the literacy programs as women and mother groups can save the money in the regular

basis and they can utilize it in their kid's education, for their training, skill enhancement and entrepreneurship development.

According to the CBS 2011, Nepal has an adult literacy rate of 56.6%. The rate has reached to around 70% now. It should be a matter of concern for Nepal that despite of over 50 years of development history in the education sector, almost 30% of the adult populations of Nepal are still illiterate one. Many literacy-program graduates give up due to the limited availability of reading material and majority of the adults move to the foreign labor market without literacy and skills. In addition, adult women often don't complete the literacy classes because of timing as in the morning and evening time; they are expected to work in household chores. In some of the communities, women can't attend the literacy classes because of the cultural barriers as they are not allowed to go out of the home in the evening and night time of literacy classes. However, the interesting and bitter fact is that the VNR report has neither raised those issues in the report nor has posed the challenges in achieving the literate nation mission.

SDG 4 contributes in achieving the other SDGs. However, there is also no any recognition or discussion of it including adult education, adult literacy and lifelong learning that any of the progress made in the SDGs that were reported were due to the educational access and literacy programs. The document nowhere mentions that learning, skills or education has contributed in the attainment of other SDGs.

With regards to SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), Nepal has made a significant progress in reducing extreme poverty. Government is implementing 49 poverty alleviation programs. However, the report does not mention about the strategies and mechanisms adopted for poverty reduction such as education, skills generation trainings, income generating opportunities etc.

With regard to SDG 2 (End hunger and achieve food security and improve nutrition), the report discusses that still there are too many underweight children and the concern of nutrition is still a prime concern. There are disparities in the distribution of underweight children with higher proportion in

rural areas rather than the urban one. Further, the report also highlights that the children of women with no education are more likely to be underweight than that of literate mother. Programs to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutritional plans have been developed and awareness raising programs has also been done so as to improve status of pregnant women and children up to 2 years.

With regard to SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), report mentions about the progress made in terms of child mortality and improving the maternal health however, the country still has many health challenges. Poor and marginalized people face many barriers to accessing the health services. There is lack of awareness regarding the communicable diseases and also lack of sex and reproductive health education. The efforts of government does not seem to be well focused on these aspects and lifelong learning aspects in terms of healthy living is not incorporated as well as addressed by the VNR report.

With regard to SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), the report claims that gender parity is achieved at all levels of education and also there is increased in the enrollment of girls in the school. The constitution of Nepal has enshrined the rights of women in line with the government's commitment and now women occupy 29.5% of seats in the national parliament and about 40 % seats in local government. Women's participation in the decision making has also improved. Though, the SDG document and its targets aim at women empowerment through skills development and promoting technical and vocational education. The skills and opportunities provided to women have contributed for their empowerment, however, the VNR report is silent about the contribution made by such educational programs and skills development trainings in achieving the gender parity as well as increasing engagement of women in the decision making process.

With regards to SDG 9 (Build resilient infrastructure and promote inclusive industrialization), the infrastructural development in terms of roads, railway, tourism, industry etc. have grown in the SDG period. However, the sustainability and resiliency of the infrastructure development is on

doubt. There has not been much progress on the research and technological innovations for social development as well as the industrialization as the development budget is also very nominal at the national as well as the provincial level. However, the report has not discussed much on how infrastructures are women and child friendly.

Reviewing SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 17 it has been found that much more is to be done in terms of the awareness raising, capacity development as well as the skills enhancement as well as ensuring equal participation. There is a need to educate women, youths and adults regarding the tourism and its prospect, promoting industries, building the resilient infrastructure. Moreover, there is also a need of capacity enhancement trainings to the women regarding their meaningful participation in the decision making process. Many of the deputy mayors and Dalit women representatives in the local government are still illiterate and are often just the signatories in the decisions made by the powerful groups. Thus, there is a need of educating and capacitating women so that they could make influence in the policy making process.

