

Guidelines for Lifelong Education Management to Mobilize Learning Community

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ABSTRACT

This article is a study of the guidelines for lifelong education management to mobilize learning communities in the social-cultural context of Thailand is intended to 1) analyze and synthesize the management of lifelong learning to mobilize learning community in the social-cultural context of Thailand; and 2) propose guidelines for lifelong education management to mobilize learning community in the social-cultural context of Thailand. This article applies qualitative research methods, using various documents, interviews and focus groups. The results found that these guidelines are the learning processes which affect learning throughout one's life. The guidelines for lifelong education management to mobilize learning communities in the social-cultural context of Thailand consists of these key components; lifelong education management guidelines; and the final products. Finally, lifelong education management guidelines could be used to promote and develop lifelong learning for learning community mobilization based on the social-cultural context in Thailand. It is anticipated that the findings will add meaningful information and practical guidelines for enhancing understanding of guidelines for lifelong education management to mobilize learning community in Thailand, and serve as a basic and comparative outcome for further research.

KEYWORDS

Guidelines, Learning Community, Lifelong Education Management, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes in global society prompt Thai people and society to adjust themselves accordingly. Quality of education management is a key factor enabling people to adjust themselves effectively amid a number of changes in global contexts. With good quality of education management, people's quality will also be enhanced accordingly. Human is the most significant resource for a country to enhance its competitiveness amid the rapidly changing world. Therefore, it is essential that Thailand give the top priority to human development so that Thai citizens possess high potential to compete in the international level. Thai people are expected to be both virtuous and clever as they are expected to act as social capital and help to develop the country to stand gracefully in the international stage (The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2012). Amid the educational change trend, the concept of lifelong education has been adapted as a guideline for the country's education management to ensure that Thai people are given wide opportunities for lifelong learning. The lifelong education concept is also taken into account to build leaning society and allow society to participate in education management. The concept is a key driver for the country's education reform that focuses on development of quality and standard of education as well as the learning of Thai people.

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Based on this concept, the education management focuses on development of learners, educational institutes, learning resources, curriculums and content designed under effective management, in order to broaden educational opportunities with high learning quality to cover all areas. Hence, the lifelong learning concept is expected to provide Thai citizens with lifelong educational opportunities and also encourage lifelong learning management collaboration among all relevant parties (Office of the Secretary of Education, Ministry of Education, 2009; Office of Education Council, 2009).

However, a number of problems linked to Thai education have been detached, with solutions urgently required. This is especially true for the case of education standard, educational management efficiency and enlargement of educational opportunities. Some problems include the lack of adequate freedom and flexibility in educational management for certain education agencies; insufficient educational services provided for disadvantaged people; lack of appropriate lifelong education contents and methods to facilitate educational achievement; and lack of regulation fine-tuning to facilitate-self learning. Given these problems, the lifelong education has yet to be merged into Thai ways of living. In addition, the society still lacks for collaboration in education management despite a law on promotion of informal and non-formal education being imposed as a mechanism to drive principles and the objectives of national education law (Charungkaittikul et al., 2012). The extent of learning transfers between the formal system and informal system remains rather low. The target groups for the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education (NIE) include a very large number of learners with varieties of learning needs or demand while the data base system for updated records of current learners and learning facilitators and supporters remains inefficient. On top of that, most educational personnel mainly act as education managers rather than promoters or facilitators of education management. Partnership networks lack of motivation and clear understanding of their roles (Office of Education Council, 2009). It should also be noted that lifelong education and non-formal and informal education are still facing a number of execution problems; for instance, the curriculum development remains unable to meet different demand of the target groups while the academic performances of learners under the NIE system still stay far below minimum standard (Office of Education Council, 2011 and Sangsri, 2014)

Lifelong education is highly significant as it is a core concept for development of a society towards a learning society. It helps to enhance living quality of both individuals and groups of individuals, who will act as the major contributors to development and advancement of a community, society, and the country in balancing, stable and sustainable ways. As the Thai cultural context includes different foundation structures where both urban and rural communities are mixed, the elements of economic advancement and development in different parts are thus different. Apparently, the development based on different conditions yields different outcome. Therefore, lifelong education management can reflect the possibility of putting the concept of lifelong education into practice in order to mobilize a learning community. It is thus important that all relevant agencies and individuals be well aware of the philosophy, concept and principle of lifelong education before drafting practical guidelines for lifelong education execution to mobilize the learning community in the social – cultural context of Thailand in a sustainable way. Lifelong education requires continued integration of learning into learners' ways of living as well as the nature of learners' community so that they can apply what they have learned to development of their living standard. Also, lifelong education helps learners to acquire thinking skills and sensible and effective problem-solving skills. Moreover, it is also essential to employ the decentralization principle that encourages learners, communities and local administration organizations to take part in earning processes or activities; in light of this, local organizations or communities should be empowered to engage in learning management. Finally, the lifelong education should be flexible and widely varied to ensure that the education is effective and able to meet learners' broad demand; therefore, the lifelong education concept can be applied to mobilize a learning community based on the Thai social and cultural context.

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