A part from this, there is a growing case of non-communicable diseases like cancer, diabetes, kidney problem/ failure, heart attacks etc. Thus, there is also an utmost urgency to educate the people regarding healthy way of living, art of eating, living a balanced life as well as stress management skills and approaches. Counseling of mothers about underweight caused by malnutrition and also obesity is also significant to achieve SDG 2 and 3. Moreover, there is also a need for educating farmers especially women farmers regarding organic farming approaches, and the use of new technologies so that the vulnerability of agriculture sector gets reduced. Such concerns are not planned as well as taken into consideration in the SDG targets as well as in the programs and plans. Hence, there is a need to strengthen the vocational and technical programs, skills enhancement trainings, awareness programs etc. for the improvement of the overall performance of SDGs and to attain the targets set in the different SDGs. It is observed that the VNR only provides overview of the progress made in each SDG in the specific quantitative terms with more focused targets and lump sum indication of the progress. But, the strategies adopted, challenges faced and mitigation strategies have not been analyzed in the report.

Policies Governing ALE in Nepal

ALE in VNR Policy Review

The concern of Adult Learning and Education remains touched in the plan and policy monitoring and review mechanisms in the VNR of Nepal. However, one of the aspects of ALE i.e. capacity building has been reported to be planned under the Integrated Evaluation Action Plan of the National Planning Commission (NPC) focusing on evaluation of the capacity building. The government has formed its long term, medium term periodic development plans, sectorial perspective plans, and annual plans. Sixteen medium term and long terms sectorial plans and strategies have been developed in Nepal which aligns with the goals of SDG. Some of these sectorial plans include School Sector Development Plan which is concerned about education and lifelong learning, Nepal Health Sector Strategy, Zero Hunger Challenge National Plan of Action, Agriculture Development Strategy, Forest Sector Strategy etc. However, many of these sectorial plans, long term strategies and perspective plans of the line ministries were developed before

the adaptation of SDGs or at early stage of SDGs. Thus their targets and indicators are not perfectly aligned with SDGs and they need to be updated. In addition, Monitoring and Evaluation Act, 2016 has been drafted to promote and enabling policy environment for tracking and evaluating the SDGs.

The VNR does not highlight about the alignment of SDG with its program and development budget. However, based on the strategies of the 14th three year plan, the government has also defined its annual programs. Each year's national budget has also been allocated as per the strategies of the 14th three year plan and the SDGs. Goal 9 and 11 are in the highest national priorities of the national budget 2018/19, Because of which the largest share of the development budget i.e. 26.1% and 29.8% has been allocated for the attainment of these goals. Moreover, the least priority is for the Goal 17 that has only 0.2% of the total national development budget.



There is no specific new policy on adult learning and education formed thus far after the promulgation of new constitution 2015. The non-formal education policy 2007 that talks about implementing 'programs related to lifelong and continuous education, skill development and income generation' is under implementation. But, the policy is not explicit about the nature of lifelong learning. Further, adult education is conceived in a narrow term, basically literacy: 'the ability to read and write with understanding and to perform simple arithmetic calculations'.

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 ensures the right to education of all citizens from different social segments. It has also ensured the right to access on descent employment opportunities acquiring knowledge and skills through vocational and other modes of education particularly for those who are marginalized and deprived communities including rights to women to obtain special opportunity in education, health, employment and social security, on the basis of positive discrimination. Though, the Constitution has spirit on promoting the access on education for all citizens of Nepal on any modes or means, though it is silent specifically on the issues of adult literacy and lifelong learning.

In the same line, School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009–2016) mentions lifelong learning. The term lifelong learning appears in association with literacy: 'literacy enables adults to engage in lifelong learning and helps to develop capabilities to sustain their livelihoods and participate fully in society'. The plan aims at linking lifelong learning with income generation as well as with occupational and vocational skills. Thus, it seems that there is no explicit policy that explains the nuanced understanding of lifelong learning rather it is conceived vaguely as a strategy of 'improving literacy' and then livelihoods of people.

The national framework of action for SDG4 attempted to promote the learning needs of all women, young people and adults that were emphasized to meet through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs. Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) has launched Literate Nepal campaign to eradicate illiteracy in Nepal mostly catering adult literacy and adult education to adults including women and out of school children.

After Nepal's commitment on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, it has set the target under adult literacy is 'equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. It has been further targeted that a larger percent of women, youth and adults having relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. It has further been targeted for the elimination of gender disparities in education and equal access to all levels of education for vulnerable people poor and other disadvantaged groups.

The sectorial plan for SDG 4 is School Sector Development Plan (SSDP). Particularly, it has an objective of enhancing functional literacy and cultivates reading and learning habits among youths and adults and it has put forward the strategies of improving the programs of adult education and lifelong learning. It has emphasized on scaling up of continuous expansion of libraries and community reading centers for building the reading habits of adults, youths and women. In so doing, it focuses on empowering local governments for developing or designing, planning, and implementing the literacy and post-literacy programs. It stresses on collaborative works of national volunteer campaigns, local governments, and local civil society organizations.

Current 'National Education Policy 2076', which has not been made public yet' but passed from Cabinet of Government of Nepal, was partly announced by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST). This policy has come up with the vision of making 'educated, civilized, healthy, and capable human resources for promoting social justice and transformation and prosperity of Nepal'. Further, it aims to make all levels of education competitive, technology friendly, employable, and productive that meets the needs of the state. The policy gives emphasis on to declare 'Literate Nepal' concentrating on making educated Nepal through expanding the programs of lifelong learning in the country. In addition, the policy is aware on maintaining equivalence and permeability of qualifications of formal, non-formal, technical and vocational education through developing national qualification framework. It highlights the credit

banking and transfer on the basis of testing and evaluation of knowledge, skills, and capability of students from formal and non-formal education as envisaged by national vocational qualification framework. Another concern it tries to address is the inclusive education for all those from disadvantaged and marginalized communities providing life-skills and vocational education through affirmative actions and reservations.

The Act Relating to Compulsory and Free Education, 2075 (2018) stipulates that all Nepali citizens have right become literate or every illiterate citizen shall have the right to become literate.

Similarly, Local Government Operation Act 2074 is about the constitutional rights delegated to the local governments. The act has stipulated numerous educational rights of local governments. In regard to adult literacy and lifelong learning, the local governments are supposed to formulate policies, rules, and standards of non-formal education, open and alternative continuous learning, and community learning programs. In addition, the local governments have right to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate the programs adult education and learning related program. Besides, this Act has provisioned the rights to local governments to open and manage the community libraries.

Financing of ALE

Financing has been taken as a major challenge in the implementation of SDGs. Nepal aims to manage sufficient financial resources from its public, private and development partners for the attainment of SDGs. However, the SDG preliminary assessment report prepared by the National Planning Commission indicates a huge financing gap for meeting the SDG targets that is in overall as a share of GDP, the financing gap ranges between 9% in the 2016-2019 to 15% in 2025-2030. About 12 percent of GDP is the average financing gap under the assumption that the real economic growth will be a steady 6.6 percent throughout 2016-2030. Social sectors including poverty, health, education and gender comprise 31% of the financing gap as per the estimation made by the National Planning Commission in 2016. The public sector is expected to shoulder about 55 percent of the SDG investment

requirement, starting foremost with sectors like poverty reduction, followed by agriculture, health, education, gender, water and sanitation, transport infrastructure, climate action, and governance. Out of the total federal budget for the education sector, 25.9% has been allocated for the non-formal education sector. However, the VNR report does not explicitly highlights about the financing mechanisms of different policies and plans as mentioned in the above section. However, in terms of financing the SDGs, the report has recognized the need to improve the domestic resource mobilization, partnership with the private sectors, cooperatives and civil society, development partners as well as the three tiers of the government. But, it neither speaks about any funding mechanisms for the ALE nor stressed for fulfilling the gap.

ALE Delivery Mechanism

Since the VNR report has not reviewed Goal 4, however, it might be a limitation of the report that it does not speak about the delivery mechanism of ALE or of overall education. For the implementation of the SDGs, Government of Nepal has formed three levels of committees. The country ownership of the SDGs is manifested in the institutional set up of the High-level National Steering Committee chaired by the Prime Minister. This National Steering Committee is responsible to provide policy directives, conducive policy environment and building partnership for achieving the SDGs. Within this, there is a Coordination and Implementation Committee chaired by the Vice-Chair of the National Planning Commission. This committee is responsible for guiding the line ministries on mainstreaming SDGs into national, provincial and the local level's policies and plan. It also guides for the management of the financial, human and technical resources, effective and efficient mobilization of the internal resources, and coordination between the public, private actors and the development partners including CSOs. Below the Coordination and Implementation Committee, there are nine SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Thematic Committees led by Members of NPC such as Economic Development Committee, Social Development Committee, Sustainable Production and Gender Mainstreaming Committee, Agriculture Development and Drinking Water Committee, Energy Development and Climate Change Committee, Infrastructure Development Committee and Governance Committee. These thematic committees are responsible for the preparation of the SDG plans, programs, budgets implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation. The high level National Development Action Committee (NDAC) is the apex body of M&E in the government that seeks to relieve coordination bottlenecks and redress problems that cannot be solved at the ministerial level.

A part from this, local and provincial governments are also made responsible for the implementation of the SDG at the local level. Government has envisioned for establishing the SDG implementation Committee for the SDGs at the provincial and local level. The District Coordination Committees (DCCs) at the district level are expected to take lead in the coordination and implementation of the SDGs at the local level. In order to implement the Education 2030 agenda, Nepal government is in the process of finalization of Education 2030 National Framework for Action.

Besides, the VNR report have also recognized that other government and non-government agencies have also initiated activities including institutional setups for implementing the SDGs. Private sectors, Cooperative sectors have joined hands with the government for implementing the SDGs through job creation and infrastructure building. The VNR report has also recognized the support of development partners and civil society organizations. CSOs have formed an SDG forum, which has identified target groups and formed thematic groups.

Reviewing the institutional structure and delivery mechanisms for SDGs, it can be noted that a sound coordination and collaboration is a must for the implementation of SDGs. It is because the SDGs implementation structure seems top down mechanism from the national to the local level. Line ministries at the national and provincial level together with the local government at the local level need to have a sound coordination. However, with so much of the SDGs dependent on the initiatives of provincial and local governments, these institutional arrangements have not been seen to be established at local and province levels till the date. The VNR report does not discuss about the delivery mechanisms of Adult Learning Education. Further it has not analyzed the institutional structures responsible for capacity development, skills enhancement, awareness raising or any other components of ALE.

Programs and Interventions of government and CSOs in ALE

Initiations from Government

Nepal has a good track record of initiations in the adult learning and education. However, the major problems to that were that the adult literacy remained for a short period project time and thus could not be continued upon. An adult literacy class of the first type ran for 9 months with a total of 260 hours of teaching in 1960s. An Adult Education Center, of the second type ran programs for the new literates, after the recognition of the fact that if there were no follow up programs for the recently acquired skills the adults would forget them. The Literacy Campaign, the third type had as its general objectives, the eradication of illiteracy from the whole of Nepal, and as its specific objectives, the making of all illiterate people between 14 and 45 years of age from a certain selected zone, district, village Panchayat, or such limited area, literate over a definite time period. The radio continued to give programs for the literacy students, these included poems, short stories, comedy, agriculture, science, and general knowledge. A part from this, work Oriented Adult Education Programs were there to impart relevant knowledge and skills to adults so as to enable them to contribute to local developmental activities. However, all of these programs were just for a certain time framework and could neither be sustainable for the continuous one.

Currently, in the federal level, there is an Alternative Education Section under the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) to look after the adult learning and education. Besides, there is also a Technical and Vocational Education Section in the CEHRD to provide technical and vocational education for the youths and adults. Besides, there is also a Special Education Council

that looks after the education of the special target groups. In addition, as an aspect of ALE, it has been preparing to enhance teacher professional development establishing Teacher Training Center in each of seven provinces. Education and Human Resource Development is one mechanism that has been training to the educational bureaucrats for enhancing their professional competencies.

Local governments are also responsible for the adult learning and education. Based on the Local Government Operation Act (2017), they can formulate policies and programs regarding to operate, govern and regulate the program. Some of the local governments have planned for the non-formal education, alternative learning classes and community learning centers in their local education plans. Besides, some of the local governments are managing adult literacy and technical education and vocational training at local level.

A part from this, Government of Nepal had also a plan to establish one Community Learning Centre in each of the wards of each Municipality. Moreover, government also has been conducting television and radio literacy programs for the people from the marginalized communities.

Further, non-formal education has been increasingly been prioritized in the government plans and programs. Out of the total federal budget for the education sector, 25.9% has been allocated for the non-formal education sector. Skills development training programs, technical and vocational education trainings, bookstores, libraries etc. are also budgeted by the government to promote adult learning and education in Nepal.

Initiations from Civil Society Organizations

Most of the civil society organizations and NGOs working with the community people in rural areas and also in urban slums are providing non-formal education and literacy classes. 'National Resource Center for Non- Formal Education (NRC-NFE)' was also established with the initiation of 40 different NGOs for the development of need based curriculum for different target groups. NRC- NFE was also for the development and dissemination of graded learning materials for illiterates and neo-literates especially for girls and women. This center contributed in the development of learning materials related with improvement of quality of life and income generation, organization of training of literacy instructors, development of Community Learning and development Approach and setting up Community Learning Centers in different villages to combine learning with community development.

NGOs of Nepal have developed a concept of "Community Learning and Development System (CLDS)" and "Community Learning Center (CLC)". Though government has established the CLC in different wards of the municipalities, NGOs are supporting for the operation of CLCs. The community learning center organizes non-formal education programs to help the local people to identify their problems through mutual discussion and dialogue. However, those CLCs don't provide life skills, training and empowerment opportunities.

A part from this, CSOs have organized the flexible schooling programs also for the out of school youths and adult and they are advocating for the accreditation and equivalency. Moreover, community media have been one of the effective tools for promotion of the adult learning and education. NGOs through community radio are promoting the literacy and awareness in the remote areas of Nepal.

A part from this, community libraries has also been initiated at the local levels which have promoted learning habit among the women and adults. Besides, there are also the women groups, senior citizens groups who gather in the community places and share about their learning and life experiences. This has also been a good part of lifelong learning practices backed by NGOs in Nepal.

Considering declination of interest of adults in learning and education civil society organization has initiated REFLECT techniques which are directly geared individual interests and need so that they would use frequently and not forget. It was not only confined to literacy but capacity building of people and income generating more so for women group. Similarly, CSOs empowered the adult through engaging them in CBOs like a children education Concerned group and motivated towards income generating initiatives along with ALE which has proven sustainable learning.

In the changing context of the country CSO can play crucial role on ALE at the grassroots level in coordination and collaboration with the local government utilizing community learning center. The center can make a research and learning hub for lifelong learning for adult and youths. The delivery of lifelong learning through flexible and need specific approaches, community based learning and non-formal education can play a crucial role in societal transformation and promote sustainable development.

CSOs/government has to widen their understanding and vision about ALE as per the DVV International's¹ research on the "Wider Benefits of Adult education- An Inventory of Existing Studies and Research" demonstrated the impact of investing in quality education and learning programs targeting youth and adults.

¹ DVV International stands for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association. The research was done by Ricarda Motschilnig.

The inventory emphasized that:

- Individuals less likely to be in employment (migrants, women from ethnic minorities, etc.) may benefit economically from their participation in Adult Education;
- Educational attainment in one generation has positive effects in the next generation. Adult learners become better parents, in that they are more patient, understanding and better at listening to and supporting their children by engaging their children more, serving as role model learners and becoming more involved parents;
- Learning can promote social cohesion and strengthen citizenship. Adult learning may support the development of shared norms, greater trust towards other individuals and the government and more civic co-operation.

In this context civil society organizations have to strongly argue the case for youth and adult learning and education (YALE), especially in ensuring lifelong learning opportunities for all. In Education 2030, this also means CSOs need to work towards the fulfillment of SDG 4.3 (quality TVET and higher learning), SDG 4.4 (skills development), SDG 4.6 (youth and adult literacy) and SDG 4.7 (Education for Sustainable Development).

Hence, Civil Society organizations have a strong and significant role in the promotion of adult learning and education in Nepal. However, most of these programs could not be sustained for the long run due to the issue of financial limitation and constraint.



Conclusion

The need of adult learning and education is stressed by policy makers and political parties in the number of public statements. However, financing ALE is very critical in Nepal. Since, large numbers of youths and women are unskilled and they tend to work in the menial work, these should be investment from the government to enhance their skills and empowerment. SDGs talk not only about formal education rather it stressed more on lifelong learning also. Also, the compulsory education as envisioned by the Constitution is likely to be handicapped unless the adults themselves are educated and literate. Hence, adult especially women should be educated on the need and value of education so that they are prepared to make the necessary contribution to keep their children at school until they complete formal education.

Much of the expenditure on other fields of government concern such as agricultural improvement, health, land reforms, compulsory savings, development of co-operatives or industrial development, poverty reduction etc. are likely to be

less effective or even wasted unless backed by a much more expanded and effective program of adult literacy, awareness raising, capacity development and skills enhancement.

Education is at the heart of development or progress of SDGs. Despite this fact, the VNR of Nepal has focused less on analyzing and discussing specifically about adult learning and education or even on its associated concepts. However, there is a little implicit discussion about the training and capacity building for generating income of people. Though ALE is a cross cutting issue, there is no any stated policy or mechanisms for incorporating adult learning and education for achieving the various SDGs and also delivering the ALE programs and interventions. Neither, it is mentioned about the separate budgetary allocations.

If the government is committed truly and has a strong political will for the achievement of SDGs, it must also be committed for adult learning and education. Priority is to be given to the adult education within the budget, plans and programs.

Recommendations

In light of the conclusions made above, following recommendations are made to the government of Nepal in terms of Adult Learning and Education:

- Adult Learning and Education must not only be confined to the literacy programs and education. It must be linked to the overall development and included in the every developmental plans and programs of the government.
- Government should consider reporting from the Adult Learning and Education lens in the next VNR reporting in 2020, for this there should be strong inter-ministerial/agencies coordination for the reporting.
- Higher priority should be given to adult education within the educational budget and within the overall national economic and social economic development plans.
- There should be a separate structure in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology so as to review the plan the educational programs in terms of adult learning and lifelong learning.
- Community schools should be concerned with the education of adults and out of school youths by ensuring the proper training to the teachers and also techniques to promote adult learning.
- Government should initiate to involve the major non-Government organizations, particularly the women's associations, in the functional literacy programs.
- Liaison and co-ordination should be made between the various agencies and organizations involved in educational work with adults so as to avoid unnecessary overlap or duplication of work on adult learning.
- There is also a need of campaigns and advocacy on nutritional education, education regarding the quality of food and also the production of nutritional foods indigenously so as to materialize these plans.
- Government should engage CSOs as a grassroots level working and critical policy dialogue partner to promote SDG4
- Government should develop and implementing fully-costed policies, well-targeted plans and legislation for addressing adult literacy, education for young people and adults, and lifelong learning;
- Government should expand the existing educational resources and budgets across for adult learning and education;
- Government should eliminate the barriers of participation of adult learners and creating learning environment with easy access.

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About ASPBAE

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) is a regional association of more than 200 organisations and individuals working towards promoting quality education for all and transformative and liberating, lifelong adult education and learning. It strives to forge and sustain an Asia-Pacific movement dedicated to mobilising and supporting community and people's organisations, national education coalitions, teachers' associations, campaign networks, and other civil society groups and institutions in holding governments and the international donor community accountable in meeting education targets and commitments, ensuring the right of all to education, and upholding education as an empowering tool for combating poverty and all forms of exclusion and discrimination, pursuing sustainable development, enabling active and meaningful participation in governance, and building a culture of peace and international understanding. ASPBAE publications form an integral part of ASPBAE's information, education, and advocacy activities and efforts, and seek to support sharing and learning among education stakeholders, advocates, practitioners, analysts, and policymakers. The reader is therefore encouraged to write to ASPBAE if they wish to use the material contained herein for reproduction, adaptation, and translation and to provide feedback that could help in further improving these publications.



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